

Michael McGovern
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Town of Middleton
Select Board
48 South Main Street
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Dear Board Members:

My name is Michael McGovern and I am applying for the position of Middleton Town Administrator. The Town is moving in a positive and exciting direction and I want to be part of that future. I am currently employed as the Shirley Town Administrator and previously the Assistant City Manager in Lowell, totaling nearly 10 years of experience as a manager. My involvement with every department of town and city government, gives me an understanding of how different aspects of municipal government function; from getting potholes filled to overseeing two Complete Streets project totaling nearly \$1 million, to the oversight of budgetary matters. The experience in both a town and city gives me a unique perspective. This knowledge will be valuable in leading Middleton through the challenges of preserving the character of the community, while moving forward with future development initiatives. My professional leadership can help guide the Town moving into the next decade.

Continued career growth prepared me to step in as Administrator on day one. Throughout my career, each new position presented me with challenges, while giving me an opportunity to learn. As a leader you need to be able to react thoughtfully, calmly, and professionally to resolve any crisis that arises. You must have the ability to think beyond the situations in front of you and find solutions in the short and long-term. Managing with respect demonstrates who you are and your character. You cannot expect or demand respect from co-workers and the community; you must gain and earn their trust. Staff needs to know you support them and appreciate their effort.

Managing during the COVID-19 period presents many difficulties, from a financial, a day-to-day operational, and a personnel standpoint. The world is more complicated today, particularly during the pandemic. Beyond the financial havoc it creates, there is a very real personal sense of uncertainty from the staff and general public. Understanding the need for employees to find a balance between their professional life and personal life is critical. Creating a work environment that is conducive to mental health well-being is an added layer to being an effective manager. For example, last year many younger staff faced the added stress of children at home studying remotely. We needed to be understanding and more flexible as went through those times. Many communities face financial hardships due to the pandemic and Shirley is no different. We implemented controls to better weather the financial volatility such as spending and hiring reviews; the majority of free cash in FY21 and FY22 was appropriated to reserve accounts at both Annual Town Meetings; and utilized CARES and now ARPA funding to help supplement needs. Communication was and still is the key in any situation, especially during COVID-19.

Town of Shirley experienced a number of turbulent years prior to July 2018, resulting in financial, personnel, and operational instability. Working with the Board of Selectmen, together we made incredible progress. The constant discussion and information we exchange has been an integral component in our success. The FY20 independent audit removed the past findings of cash and receivable reconciliation concerns. This item had been an ongoing issue for a number of years prior to my starting as Administrator. We balanced the budget for the past three years without using one-time revenues and doubled our stabilization accounts.

Internally with staff, we focused on team building, stability, and ultimately, changing the morale. We could not tackle the major issues facing the operations if we were not all working together. Although necessary to understand the events of the past, I stressed the importance of not dwelling on those polarizing periods. A main focus was to create an environment of respect and professionalism with all employees. It was extremely important to let the staff know that they were supported and allowed to do their jobs without being micromanaged. Once again, communication was a key element; it was critical that departments did not operate in silos.

Externally, we focused on the community and set out to regain the trust of the Shirley residents in their town government. On a very basic, but effective level, we focused on making town hall experience a more friendly and welcoming place to do business. Often it is the small things that make the most difference. On a larger scale, we preached transparency and openness. Although a cliché, the phrase, "My door is always open" is something I constantly tell residents. If you have an issue, call or come in to see me; there is no appointment necessary. We went

to great lengths to open the lines of communication between my office and the volunteer boards and committees. Working through the many financial obstacles the Town faced, we developed a superb working relationship with the Finance Committee. As a result, many past finance issues have been rectified and now stabilized. As a result, the Town benefitted by nearly \$1 million for free cash certification for FY19, approximately \$500,000 - \$600,000 more than past years. Carrying the transparent and open philosophy into town meetings; a presentation slide for each warrant article is standard practice, with as much detail as possible.

By working in unison with the Board of Selectmen, various Town Boards and Committees, Senator Jamie Eldridge, and then Representative Benson, we made great progress. We generated approximately \$330,000 through a tax title auction, recouping those outstanding debts. The Town was awarded a \$395,000 Complete Streets grant to improve the downtown corridor and a Shared Streets grant to revitalize the main business corridor on Front Street. We received a \$20,000 MVP grant, designating Shirley as a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness community. As a result, the Town was also awarded a \$63,000 MVP grant to study the feasibility of a Microgrid system at the Town complex. Recently, the Town was awarded a MA Office on Disability grant in the amount of \$85,000 for accessibility improvements and a \$125,000 grant from the MA State 911 Department for communications upgrades. Working with the Board of Health and Finance Committee, we addressed a serious financial shortfall in the solid waste and recycling enterprise fund by implementing a new trash collection system in an effort to make the enterprise fund a truly self-sustaining account. The tax title auction and trash collection system were considered difficult initiatives. However, the decision was easy for me to venture down those roads – they were the right things to do financially for the Town of Shirley and the residents. The Town now has a full-time DPW Director for the first time since 2013. The implementation of this position is allowing for a more efficient and productive department, with the ability to plan projects, rather than being solely reactive. We reprioritized our Capital Plan to address deferred maintenance issues with Town buildings. We can no longer kick the can down the road; postponing needed and preventative repairs only increases future costs.

Collaborative efforts have also been an area of priority. Shirley is located within the Devens jurisdiction under MassDevelopment, which also includes Ayer and Harvard. This structure is unique and requires collaboration between the four communities. I work closely with officials from Devens on economic, housing, and public works matters. Shirley is a member in a regional school district with the Town of Ayer and shares a regional dispatch center with Ayer. Understanding the importance of a good relationship between the municipal side of government and the school side, I have formed a solid connection with the Superintendent Dr. Malone. That collaborative effort extends to the Massachusetts state delegation representing Shirley. They have been very supportive in the Town's goal of improving the MBTA train depot in Shirley.

My role as Lowell Assistant City Manager and as the operational point person for every city department required me to be organized and versed in their day-to-day and long range function. Beyond the standard coordination of daily operations, I had direct involvement with yearly \$375 - \$400 million budget development, as well as daily oversight with the financial team on all fiscal matters. My experience also included human relations and bargaining matters. Responsibilities included developing changes in departmental organization, overseeing major reorganization of multiple departments with similar functions making them more streamlined and efficient. I acted as the manager's liaison with the city council, public, government agencies, and civic groups in the coordination of City affairs. On any given day, I worked with staff addressing public safety concerns, road paving projects, school administration matters, economic development projects, legal concerns, snow operations, personnel matters, to missed trash pick-up calls.

During my time in the Manager's office I oversaw numerous large scale community and economic development projects such as the new \$350 million Lowell High School addition/renovation; functioning as the project lead between the City, OPM, and the designer, revitalization of the Hamilton Canal Innovative District, the rebuilding of 8 city bridges through a \$26 million federal TIGER grant, and attracting the relocation of large companies such as Markley and Kronos to the city utilizing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) as an incentive for economic development. The TIF was also used to entice Lowell business MACOM to not only remain in the city, but construct an additional facility. As the Assistant City manager, I oversaw the feasibility study of a new combined police and DPW facility.

I look forward to discussing my candidacy and the opportunity to explain my interest in serving the Town of Middleton. Please consider my application for Town Administrator of Middleton.

Thank you,

Michael McGovern

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Profile

- Approximately five years overseeing the operations as administrator in the Town of Shirley.
- Four years of overseeing the management of the fifth largest city in Massachusetts with a population of approximately 105,000 residents and an annual operating budget of \$350 million.
- More than ten years successful experience assisting the Superintendent-Director in carrying out the duties and responsibilities of his/her office. More than 20 years of government and legislative experience.
- Ability to work collaboratively with individuals and organizations, both internally and throughout the community.
- A team player concerned with producing high quality results.
- Ability to develop, plan, and execute projects from beginning to end. Ability to oversee and coordinate multiple projects at the same time, while performing daily job related requirements.

Synopsis of Achievements

- MCPPO certified
- Secured approximately \$2 million in state grants.
- Brought in \$550,000 in revenue from a tax title auction.
- Focused effort to fund building maintenance needs.
- Addressing fire staff and safety needs.
- Implemented a \$220,000 cost savings toter trash collection system.
- Addressing accessibility issues at the Town War Memorial Building.
- Revamping the budget process and the budget document.
- Stabilizing/Remedying accounting and finances issues.
- Presented a balanced budget without use of onetime or stabilization funds.
- Developing a plan to address public works projects and infrastructure needs.
- Developing an open and transparent process for retail marijuana proposals.
- Involved with 40B development process, 43D, 40R, and Brownfields.
- Working on major economic development projects – Kronos/Crosspoint, MACOM, Markley Group.
- Jump starting the stalled Hamilton Canal District development.
- Coordinating the feasibility study for a new police and DPW combined facility.
- Erasing a \$4 million net school spending deficit.
- Involvement with an historic TIGER grant award of \$13 million for bridge repairs.
- Reorganization of several city departments resulting in savings and efficiencies.
- Increased school profile through numerous community outreach efforts.
- Established a 501(c)(3) school foundation, raising \$500,000 in six years.
- Oversaw efforts for MSBA school construction approval.
- Involved with most special projects within the school.
- Integral player in revamping school's hardware and software infrastructure.

Employment

Town of Shirley, Shirley, MA
Town Administrator

2018- Present

- Oversees all departments within the authority of town government.
- Develops schedule, warrant articles, and presentation for town meeting.
- Works directly with the accountant, treasurer, and assessor on all financial matters.
- Collaboratively coordinates with all partners on local, state, and federal issues.
- Chief Procurement Officer overseeing all procurement.
- Works closely with Ayer and Harvard, the regional school district, Devens, and Montachusets Regional Planning Commission.

- Develops grant initiatives for existing and new projects.
- Manages all labor relations including union contract negotiations.
- Handles all human resource matters both personnel matters and health benefits.
- Point person with town counsel on all legal matters.
- Liaison between boards and committees to the Board of Selectmen.
- Works closely with the Finance Committee, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission.

City of Lowell, Lowell, MA
Assistant City Manager

2014 - 2018

- Oversaw the operation of the city manager's office.
- Managed the daily operations of the City.
- Worked with Planning and Development on economic development initiatives
- Worked with the city financial team to develop the yearly budget and ensure fiscal responsibility through daily oversight of fiscal matters.
- Consulted with department heads in solving administrative problems and developing changes in departmental organization, procedure, and policies.
- Conducted special studies and investigations, prepared reports, and recommendations to the manager.
- Worked with human resources director and city solicitor on personnel matters and union negotiations.
- Conferred with local, state a federal representatives and agencies regarding city matters.
- Attended city council meetings and coordinated information and reports requested by the body.

Greater Lowell Technical High School, Tyngsboro, MA
Coordinator of School Information/Director of School Foundation

2003 - 2014

- Worked directly for the Superintendent-Director and School Committee including strategic planning, special projects, and media relations. Coordinated school, local, state, and federal government affairs.
- Worked directly with Superintendent-Director to coordinate staff during critical response situations.
- Worked collaboratively with staff, administration, community stakeholders, and parents to develop successful community and school based initiatives.
- Coordinated all school, local, state, and federal government affairs.
- Oversaw all functions associated with the Greater Lowell Technical School Charitable Foundation.

UMASS Lowell, Lowell, MA
Director of Northern Middlesex Tobacco Free Network

2000 - 2003

City of Lowell, Lowell, MA
Director of Tobacco Control

1998 - 2000

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, House of Representatives, Boston, MA
Legislative Aide to State Representative Thomas A. Golden, Jr.

1995 - 1998

City of Boston, City Council, Boston, MA
Legislative Aide to City Councilor Thomas Keane

1993 - 1995

Education

- UMASS Boston Global Comparative Public Administration, MPA program work
- University of Massachusetts at Lowell, Bachelor of Arts in History

References furnished upon request