

Richard J. LaFond

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November 1, 2021

Chair and Members of the Screening Committee:

Please accept this letter and attached resume as application for the position of Webster Town Administrator. Having reviewed the position advertisement, I am confident that I can faithfully execute the position requirements and responsibilities. A review of my resume will demonstrate that my education and work experience far exceed the minimum requirements for the position.

As a municipal manager for over 25 years, I have thorough, “hands-on” knowledge of finance, human resources, procurement, (I have drafted/implemented multiple personnel administration plans and procurement procedures) labor negotiations, public records, ethics, open meeting law requirements etc. Successfully navigating the seemingly endless state laws and mandates related to these and other activities is critical to a well-run municipality.

In April of 2020 I was specifically recruited by the then Carver Select Board to help shepherd the town through financial and operational challenges attributable to the pandemic. These included an immediate need to prepare a fiscal plan for the 2020 Annual Town Meeting and two, subsequent town meetings including the 2021 Annual Town Meeting. I accomplished this without diminishing our reserves while successfully negotiating collective bargaining agreements with three of our four municipal bargaining units. I’m proud that in all my years as a municipal manager, only once was my proposed budget contested at town meeting.

Throughout the pandemic, I was, and remain steadfast in maintaining town hall services. My experience, work ethic and judgement have served Carver well during this time of fiscal uncertainty unlike we have seen in local government in at least a generation. Staffing demands including furloughs, position consolidations, staff turnover and recruitment of key, management positions illustrate the need for an experienced manager.

During this time I have essentially saved the Gateway Health Group from deteriorating to the point of no return. In the weeks following my April start date, I was elected Chair of the Gateway Health Group. Lack of leadership and focus had driven the consortium to the brink of collapse. Had this happened it would have required changes to our health insurance plan design, resulting in significant cost and labor implications. The group is now stable and poised to grow in FY 2023 and beyond. I personally formed this consortium during my first tenure in Carver and

am particularly invested in saving this organization that has saved members millions during its existence.

Prior to my current position, I was specifically recruited for the position of Abington Town Manager to bring town government administration out of a state of disarray and constant drama. I am proud of several accomplishments that have direct, positive impact on the town including consolidating our public works functions into a Department of Public Works; building consensus on the municipal budget leading to extremely efficient, non-controversial town meetings; building stabilization reserves and improving the town's bond rating prior to the financing of our \$97,000,000 middle/high school construction project. Building stabilization reserves and my fiscally conservative budgeting practices were cited as important factors in achieving this upgrade.

I was able to fund many of our staffing goals – primarily the staffing needs in our Police Department. Cost saving measures, including approximately \$750,000 as a result of withdrawing from Mayflower Municipal Health Group, were instrumental in meeting this staffing priority.

Many long tenured Abington department heads have stated publically that during my tenure, town operations became as efficient and effective than any time prior, and relationships between department heads and staff were at an all-time high - even during difficult financial times. I am proud of my demonstrated ability to facilitate department heads, staff and elected officials in working together to address the town's needs and goals. My superior relationships with school administration the past 25 years has been critical in meeting the town's goals and demonstrating to citizens that we are a united organization. These relationships are critical in navigating the annual struggle for limited resources. I believe that as government officials one of our primary goals is to foster public confidence in our local government.

In addition to my successes above, I have experience with master planning, developing and implementing strategies for preservation of open space and have served on many public building construction committees including town halls, libraries, public safety facilities and school buildings.

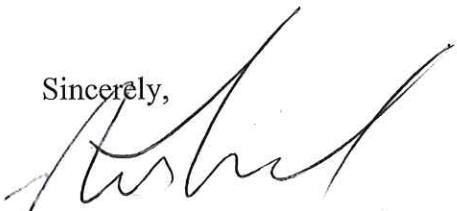
Referencing your position advertisement, be aware that I have had significant contracting authority in both Carver and Abington. As Abington Town Manager I was the contracting agent for all town activities, and, in both my Carver and Abington experiences my position included care and custody of town facilities not specifically under the jurisdiction of the school department.

As you can see from my resume, I have worked with state officials for many years in my experience with the Massachusetts Municipal Association as well as locally elected officials in furthering municipal goals.

Finally, I fully subscribe to the tenets of the Massachusetts Municipal Management Association and ICMA code of ethics. I have exercised these tenets much to my own detriment at times.

I would very much appreciate the opportunity to discuss my experience and qualifications with the Screening Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard J. LaFond".

Richard J. LaFond

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EMPLOYMENT

4/20 – Present

Interim Town Administrator

Carver, MA

(Special Act)

Chief Administrative Officer; Responsibilities Include: Appointment of employees, boards & committees, Budget Preparation and Presentation, Financial Forecasting and Capital Planning, Personnel Administration, Collective Bargaining, Chief Procurement Officer

- Managed the town through three town meetings
- Proposed three, unanimously approved budget agreements
- Reorganized the Permitting and Planning Department
- Negotiated three collective bargaining agreements
- Saved Gateway Health Group from becoming defunct
- Transitioned town from part-time to full-time Building Commissioner and Council on Aging Director
- Currently coordinating the town's effort required by an 1.8 million sq. ft. commercial Urban Renewal project
- Currently manage the town's Cares Act efforts

6/13 – 5/20

Town Manager

Abington, MA

(Pursuant to Abington Home Rule Charter)

Chief Administrative Officer; Responsibilities Include:

Chief Financial Officer, Appointment of all Department Heads and other employees, Collective Bargaining, Personnel Director, Chief Procurement Officer

Accomplishments include:

- Consolidated Highway, Sewer, Park & Recreation into a Department of Public Works reducing staffing and associated costs while enhancing service to all functions
- Re-established the Insurance Advisory Committee, negotiated successfully with all municipal unions and terminated membership in Mayflower Municipal Health Group resulting in the savings of over \$1,000,000.00 and the ability to shift resources to other goals and objectives
- Strengthened working relationships and cooperation between the town, school administration and other municipal departments
- Managed multiple budget processes with full consensus among all departments and Finance Committee enhancing productivity, collaboration and elimination of the need for special town meetings
- Instrumental in upgrading town's bond rating through conservative fiscal practices
- Serve on Middle/High School feasibility and building committees
- Participated in negotiations with the City of Brockton to increase sewerage capacity to provide more residential and business development opportunity
- Worked with the Veteran's community to establish the Abington-Whitman Veterans District in reducing costs for both towns and enhancing veteran's access to services
- Established the Abington Business Association facilitating communication with the town and among the business community
- Facilitated and/or managed grantsmanship including: MassDOT, Mass Housing, MA Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), MA Public Works Economic Development, Green Community, Community Compact and MassWorks
- Facilitated communication and responsiveness to citizen inquiries and complaints
- Develop and recommend approval of \$50,000,000 + operating budget

10/96 – 6/13

Town Administrator

Carver, MA

(Special Act)

Chief Administrative Officer; Responsibilities Include: Appointment of employees, boards & committees, Budget Preparation and Presentation, Financial Forecasting and Capital Planning, Personnel Administration, Collective Bargaining, Chief Procurement Officer

Accomplishments Include:

- Served as the Town's first Town Administrator
- Assisted in the transition from 3 member full time Board of Selectmen to professional management form of government with 5 member Board.
- Created the Gateway Health Group consisting of 6 municipal entities and served as its first Chair for 2 years resulting in significant savings for all participants
- Initiated water agreement with the Town of Middleboro resulting in the creation of the North Carver Water District
- Repaired strained relationship with school administration and school committee improving financial and organizational operations
- Instituted Financial, Procurement and Personnel policies including bylaws, wage and classification plans and personnel administration regulations
- Successfully managed 16 budget processes with an emphasis on multi-year financial forecasting
- Served as member of Library/Town Hall planning and construction committee and managed the transition to the new facilities while maintaining daily operations

9/94 -10/96

Executive Secretary

Abington, MA

(Pursuant to Abington Home Rule Charter)

Chief Executive and Administrative Officer

Responsibilities Include: Budget and Capital Budget Preparation, Financial Forecasting, Personnel Administration, Collective Bargaining, Chief Procurement Officer

Accomplishments include:

- Facilitated planning of new town hall and library through feasibility, grantsmanship, and design
- Instituted multi-year financial forecasting and capital budget planning

3/92 - 8/94

Executive Secretary

East Bridgewater, MA

Chief Administrative Officer for the Board of Selectmen

Responsibilities Include: Supervision of Departments under the jurisdiction of the Board of Selectmen, Financial Coordinator, Collective Bargaining, Insurance & Risk Management

EDUCATION

- Suffolk University School of Management, M.P.A.
- Stonehill College - Bachelor of Arts

AFFILIATIONS

- Pi Alpha, National Honor Society for Public Administration
- International City& County Management Association, Massachusetts Municipal Management Association, Massachusetts Municipal Personnel Association, Massachusetts Government Finance Association,
- Former member MMA Board of Directors and Local Government Advisory Committee

Notes:

- 20 + year member of the MMA Fiscal Policy Committee - recognized as one of the most prominent MMA policy & advocacy committees
- The MMA Board of Directors coordinates all MMA subcommittees, develops and advocates for matters impacting local government
- The Local Government Advisory Committee meets monthly with the Massachusetts Governor to discuss state government laws and proposals that have impact on municipal government

REFERENCES - Available Upon Request