

Walter F. Ramsey, AICP

15 Davis Street Turners Falls MA
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July 21, 2022

Members of the ATA Hiring Committee,

As a loyal employee of the Town of Montague, I am excited to formally apply for the position of Assistant Town Administrator. As the leader of the Planning Department for over 12 years, I have demonstrated my ability to learn quickly, adapt, and exceed expectations. During my tenure I have mastered the requisite administrative skills, honed my interpersonal abilities, and subsequently helped solidify Montague's growing reputation as a premier destination to live and work in the Pioneer Valley. In the past few years, I have had the opportunity to sharpen my leadership skills, having taken professional development trainings, onboarded a full-time employee, and assumed oversight responsibilities of increasingly complex public works projects and public-private partnerships.

As a town leader that works for and in close alignment with the Selectboard's Office, I possess a comprehensive understanding of the requirements of the ATA position. I also understand the weight of expectation that comes with the creation of this new position. I am confident that the skills that I have developed and my deep contextual knowledge of Montague will allow me to excel in the position with rapid effect.

My tenure as planner has proven my aptitude for cross-departmental collaboration and leadership. I have had the opportunity to spearhead a collaboration with virtually all municipal departments. The special municipal programs that I manage such as Green Communities, Municipal Vulnerabilities Preparedness, Complete Streets, and RiverCulture Programs have deployed important policy changes and physical improvements that will prepare the community for the future. These programs require communication and understanding across municipal departments as well as buy-in from the community. The Departments that I most closely collaborate with (DPW, Building, Selectboard, and Parks) have all expanded their capacity to deliver services due to technical assistance that I have provided or external resources that I have targeted to advance their department goals.

On a more personal note, Montague is where I reside. It is where I have chosen to settle my family and where I send my children to school. My family, like many of yours, will live with the results of actions coming out of Town Hall. I want to be part of the leadership team that facilitates Montague's evolution into a resilient and inclusive community. For me, the ATA position is an enticing opportunity to advance my professional career while continuing to serve the Town of Montague. I thank you in advance for considering me for the position.

Sincerely,



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EDUCATION:

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

- **Master of Regional Planning, 2010**
Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning, Community Planning Concentration
Graduate Community Service Award for food desert thesis fieldwork in Holyoke, MA
 - **Bachelor of Arts, *Summa cum laude*, 2008**
Department of Geosciences, Major in Urban Geography
 - **8 Course Undergraduate Certificate Program in Public Policy and Administration, 2008**
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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

TOWN PLANNER/ MEDIC COORDINATOR, Montague, MA

Feb 2010- Present

Montague Planning and Conservation Department

- Provide professional staff support to Planning Board and Conservation Commission and Economic Development & Industrial Corporation. Conduct staff technical review for all site plans, special permits, conservation permits, and project proposals
- Provide additional technical assistance to Selectboard, Zoning Board of Appeals and other Departments/Board to assist with the implementation of municipal plans and policies.
- Develop town plans, policies, and bylaws pertaining to land use, quality of life, and economic development in close coordination with the Montague Selectboard and Town Administrator.
- Directly supervise one full time assistant planner.
- Manage cross-departmental municipal programs including Green Communities, Municipal Vulnerabilities Program, and Complete Streets and RiverCulture.
- Secure and deploy grant funding for planning, design, and public construction projects. \$10M+ to date
- Oversee grant funded public construction projects through all development stages: planning, design, financing, right-of-way, permitting, procurement, construction management.
- Routinely procure and manage vendors such as planners, architects, engineers, lawyers, contractors.
- Facilitate disposition process and development of municipal real estate for community and economic benefit.
- Foster consensus among community, stakeholders and regulators on important community issues such as mill redevelopment, new municipal facilities, downtown revitalization, FERC re-licensing, industrial development, and land conservation.

Internships and Part-time experience: Town of Leverett, City of Holyoke, Capitol Region Council of Governments (CT), Denali Commission (AK), and the City of Northampton.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RECOGNITIONS:

- Member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (2013-Present)
- MA APA Outstanding Planning Project Award (2013): Downtown Turners Falls Livability Plan
- Mass Certified Public Purchasing Official Training: Public Contracting Overview (2019) and Real Property Seminar (2021)
- Smart Growth America/ LOCUS Opportunity Zone Academy Cohort (2019)
- Mass Municipal Human Resource Supervisory Leadership Development Program (2020).
- Provide frequent presentations/workshops to professional planning and advocacy associations, citizens groups, and local universities. Topics have included rehabilitation of abandoned properties, zoning, placemaking, historic preservation, indigenous reconciliation, complete streets, and downtown redevelopment.
- Mass Municipal Association/ Suffolk University Graduate Level Certificate Program in Public Administration (Enrolled- Completion anticipated May 2023)

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PROFESSIONAL WORK EXAMPLES

The following is a list of initiatives within Montague that I have assumed a leadership or management role in. The roles I played or tasks I featured in are shown in italics.

Economic Development

- *Sandy Lane Solar/Industrial Park: Master planning for 152 acre parcel, procurement for 8MW solar lease, permitting, landfill capping under a public-private partnership, development of FRTA lot, and planned reconstruction of Sandy Lane.*
- *Airport Industrial Park: Facilitated disposition of 4 lots for development and permitting for over 10 commercial expansions or new construction activities in the park. Helped bring middle mile broadband into the park and updated signage.*
- *Sale of former DPW Garage into a multi-tenant light industrial makerspace: Site planning, brownfields assessments, real estate disposition.*
- *Planning for Solar, battery energy storage, and cannabis: Analyze opportunities, facilitate local regulatory changes and public process, build customer relationships. Resulted in over 10MW of solar and 4 new cannabis-related businesses.*
- *Strathmore Mill site re-use preparation: Facilitated future re-use through various assessments as well as project management for \$750,000 of abatement and cleanup work primarily funded by grants obtained by the Planning Office.*
- *Canal District: Master Planning for 16 acre district, site preparation, permitting, marketing, pre-development, grantmaking.*

Community Development

- *Downtown Turners Falls Streetscape and Spinner Park revitalization: Conceptual planning, design, multi-phased construction using a variety of external fund streams.*
- *Unity Skate Park: grant making to cover 60% of project costs, final design, and procurement.*
- *Shea Theater revitalization: Facilitated transition to new management at theater and managed capital improvements using grant funds.*
- *Millers Falls Powers Block historic rehabilitation into 9 units of housing and 3 storefronts: Site Planning, brownfields assessments, permitting, real estate disposition.*
- *Montague Center School Redevelopment into 22 units of net-zero housing: Site planning, permitting, real estate disposition.*
- *RiverCulture Program for Creative Economy: Oversight of Director, Facilitated transition to a sustainable partnership model with town support (Currently in its 15th year).*
- *Great Falls/ Wissattennewag Battle Study funded by National Park Service: Grantmaking, project management, and coalition building of five tribes and historic commissions. Honoring the 2004 Reconciliation Accord.*
- *Development of walking trails in Millers Falls and on Dry Hill in Montague Center: planning, grantmaking, permitting, project management.*

- Millers Falls National Register Historic District Designation: *Coalition building and project management. This action helped save the Powers Block and old hotel.*
- Turners Falls Cultural District Designation: *Coalition building of downtown partnership.*

Municipal Infrastructure and Capital Projects

- Chestnut Hill Loop Bridge Replacement: *Grantmaking, design, permitting, procurement, project management.*
- Sidewalk network gap + Complete Streets projects throughout town: *planning, Grantmaking, design, permitting, procurement, project management.*
- Greenfield and Hatchery Road Reconstruction: *Permitting, right-of-way.*
- Millers Falls Road Bank Stabilization: *Grantmaking, design, permitting, procurement, project management.*
- Montague City Road Bike Path Crossing: *design, permitting, right-of-way.*
- Canal District Gateway Enhancement Project: *Grantmaking, design, permitting, procurement, project management.*
- Green Communities HVAC and Lighting projects at Shea Theater, MCWF, libraries, Sheffield School, Town Hall, and Public Safety Complex: *Grantmaking, design, permitting, procurement, oversight. As a result, Municipal energy use has been reduced by 26% from 2008 baseline levels.*
- New Public Works Facility: *Site selection, feasibility assessment, staff support to planning committee during planning phase for a successfully executed building project.*

Policy and Regulation Development

- Comprehensive Overhaul of Montague Zoning Bylaws (2019)
- First 40R Smart Growth Zoning District in Franklin County (2022)
- Zoning Bylaws related to solar, energy storage, accessory apartments, mixed-use, and cannabis.
- Comprehensive overhaul of Montague Subdivision Regulations (2017)
- Right to Farm Bylaw (2013)
- Public Tree Protection Bylaw (2021)
- Downtown Turners Falls Parking Study (2022)

Municipal Plans

- Canal District Master Plan (2022)
- Downtown Rapid Recovery Plan (2021)
- Downtown Turners Falls Livability Plan (2013) and Check-in report (2020)
- Millers on the Move Village Action Strategy (2018)
- Complete Streets Action Plan (2018)
- Montague Housing Plan (2015)
- Montague Open Space and Recreation Plan (2010, 2018)
- Montague Multi- Hazard Mitigation Plan (2011, 2019)
- MEDIC Economic Development Plan (2014, 2022)