



Town Manager Recruitment

Onancock, Virginia

December 2025



TO: The Town of Onancock Council Members

FROM: Libby Gooden & John Anzivino, Executive Managers

DATE: December 5, 2025

RE: Town of Onancock Manager Recruitment

We are looking forward to meeting with the Town Council next Wednesday, December 10th, at 4:00 p.m., to discuss the process for the recruitment of the next Town Manager for the Town of Onancock. We anticipate that the discussion will take no longer than two hours.

We have already started gathering information for the development of the recruitment profile that we plan on releasing in the second week of January. We have attached copies of the profile that we used for the recruitment of the Town of Tappahannock Manager so that you can see what sort of finished product we aspire to complete for you.

Our meeting with the Town Council is very important to help us help you find the right person for the position. We want to hear what you are looking for in the next Town Manager, what we should know about the Town of Onancock, and what your goals are for the future of the community. Attached also find a list of questions that we will go over with the Town Council to get your input. There is no need to fill out the document. We just want you to know in advance what we will be asking.

Finally, during our meeting we will review the recruitment process, options to consider, and a tentative timeline. The last document provides guidance for the recruitment process that we will also review with the Town Council.

Please let us know if you have any questions before next Wednesday. We will share any responses with all Council Members.

Thank you for this opportunity to be of service.

MANAGER RECRUITMENT TIMELINE

Phase I – Governing Body Preparation

- Distribute recruitment questionnaire and general guidance to Town Council
- Conduct kickoff meeting with Town Council to gather input, develop the recruitment profile, and confirm overall timeline
- Submit draft recruitment profile to Town Council for review and revisions
- Finalize and publish the recruitment profile and begin an advertisement campaign

Target Completion:

Phase II – Application Process & Candidate Screening

- Initial application deadline and review of candidate pool by the Berkley Group
- Conduct preliminary virtual interviews with top-tier candidates
- Identify semifinalists for consideration by Town Council

Target Completion:

Phase III – Final Interview Planning & Processing

- Meet with Town Council to review screened candidates and select finalists for in-person interviews
- Begin reference and background checks on finalists
- Schedule and conduct formal interviews (Town Council should reserve at least one full day for interviews)

Target Completion:

Phase IV – Selection, Offer, & Appointment

- Finalize reference checks and negotiate contract with selected finalist
- Present and approve the employment agreement during a public Town Council meeting

Target Completion:

Phase V – Post-Placement Support

- Publicly announce the selection of the new Town Manager
- Provide onboarding assistance and transitional support (as requested)

Target Completion:

GUIDANCE FORM

Berkley Group is totally committed to providing the Town of Onancock with the professional and timely services needed to ensure that the county identifies a highly qualified and dedicated Town Manager – one who fits the culture of the community and the town organization and who values the mission and vision of the Town.

While Berkley Group will manage the process and work to ensure that the Town Council is kept fully informed of progress and engaged in key decisions, the Town Council is fully in charge of this important decision. Along the way, there are some things that the Town Council can do to help achieve a successful outcome. Here are a few suggestions for members of Council to consider:

1. Even as you will be evaluating candidates, the best candidates will be evaluating the Town of Onancock and you as Council members. Candidates will likely be reading local newspapers and checking online Council meeting records to get a feel for the community. It is always a good time to highlight the positives about your community, and to set an example of thoughtfulness and civility in your deliberations, and now you have an added reason for doing so.
2. As much as possible, the Council should seek consensus on the critical needs and priorities of the community and the county organization, and the desired skills, expertise, and work experience of the candidates (including input received from the public). This will help create a clear and unambiguous candidate profile which will, in turn, help to attract the best-fit candidates.
3. A change at the top can be stressful for employees. Assuring employees that you appreciate their work and that you will focus on finding the best possible leader for their team can help.
4. Confidentiality is a critical consideration. Many good candidates are currently employed and need to trust that this process won't put them at risk unnecessarily. Assurance of confidentiality will result in more and better applicants. Confidentiality in this context includes, among other things, candidate names, titles, and places of employment. The Berkley Group will work with you and the Town Attorney to define the proper level of confidentiality consistent with Virginia law.
5. It will be helpful to select a single source, or spokesperson, to provide information that can be made public. Members of the media, the public, and employees will all want as much information as they can get. All inquiries should be directed to the spokesperson, and the spokesperson should release only that information that the Council has chosen to release, or that must be released by law.

6. Similarly, it will be helpful to manage all contact with candidates and references through one point of contact. We recommend that Libby Gooden be the Berkley Group contact (libby.gooden@bgllc.net, 757.256.9198). For example, if a candidate approaches a Council member, the candidate should be directed to Berkley point of contact. If a Council member receives an application, it should be forwarded directly to Berkley Group who will notify the candidate that it has the application, and future contacts should be directly with the Berkley Group.
7. All reference and background checks must also go through the Berkley point of contact to ensure that we are compliant with employment law and that applicants have been properly notified. In addition, individual checks or preliminary contacts with applicants may put the Council and the Town at risk of litigation. This is important for maintaining confidentiality and compliance until the point in a process when an applicant has become a finalist and has notified a current employer of his/her status). Among other things, this will help keep the process fair, equitable and legal.
8. While all Council members' thoughts, insights, and concerns should be expressed during the process, a unanimous public vote at the time of final selection of the next town manager will go a long way toward facilitating a successful transition.

These are general guidelines to help the Council through this vitally important process. Along the way, the Berkley team will be there through each step of the recruitment, screening, selection, negotiation, and final decision. We are here to support, guide, and assist so that you get the candidate you are seeking.



Town Manager Town and Candidate Attributes

As the Berkley Group screens applicants for the Town Manager position, we would like to be able to describe the Town of Onancock to prospective candidates, identify the priorities of the Town Council, outline issues, challenges, and opportunities that the new Town Manager will face, and understand the attributes of the “ideal” candidate in terms of qualifications, leadership style, and desired characteristics.

When we meet with Town Council, we will seek answers to the following questions:

1. What is special about the Town of Onancock that we can tell prospective candidates?
2. What else should prospective candidates know about the Town and its government?
3. What are the priorities of the Town Council in the next three (3) to five (5) years?
4. What issues, challenges, opportunities, and projects might the new Manager be expected to address within the next one to two years?

Issues:

Challenges:

Opportunities:

Projects:

5. Are the components of the current comprehensive plan still consistent with the Council's thinking? Do you see the need for any major changes?

6. What are the qualifications of the desired candidate in terms of education, experience (either as the top manager/administrator or in a subordinate role), professional affiliations, or otherwise?

Education:

Experience:

Affiliations:

Other:

7. Describe the leadership style that will provide the greatest opportunity for success for the new Manager.

8. What are other desired characteristics (such as personal traits, attitudes, capabilities and demonstrated skills) for prospective candidates?