



TOWN MANAGER

TOWN OF TAPPAHANNOCK, VA



The Town of Tappahannock is seeking an experienced professional to serve as Town Manager, the chief administrative officer responsible for directing programs and operations of the town government.

This recruitment profile describes the Town of Tappahannock to prospective candidates, identifies town priorities, and outlines issues, challenges, and opportunities that the new Town Manager will face. The profile also describes the town's 'ideal' candidate in terms of qualifications, leadership style and desired characteristics. The profile also provides background information on the community, its government operations, and organizational aspirations.

Qualified candidates are encouraged to submit a cover letter, resume, salary expectations and professional references, to The Berkley Group via email to jennifer.whistleman@bgllc.net. **While the position is open until filled, review of candidates will begin on or around June 6, 2025, however, highly qualified candidates may be invited for interview at any time.** Inquiries relating to the Town Manager position may be directed to:

Jennifer Whistleman

The Berkley Group

P.O. Box 181

Bridgewater, Virginia 22812

Email: jennifer.whistleman@bgllc.net

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COMMUNITY BACKGROUND

Tappahannock, Virginia, located on the Rappahannock River along the state's Middle Peninsula, offers a unique blend of historical significance, natural beauty, and small-town charm. Its name, derived from a Native American term meaning "on the rise and fall of water," reflects the town's deep connection to the river. The site was first visited by Captain John Smith in 1608, marking the beginning of European interaction with the area's native peoples. The town's historical significance is reflected in events like the Leedstown Resolutions, a precursor to American Revolutionary fervor, and a British raid during the War of 1812.

Established initially as a trading post known as Hobbs Hole, the town played an important role in colonial commerce and was later renamed New Plymouth before ultimately reverting to Tappahannock. It emerged as a port town that enabled vibrant trade on the Rappahannock River throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. As the county seat of Essex County, Tappahannock has long served as a hub for government and trade in the region and is home to various offices and historical government buildings. The town retains a well-preserved historic district, showcasing 18th and 19th – century architecture such as the Essex County Courthouse, Debtor's Prison, and several historic homes. Walking tours and curated exhibits highlight Tappahannock's rich past and architectural legacy.

Prominent figures such as Thomas Ritchie, editor of the Richmond Enquirer, and Spencer Roane, Chief Justice of the Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals, have ties to the community.

Today, Tappahannock citizens are proud of their river culture and the Town is known for its fresh, local seafood. Geographically, the town is located 100 hundred miles south of Washington, D.C, 95 miles north of Norfolk, VA and 45 miles northeast of Richmond, VA. Tappahannock is the only place Highway Rt. 17 touches the Rappahannock River.

RECREATION & LIFESTYLE

The area offers hometown living and is a haven for outdoor enthusiasts and also for those seeking a slower, more relaxed lifestyle. It is a town proud of its past and eager to share its future with those ready to explore what's on TAPP.

Its riverside setting offers opportunities for fishing, boating, kayaking, paddling, crabbing, and enjoying local seafood, particularly the renowned Rappahannock River oysters. Downtown features locally owned boutiques, home and garden décor, an antique mall full of eclectic finds and artisan shops with a distinctly nautical character. Shop owners are delighted to share information about the area with their customers.

The Farmer's Market provides fresh local produce, homemade baked goods, fresh meats and seafood, unique crafts and gifts, and plants. The market also offers live music entertainment, on-site dining options, and fun activities for the whole family.

Among the town's most valued recreational assets is Rotary Poor House Park, located in Essex County. Covering over 600 acres, this park offers diverse natural trails through upland pine forests and riparian habitats. Revitalized through a grant from the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, the park includes family-friendly biking and hiking trails and is planned to expand with additional amenities such as a visitor and education center, picnic pavilions, sports fields, and a dog park.

For those looking for a weekend getaway or an introduction to Virginia's coastal heritage, Tappahannock offers a curated sample itinerary through the "TAPP into Nature" initiative, designed to showcase the town's outdoor appeal.





RECREATION & LIFESTYLE

The Town of Tappahannock operates under a Council-Manager form of government, where Town Council is the seven-member legislative body responsible for such things as adopting all ordinances and resolutions, approving the annual operating and capital budgets, setting all tax rates, approving the Capital Improvement Plan, setting all user fees, and making land use and zoning decisions. Council members are elected at large to four-year terms and on a staggered basis, with elections held every two years. The mayor is elected at large and has the right to vote to break a tie. The 2024-2025 Operating Budget totals almost \$7 million (all funds included). The Council supports the citizens in a proactive manner, anticipating issues and working toward carefully crafted community-based solutions.

Council appoints a Town Manager who is responsible for the day-to-day administration and operations of the town government, appoints and supervises employees, implements policies, and addresses priorities adopted by the Council. The Town Charter stipulates that the Town Manager shall be a Town resident unless otherwise approved by Town Council. Council has indicated a strong preference for the Town Manager to be a resident of Tappahannock or Essex County.

Currently, the town staff consists of 45 full-time budgeted positions that are involved in delivering a wide range of services to the town's citizens. Town services include law enforcement, facilities maintenance (parks and recreation), planning and zoning, public works (water and sewer lines maintenance, trash, and recycling), wastewater treatment plant and stormwater and solid waste management. The town's commitment to leisure activities includes the maintenance of two beautiful parks, Tappahannock River Park, Central Park and two beach areas, Marsh Street Beach and Duke Street Beach.

Council also appoints a Town Treasurer, Town Clerk, Town Attorney and Police Chief, who work in close collaboration with the Town Manager.

TOWN GOVERNMENT & ORGANIZATION

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CHALLENGES, ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

The Town Council has identified several issues and challenges to be addressed by the new Town Manager, including the continuation of projects that have already begun.

- Manage the Hoskins Creek Park Project (waterfront accessible park), which was begun in October 2024, including continuing the development of the partnership with Pack Brother's Hospitality and meeting development schedules through the end of 2026. Significant funding is provided by a \$1.3 million grant award from the Boating Infrastructure (BIG) Grant.
- Complete the design and engineering for the Town's +100-acre future Industrial Park. Identify funding sources for construction.
- Manage the completion of Central Park, phase 2 to include the addition of restrooms and entertainment areas.
- Manage the Downtown Sewer Rehabilitation Project which focuses on upgrading the sewer system along key town streets in order to improve the water treatment system infrastructure. Finalize the Preliminary Engineering Report of Phase 2 Downtown Sewer Infrastructure Rehab Project, and secure grant and loan funding through USDA-RD
- Preserve, enhance, and promote Tappahannock's historic, rural, small-town atmosphere while seeking limited planned residential growth.
- Seek opportunities to encourage business growth that will provide a range of services to meet residential needs and to build a strong and diverse economic base.
- Maintain a safe coexistence between motorized and non-motorized vehicles with pedestrian-friendly access to historical and cultural sites, parks, town businesses and in the neighborhoods.
- Develop and maintain high quality, safe, and accessible recreational areas.
- Collaborate with and understand the various perspectives of community stakeholders and interest groups to balance their aspirations with overall town needs and resources.
- Continue the town's partnership with neighboring communities within the River Realm (nine small towns united by 465 miles of shoreline and unique attractions) by participating in collaborative events and initiatives to highlight the region.
- Participating in town events, developing relationships with local business owners, community members and regional partners.
- The Town Manager also holds the positions of Zoning Administrator and Subdivision Administrator.

QUALIFICATIONS, EDUCATION, & EXPERIENCE

The following education and experience factors outline the qualifications for successful performance:

- Bachelor's degree in public administration, business management or a related field. Master's degree in a similar discipline is preferred.
- Five to ten years of successful leadership as a senior executive/administrator in an organization with comparable responsibilities and possession of a broad skill set appropriate to the breadth of town government operations.
- Local government experience in Virginia is highly desired.
- Demonstrated experience managing multiple complex capital projects simultaneously through a variety of funding/granting agencies.
- Extensive experience in local government financial management, including the development and management of operating and capital budgets.
- Experience in economic development, downtown development/redevelopment, and tourism, preferred.
- A demonstrated commitment to ongoing professional development through participation in organizations such as the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and the Virginia Local Government Management Association (VLGMA). Designation, or progress toward designation, as ICMA Credentialed Manager is preferred.
- A combination of education and experience that qualifies an applicant for this position may be considered in lieu of the more specific criteria listed above.



PERSONALITY TRAITS AND DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS

The following personal traits and desired characteristics are the elements for successful performance:

- Demonstrates absolute integrity, ensuring ethical, equitable, honest, fair, open, and personable interactions with Council, town employees, partners, and community members.
- Professionally competent, with confidence tempered by humility and the ability to adapt to changing priorities.
- Excellent communications and interpersonal abilities, including the ability to listen effectively to understand and manage differing points of view.
- A genuine 'people person' who truly enjoys attending town events, engaging with business owners, and interacting with town residents and visitors.
- Energetic and enthusiastic, eager to complete current projects and work with Town Council on prioritizing future strategic initiatives.
- Strong leadership skills, in the government organization, the community, and the region; visionary, analytical, proactive, decisive, and consistent; able to facilitate the blending of differing points of view into a reasonable approach for community betterment.
- Knowledgeable and supportive of the principles of the Council-Manager form of government and respectful of the complementary roles of the Town Council and the Town Manager.
- Role model, coach, and mentor for town employees, dedicated to the professional development of staff and able to empower employees with a focus on performance, collaboration, and accountability.





COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

Compensation for the Town Manager is dependent upon qualifications and experience within a starting range of \$109,000 – \$135,000 annually. The successful candidate will be provided the Town's benefits package including participation in the Virginia Retirement System (VRS), health/dental/vision insurance, vacation and sick leave, professional development support, and other benefits in a negotiated employment contract.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Initial review of candidates will begin on or around June 6, 2025. Applications received after that date may be considered until the position is filled. Timely submittal will ensure the most advantageous review. Highly qualified candidates may be invited to interview at any time. To be considered, please submit a cover letter, resume, salary expectations and professional references to The Berkley Group, via e-mail to jennifer.whistleman@bgllc.net. Questions may be directed to:

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For Additional Information, please visit <https://www.tappahannock-va.gov>

The Town of Tappahannock is an Equal Opportunity Employer