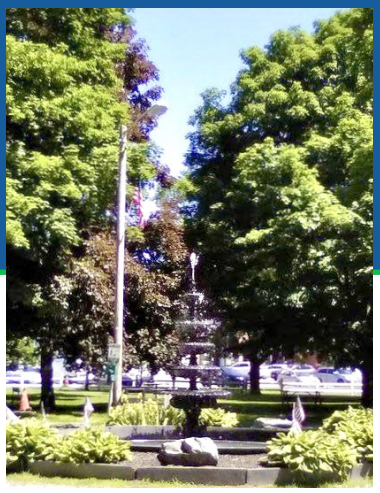


FAIR HAVEN, VERMONT

TOWN MANAGER

Salary $110,000 to $130,000

The Town Manager's skills should include development expertise, finance and budgeting acumen, labor relations competency, an understanding of municipal infrastructure maintenance, success in grant writing and grant management, and ease with relationship-building and networking.

THE POSITION

Fair Haven, VT, (population 2736) seeks a Town Manager with strong diplomacy, emotional steadiness, integrity, and the ability to unite staff around a shared vision. Essential qualities include excellent communication, conflict management, fairness, long-term planning, and a deftness at finding common ground and working constructively through personality conflict. The manager must be organized, strategic, and capable of having difficult but necessary conversations.

Fair Haven has a total budget of $4.4 Million ($2.35M general fund, $560K Water, $690K Waste Water, and $797K Highway). The Town operates Police, Fire (volunteer), Water, Sewer, Highway, Transfer Station, Recreation, and Accounting. There are 20 full-time and up to 67 part-time employees.

The Town Manager is the Chief Administrative Officer. The Town Manager reports to a non-partisan, five-person Select Board. The Board's five seats carry staggered terms: 1 three-year term, 2 two-year terms, and 2 one-year terms. The Town operates in the Town Meeting system under Vermont Statutes and uses the Australian Ballot form of voting.

Applicants' skills should include development expertise, finance and budgeting acumen, labor relations competency, an understanding of municipal infrastructure maintenance, success in grant writing and grant management, and ease with relationship-building and networking.

In the first year, the Town Manager's priorities should include building relationships in the community, assessing all ongoing projects, mastering the budget, and establishing clear systems for reporting on their work and presenting those reports to the Board and the Town at Board meetings. Early wins could include a Scotch Hill paving plan, addressing reckless use of e-scooters/ e-motos on Town roads, improving Transfer Station operations, advancing the Hampton Housing Project through pre-development, demonstrating community engagement, supporting the organization of successful town events, and ensuring timely sidewalk plowing.

For more information on the Town of Fair Haven, visit fairhavenvt.gov

THE COMMUNITY

Fair Haven is a tight-knit community with deep familial roots, appreciable local history, a strong civic identity, and significant untapped development potential. Its location at a major state highway crossroad and near lakes, colleges, and tourist destinations positions it well for future growth. Recent accomplishments include major upgrades of the Waste Water facility, stormwater improvements, redevelopment of the park and ride, and the purchase of a new building for DPW operations. Community and athletic events, in particular those which take place on the Town's historic Village Green and at its schools and library, are central to Fair Haven's identity.

The Town also faces notable challenges: a limited tax base, aging infrastructure and sidewalks, an undersized firehouse, and a sense of growing division amplified by social media. Strategic planning has been inconsistent, and volunteer engagement has declined. Economic development has stalled due to a hesitance by the community to fund expensive projects and a lack of long-term vision. Urgent needs include establishing clear systems for project tracking, communication, and budgeting; long-term needs center on comprehensive goal setting and housing development.

Opportunities for growth include doubling down on housing development and rehab of existing housing stock, expanding the use of public spaces for events, and stimulating small-business activity by providing local businesses with grant access and marketing. There are also opportunities to improve efficiency and find savings for the town by continuing to streamline the Transfer Station, funding long-term capital projects at the Waste Water treatment plant, continuing to upgrade systems at municipal buildings, and exploring renewable energy options. Success in 3–5 years would include attracting new job creators, population growth, revitalized housing stock, fully occupied downtown storefronts, and improved public-facing processes.

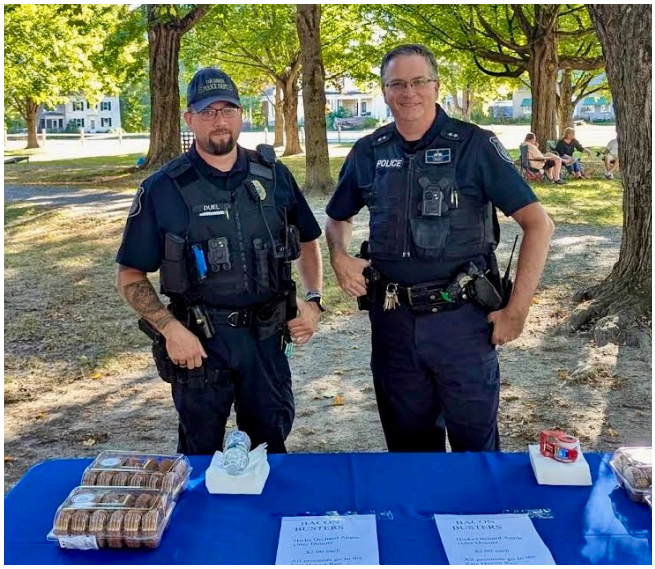
External threats mirror statewide trends: an aging population, rising costs, a housing shortage, a shrinking grand list, the pressure to consolidate our school district, and the proliferation of misinformation. Internal risks include negative voices dominating discourse, unclear expectations, personality clashes, and lack of shared vision.

For more information on the Town of Fair Haven, visit fairhavenvt.gov

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION

The municipal organization benefits from a cooperative Select Board. Staff members have deep institutional knowledge, excel at resident interaction, and exhibit good budgetary mindfulness. Teamwork between water and sewer is excellent, and interdepartmental communication is generally productive.

However, there is some tension and siloing between departments which can be improved upon. Operational inefficiencies exist at the transfer station. An unclear distribution of responsibilities sometimes leads to frustration amongst staff. Staffing capacity is constrained by budgetary limitations. Policy implementation is generally effective, but a need for more clearly outlined policies persists.



APPLICATION PROCESS

The Town is seeking a person with prior municipal government experience. Bachelor's degree in Public Administration, Government or a related field is required. Master's degree is preferred. Fair Haven residency is desired but not required.

Salary range for this position is $110,000 to $130,000 annually depending on experience and qualifications. Benefit package as per Town's personnel policy. Full background and reference checks will be performed on final candidates.

Applications must be submitted electronically to bfraser@vlct.org (clearly marked Fair Haven) and will be accepted until Tuesday, September 8th.

The process is being managed by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns onbehalf of the Select Board and Trustees, please direct any questions about the position or the process to Bill Fraser, VLCT Management Specialist, at

bfraser@vlct.org | 802-522-5846

For more information on the Town of Fair Haven, visit fairhavenvt.gov