

## **Massachusetts House of Representatives Bill Summary**

**Bill #:** H.4784

**Title:** An Act providing for a town administrator in the town of Hopedale

**Sponsor:** Rep. Brian Murray

**Committee:** Municipalities and Regional Government

**Hearing Date:** December 11 to December 18, 2025 written testimony only

**Current Law:** MGL Chapter 31 is the state's Civil Service law.

Chapter 41 governs officers and employees of cities, towns, and districts.

Section 108N of Chapter 41 governs employment contracts for town managers, administrators, executive secretaries, or administrative assistants. It regulates the length of such contracts and the provisions, benefits, and other conditions that are to be included.

**Summary:** Section 1 of the bill directs the Hopedale Select Board to appoint a town administrator and to enter into an employment contract for compensation and benefits in accordance with state law.

Section 2 prescribes the minimum qualifications for the appointment of a town administrator, requires the person to work full time and not hold any other public office, or engage in any other business or profession during their term of office that might interfere with their duties. Additional qualifications may be established by the town as necessary.

Section 3 states that the town administrator shall be the chief administrative officer and have the following powers and duties:

- Be responsible for the efficient administration and coordination of all matters that fall under the jurisdiction of the Select Board;
- Implement all policies, directives and votes of the Select Board;
- Have access to all town books, papers and records for information;
- Administer personnel policies and bylaws of the town;
- Prepare annual budget for all town agencies under the Select Board;
- Prepare and format uniform budget document for use by all departments and agencies of the town for presentation to Select Board, and develop and update annual capital improvement plan;
- Keep the Select Board informed as to the financial needs of the town and make recommendations deemed necessary or expedient.
- Review current bylaws, regulations and policies and recommend any changes that they deem necessary;

- Ensure that all provisions of General Laws, bylaws and votes of Town Meeting and the Select Board that require enforcement, direction and supervision of the Town Administrator's office are carried out'
- Be responsible for purchase of all supplies, materials and equipment, except for books and educational materials and other media for schools and the library, and approve all town contracts;
- Negotiate all contracts that the Select Board is authorized to enter into, subject to final approval and execution by the Select Board;
- Seek and evaluate candidates for all jobs or positions subject to appointment by the Select Board, other than the Administrator, Counsel or positions filled through the Civil Service law, submitting a list of 3 names (or fewer if less than 3 applicants) for each appointment, ranked in order of preference, to the Board;
- Fix compensation of all town officers and employees that are appointed by the Town Administrator within limits established by appropriation, bylaw or collective bargaining agreement;
- Recommend reorganization changes in town government;
- Administer the municipal insurance programs;
- Attend and speak at all Select Board meetings unless excused, and attend all Town Meetings and be available to answer questions;
- Inquire into the conduct in office of any officer, employee or department, board or commission under the jurisdiction of the Town Administrator or the Select Board; and
- Perform any other lawful duties required by town bylaw or majority vote of the Select Board.

Section 4 authorizes the Select Board by majority vote to remove, for good cause, the Town Administrator from office, in accordance with any requirements and procedures of their contract, if any exists. The Town Administrator shall be given written notice of the cause(s) for removal and be given a due process hearing, either public or private at the option of the Administrator, with full opportunity to be heard.

Section 5 contains a process for filling vacancies in the office of Town Administrator caused by death, removal, resignation or otherwise, or if the Administrator is on extended leave of absence. The Select Board may, by majority vote, appoint a person to act as temporary Town Administrator for a period of not more than 3 months unless extended another 3 months. The person so chosen would receive the same compensation.

Section 6 states that this act shall take effect upon its passage.

**Notes:**

The language in this special legislation was approved as Article 27 at the May 20, 2025 Annual Town Meeting; motion carried by a standing vote of 53 in favor and 32 opposed.