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The Town of Crewe 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 provides background information on the community, its government operations and its aspirations. It also outlines the qualifications, experience and characteristics determined to be necessary and desirable for the position of Town Manager. [2022 Community and Candidate Profile.pdf](#)

Qualified candidates are encouraged to submit a cover letter and resume, with salary history and professional references, to the Town of Crewe, email Jay Scudder at jscudder@townofcrewe.com. While the position is open until filled, **review of candidates will begin August 16, 2022**. Inquiries relating to the Town manager position may be directed to: Jay Scudder, Interim Town Manager.



**Community and Candidate Profile for the
2022 Crewe Town Manager Search**



**Town of Crewe
July 2022**

Community Profile

About Crewe

The Town of Crewe has often been referred to as “the Town that Norfolk and Western Railroad built.” The area surrounding the former “Robertson’s Siding” was owned by four large landowners, one of whom was Mrs. Jane Robertson, for whom the area was named. The N&W bought their property from her at a cost of \$12.00 an acre. Until 1887, the Norfolk and Western Railroad had been operating by divisions east and west of Lynchburg, and one branch after another had been built into the coal and ore fields. The traffic increased until the western division became too large for efficient operation, so to meet the immediate needs of the business and to provide for its future growth, the line was rearranged into divisions of almost equal mileage from Norfolk to Robertson’s and on to Roanoke, Radford, and Bluefield. The need for a new divisional halfway point gave rise to Crewe. In 1888 the shops that had been in Petersburg were moved to Robertson’s and a new town was born. The name of “Crewe” was suggested as it was the name of a vibrant railroad town in England. Although Crewe seemingly sprang up overnight, it was not officially incorporated until March 3, 1893.

Like many rural communities, the Town of Crewe decreased in population between 1940 and 1970. In 1940, during the time of World War II, the Town of Crewe had a population total of 2,048 persons. Many citizens moved into Crewe during this time due to the opening of Camp Pickett, now known as Fort Pickett. Soldiers and their families that located in the Town would sometimes find housing through residents renting out rooms in their homes. This size of population contributed to the activity of the downtown and crowded streets. In addition, the Town’s once thriving Norfolk & Western encountered lay-offs due to a transfer from steam engines to diesel. However, later that year, the railroad merged with Virginia Railroad and jobs were created.

Crewe is very proud of its heritage and offers a progressive attitude while maintaining the charm associated with small town America. Since its early days, Crewe has seen a number of historical events and figures pass through. William Hodges Mann, Governor of Virginia was president of the Bank of Crewe. Baptist missionary Lottie Moon is found her final resting place in the Crewe cemetery. From reconstruction to World War II to today and beyond, Crewe has had its share of events and eccentricities; but through it all, it has maintained its authentic down-home charm.

Challenges

The following interrelated factors are among those adversely impacting the community and economic development of Crewe:

- **Limited resources.** As of the 2020 census, Crewe’s population was 2,510. According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 23% of Nottoway children live in poverty, compared to the 12% statewide average. At least one source puts Nottoway schools in the bottom 24% of public schools in Virginia. Median household income is \$51,500, compared to \$79,200 statewide average. With a low tax base, the Town of Crewe has

limited financial capacity to contribute to programs outside of the core services of public safety and infrastructure maintenance. The annual projected operating budget for the Town of Crewe, including General Fund, Water, Sewer, Airport, and Cemetery funds is approximately \$4.7 million. General Fund revenues come primarily from meals tax (appx. \$325,000); real estate tax (appx. \$310,000); local sales and use tax, (appx. \$190,000); and personal property tax (appx. \$90,000). With major improvements needed for water and sewer infrastructure and downtown revitalization, the ability to leverage resources against new revenue—including grants, increasing the tax base, and other funding—is critical.

- **Loss of local history, culture, and identity.** Given limited resources, preserving aging historic infrastructure was not always a priority for the Town of Crewe. Historic buildings like the old Norfolk & Western Roundhouse were demolished when they became unnecessary, rather than restored and repurposed. Additionally, the highway system bypassing Main Street has hampered the community and economic development success. Carolina Avenue was the epicenter of economic activity during the height of the railroad. What was once a bustle of activity from railroad workers and their families has dwindled to a few shops and several vacant, blighted buildings. The highway system has turned the authenticity and charm of the proud, old railroad town to pit stop. Crewe continues to lose its greatest assets for community development: its history, culture, and identity.
- **Lack of local jobs in key areas and economic dependence on state and federal facilities.** The economy of Nottoway County and the Town of Crewe is limited in diversity and highly dependent on state and federal facilities. Five of the six top employers in Nottoway County are state and federal facilities which could close at any time, with very little notice. Only 57.4% of the working population that lives in the Town of Crewe is employed in the County of Nottoway. The remaining 43.6% must travel outside of Nottoway, often long distances to work. This is due in large part to a shortage of local jobs. Small businesses are finding it harder and harder to maintain profitability, must less thrive in Nottoway County. Despite a need for trade jobs and a market for handmade craftsmanship, tradespeople and entrepreneurs find it difficult to obtain the necessary education or startup costs associated with the needed jobs.
- **Poor physical health.** The fiscal health of a locality is correlated with the physical health. A physically healthier community provides a higher quality of life, which attracts new residents and businesses. Unfortunately, in Nottoway County adult obesity is at 39% compared to the 32% statewide average, in part because access to exercise opportunities is at only 56% compared to the statewide average of 78% and limited access to healthy foods is at 22% compared to the statewide average of 4%. Additionally, despite local educational and programmatic resources like the Virginia Cooperative Extension, the lack of a central location for program delivery creates a lack of health education and knowledge about recreation opportunities in and around Crewe.
- **Blight.** In addition to the shortage of local trades jobs described above (contractors, roofers, plumbers, electricians, and other skilled tradespersons), limited subject matter

expertise on and financial capacity for real estate development and limited subject matter expertise on economic development contribute to the Town's ongoing blight issues. Several once-impressive houses and businesses are shuttered. Property owners of vacant properties often live out-of-town; having inherited the property, they have little connection to Crewe. Limited administrative capacity make ordinance enforcement like grass cutting and trash pickup difficult. The ongoing concerns have caused the outlook of residents to fall into varying levels of hope, frustration, dissolution, and apathy.

- **Food access.** Crewe's last "full service" grocery store closed over a decade ago. Today, a small shop with produce, meats, and essential items; a Mennonite store with fresh baked goods, spices, and deli products; and several "dollar stores" fill the immediate need for most citizens' needs. However, there is a need and overwhelming desire for a one-stop shop to serve as an anchor business for the community. Unfortunately, the region hosts at least six full-service grocery stores within a 20-mile radius. Given the low population of Crewe, this makes attracting a "big name" store especially difficult. There is a demand and need for a local one-stop shop; but creativity and public investment may be required for making that a reality.
- **Public safety.** Public safety has been of increasing concern for residents. The Crewe Police Department has made great strides in improving previous negative perceptions of the local PD. They have instituted several initiatives to restore faith and trust: issuing press releases, going "above and beyond" in assisting community members, organizing an exceptional "National Night Out," and previously regular, engaging communication through social media (for which the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police has used the Crewe PD as a positive example of engaging with the community). Additionally, Crewe's Outreach and Resource Coordinator works directly with the PD to engage the community in a variety of ways.

Nevertheless, there are still real and perceived vulnerabilities facing public safety:

- There is an **increase in drug-related and violent crime** due in large part to the opioid epidemic across the nation.
 - Citizens report they don't **feel safe** in the community. Increase in crime, increase in blight, and declining faith and trust in the PD are highly correlated with each other. These feelings snowball, creating a cycle of increased crime, increased blight, and further lack of faith.
- **Water system.** The Town of Crewe is facing significant challenges regarding its water system. Sixty-six percent of water revenue comes from sale of water to three state facilities outside of town limits; and those water revenues offset the cost of wastewater expenses. The Commonwealth of Virginia has informed the Town of Crewe that it will be ending its decades-old contract with the Town in 2025 and will no longer purchase water from Crewe.

At the same time, parts of Crewe's water system infrastructure are nearly 100 years old, and water and wastewater systems currently combine to a \$4 million debt. Significant, costly upgrades are needed to the water delivery system as the Town simultaneously faces a 2/3 loss in revenue.

Crewe's Economic Vision

Crewe's vision for community and economic development reflects citizens' desires to increase income and employment opportunities while restoring and preserving the high quality of life rooted in its history. In order to make Crewe more attractive for current and future citizens and businesses, the Town has determined a clear marketing and branding strategy is essential. Positive, uniform messaging that highlights the positive attributes of Crewe will leave visitors and prospective businesses with an optimistic outlook. Such a strategy requires tapping into the authenticity of Crewe.

The Town believes creating, attracting and retaining talent should be comprehensive, to include both college-educated individuals as well as tradespeople. A healthy economy is dependent on a skilled workforce. Crewe should facilitate and encourage partnerships between major employers, Nottoway County Public Schools, Southside Virginia Community College, Longwood University, Hampden--Sydney College, and Virginia Tech for educating and training the emergent workforce. Specific focus should be put on key industries for the region, including agriculture, utilities, education, healthcare and nursing, corrections, and advanced manufacturing

Assets

The Town of Crewe has the following assets to help achieve its economic vision:

- **The Crewe Railroad Museum.** Named the 2014 Best Railroad Museum by Virginia Living, The Crewe Railroad Museum is a not-for-profit memorial to the many residents of Crewe and the surrounding areas that lived here and were employed by the N&W Railroad. It is staffed and managed by volunteers, some of whom are retired engineers, firemen, and conductors. The Museum consists of a main building with similar construction as the original Crewe Passenger station. The building houses many artifacts, photos, and memorabilia, the majority of which has been donated by the residents of Crewe. Outside, in a park like surrounding, there is a steam locomotive, diesel locomotive, several freight cars, a caboose, and the latest acquisition, a passenger coach that was used on the crack N&W Powhatan Arrow passenger trains of the 1940's and 1950's.
- **Recreation space.** Crewe Veterans' Memorial Park provides recreation opportunities that are open to the general public. The park consists of three parts that provide citizens with various recreation and education opportunities. The facilities include two volleyball courts, a fitness trail, gazebo, picnic tables, and barbecue pits. The park is decorated and illuminated each year to celebrate the holiday season. Among facilities is also a youth

baseball stadium, the stands of which were constructed from used rail lines in the early 1960's, a one-of-a-kind feature linking all aspects of Crewe life to the railroad.

- **Route 49 bridge.** Passersby enjoy stopping along the bridge over the rail line to watch as trains from the rail yard pass below.
- **Division headquarters.** The old Norfolk and Western division headquarters is a 69-year old office building in the southwest corner of the Veteran's Memorial Park, donated to the Town of Crewe in 2003. The building has sat vacant since that time and is likely contaminated with asbestos, lead paint, and mold. The two-story, 9,600 sq. ft. building is structurally sound and ideally situated for a public-use facility for community and economic development.
- **WSVS.** WSVS is a historic radio station, built in 1947, that hosted some of the most famous American Roots musicians in music history, including Flatt & Scruggs and the Foggy Mountain Boys. The station has been restored and continues to host live music every Saturday at noon. Owners invite the public to stop by before noon on Saturdays, have a picnic on their table out front or in the grassy area out back, and experience how live music is produced on the radio the same way it was 70 years ago.
- **HEAL Initiative.** Crewe is Virginia's first Healthy Eating/Active Living (HEAL) Community. This means that Town leadership has committed to enacting policy and environmental changes to broaden the array of healthy options available in Crewe. Evidence suggests that a healthier community is a more desirable place to visit, own a business, and raise a family. By becoming the first HEAL town in Virginia, Crewe is a leader in developing innovative ideas and common sense solutions for providing healthy choices in Southern Virginia.
- **Location.** Crewe is central to major regional economic hubs: 56 miles to Richmond, VA; 68 miles to Lynchburg, VA; 111 miles to Raleigh, NC; 121 miles to Norfolk, VA; 160 miles from Washington, DC
- **Workforce.** Crewe is surrounded by students entering the workforce from 2-year and 4-year education programs, including: Southside Virginia Community College (26 miles); Longwood University (20 miles); Hampden-Sydney College (24 miles); Medical College of Virginia (58 miles)
- **Business Community.** Crewe has a close-knit business community, brought together through the Crewe-Burkeville Chamber of Commerce. The Crewe-Burkeville Chamber of Commerce is a non-profit organization that business members use to enrich and enhance the business environment of the area.
- **Crewe Municipal Airport.** The Town of Crewe Municipal Airport is an excellent resource for local businesses, traveling dignitaries, and flight enthusiasts.

Candidate Profile

Town Manager Ideal Type

The ideal Town Manager will have the following characteristics and skills:

- **Chief Administrative Officer.** Crewe’s Town Manager is the Chief Administrative Officer for the Town. In this role, he or she will have ultimate oversight of all Town operations. The ideal Town Manager will have the knowledge and experience for handling all human resource issues. He or she will have the planning skills for taking the vision of Crewe’s leadership and translating it from an abstract concept to a concrete, executable, and measurable strategy. Most importantly, he or she will have the financial forte for creating annual fiscal and capital budgets that meet with growing needs of all stakeholders while maintaining sound fiscal management practices, all with limited resources.
- **Complex problem solving.** Like many resource-deprived, rural localities, the Town of Crewe has its share of challenges. Faith and trust in the town is at best stagnant and at worst declining; citizen apathy is increasing as blight worsens; elected leaders only have abstract understandings of the current trends, challenges, and operational methodologies of many town operations; funding is severely limited; and each department can benefit from increased accountability, follow-up, and follow-through. The ideal Town Manager will need to have the knowledge, expertise, and personality necessary to enact policies and processes for increasing trust in government through oversight and accountability; eliminating blight with limited resources; and restoring the local economy through innovation and collaboration.
- **Subject matter expertise.** Crewe’s elected leadership are part-time volunteers. While entrusted by the citizens with the responsibility to create a vision and policies for achieving that vision, their experience with local government operations and emerging practices varies. The ideal Town Manager will have either the subject matter expertise or the capability to obtain and interpret data, analyze information, and present alternatives and recommendations to Council on pressing issues.
- **Forward-leaning.** Small, rural communities exist in a competitive environment. With limited resources, attracting the minority of individuals who prefer quiet, small-town charm over the bustle of cities and suburbs often requires ingenuity. The ideal Town Manager will stay up-to-date on how to best communicate with current citizens and market Crewe to prospective families and businesses. He or she will understand that “keeping the train running” is not enough—Crewe needs direction and forward momentum.
- **Independent and accountable.** The Town Manager operates with virtually no day-to-day supervision. He or she has near-complete autonomy in conducting the day-to-day operations of the Town while simultaneously aiding Council in crafting and concretizing

a vision for the future. For this reason, the ideal Town Manager will have the experience and poise necessary for acting independently in a way that serves the public interest. He or she will hold subordinates accountable while expecting the same level of accountability from Council on him or herself.

- **High quality communications skills.** For a small rural town, Crewe has a diverse population with a plethora of stakeholders. The ideal Town Manager will know how to best communicate with leadership, staff, residents, current and prospective businesses, regional counties and towns, state facilities, vendors, and advocacy groups. He or she will be adept at using technology as a tool to reach communications goals, but also understand that Crewe's population also requires more traditional methods of outreach. He or she will accurately and succinctly communicate the vision and goals of Council to stakeholders while simultaneously gathering data from stakeholders to report to Council. He or she will possess a strong command of professional dialogue while maintaining the ability to understand and be understood by, and deal effectively and courteously with, all segments of the population.
- **Thrives on challenging projects.** From blight reduction to public safety to improving and replacing aging water infrastructure, the Town of Crewe faces serious complex challenges. The ideal Town Manager will not only be able to successfully plan and execute projects, but will also thrive on challenges. He or she will need to have the stamina to withstand high-stress situations, work with stakeholders to research and develop solutions to pressing issues, and have the confidence to act on those solutions. All of this while overseeing and maintaining normal day-to-day town operations, responding to unforeseen issues as they arise, and maintaining courteous and effective communication with the public.

What the Citizens Say

The Town of Crewe seeks to be as accessible, transparent, and engaging with citizens as possible. To this end, citizen input on skills, qualities, and characteristics of the next Town Manager is vital to ensure Crewe's next Chief Administrative Officer is the community's choice. The following are characteristics citizens have said are important for the next Town Manager:

- **Expertise.** Citizens have identified "blight" handling concerns with the "water system" as primary concerns requiring expertise. They see the Town Manager as taking an active role in "ridding the safety risks and eyesore throughout the town." He or she will have a "PROVEN track record of administering grant money in town(s) of like size and demographics" and "PROVEN track record of enforcing ordinances, especially for rental properties." Additionally, "economic development" and "building [a] plan for business development" are critical skills. To accomplish this, some want in their Town Manager a "diligent grant seeker, especially for the business district of Crewe to enable economic development." "The Town needs help and maybe grants to help with the stability of our town. Too much history to let it fade away. New businesses are needed for our economy. Sidewalks need attention badly. Biggest issue the Town [Manager] needs to work with

the . . . people . . . to help solve issues” and create an “aesthetically pleasing downtown.” As one citizen sums it, “Crewe is in a wonderful location to be a thriving small town. I hope to see it become that again.”

- **Skills.** The citizens of Crewe seek a Town Manager skilled in “public relations,” with skills necessary for “developing partnerships and working relationships across the board which should help spread work as have a wider brain trust.” This involves “bringing all teams together,” dealing with county board [of Supervisors] personnel.” “Delegating assignments to the proper people” is important to “clean up our community.” Communication is also important, so “computer literacy” and “making information public” is critical.
- **Demeanor.** Citizens seek in their Town Manager “a well-balance person” and a “people person” who is not only “interested in growing our town,” but also “is honest and willing to fight to to improve the town and bring in growth.” We “need someone with a vision,” capable of “LISTENING,” while having a humble, yet authoritative demeanor.”. He or she should “be more proactive and being open to consideration of new ideas and ways of doing things” by “listening to public” and acting with “good morals and able to relate to this unique community without condescension” who “doesn’t give a bully impression.” Citizens seek “someone that will care about our town,” understanding that “the most experience and educated may not be the best fit for our town.” “We need a town manager that will do as he says he is going to do, not sugar coat things and then months later after a turmoil do them. He [or] she needs to be accountable, reliable and reachable. This small town is unique and one that I love. I want a listener, a doer, a go getter, one that values the town’s needs - apply for grants, etc.”

Selection Process

Process

The Town of Crewe will conduct a fair and comprehensive process for finding the best candidate to serve as our next Town Manager. To this end, candidates can expect the following process:

1. Job announcement is posted, webpage is developed, and Community and Candidate Profiles are made available for candidates’ preliminary research into Crewe.
2. Council will convene an expert committee to score applications and vet candidates into 3 categories: highly qualified, qualified, and not qualified. The expert committee will consist of current and past local town managers with significant objectivity. In order to preserve objectivity, their identities will be kept anonymous until a candidate is selected.
3. All members of Council will receive all applications with the expert committee’s categorization, and select candidates for initial interviews.

4. Council will invite 3 – 5 candidates for in-person interviews.
5. Council will prioritize candidates.
6. The Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Interim Town Manager will make offer(s) to prioritized candidates, negotiate contracts, and announce the next Town Manager.

How to Prepare

Candidates for the Town Manager position should take each phase of the selection process seriously. To this end:

- Résumés, cover letters, and other application information should be clear, succinct, and speak to the candidate's ability to achieve the goals of the office they hope to obtain.
- Candidates should make every effort to obtain as much knowledge about the Town of Crewe, its issues, and its stakeholders as possible prior to applying. At a minimum, this means reading and understanding the Community and Candidate Profile document.
- Candidates should take further steps to learn about Crewe through open-source information. Watch past meetings of Crewe Town Council on YouTube. Read websites, news articles, and past meeting minutes.
- Candidates should understand not only Crewe's issues, but the regional and state issues that contribute to the environment in which Crewe operates. Know the issues, the challenges, and potential solutions derived from other localities.
- Candidates should be prepared to speak knowledgably about both abstract concepts of local government management, as well as concrete solutions. That said, candidates should keep an open mind to approaches to management, as the unique context surrounding Crewe's government can only be fully understood through experience.
- **Under no circumstances should any candidate approach or otherwise reach out to the Mayor or any member of Council for an ex parte communication regarding their application once their application is submitted.** Questions about the application process should be directed to Jay Scudder at jscudder@townofcrewe.com.