

Galax, Virginia

City Manager Recruitment Profile



City of
Galax
Virginia



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

This opportunity is created by the planned retirement of the City Manager, effective June 2021, after 12 years of service as the Manager.

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 City Manager.

Qualified candidates are encouraged to submit a cover letter and resume, with salary history and professional references, to The Berkley Group via email at kimball.payne@bgllc.net. While the position is open until filled, **review of candidates will begin March 29, 2021**. Inquiries relating to the City Manager position may be directed to:

Kimball Payne

The Berkley Group

P.O. Box 181

Bridgewater, Virginia 22812

Email: kimball.payne@bgllc.net

Mobile: (434) 444-3662



Galax, VA

Community Background

The City of Galax is in Southwest Virginia, bordered on the northeast by Carroll County and to the southwest by Grayson County. Named for an evergreen groundcover found only in the Blue Ridge Mountains and popular in floral arrangements, Galax was chartered as a town in 1906 and became an independent city in 1953. It encompasses 8.2 square miles with a population of approximately 6,500 citizens. Located on VA Route 58, approximately nine miles southwest of Exit 14 on Interstate 77, Galax is 82 miles southwest of Roanoke, Virginia and 64 miles northwest of Winston-Salem, North Carolina and is within an easy day's drive of Richmond, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and Virginia Beach.

Known as "The Gateway to the Blue Ridge Mountains," Galax enjoys a rich heritage of industry and traditional music, with quiet, peaceful neighborhoods, a "one of a kind" small town experience, and easy access to urban areas. Its citizens demonstrate a strong sense of community engagement and pride. While remaining a center for furniture manufacturing, the city has become a blossoming tourism destination due to its downtown revitalization efforts, its music and arts scene, and its proximity to the Blue Ridge Parkway and the New River.

The City of Galax has a strong and growing employment base, centered on the manufacturing, retail trade, and service sectors. For many years, the City was known as a major center of furniture and textile manufacturing. Despite a decline in those industries since the late 1990's, there is still a significant presence, with Vaughan-Bassett Furniture as the City's largest employer. Electronics, glass, and other hardwood products manufacturing have also developed as replacement industries. To support a diversifying economy, with more emphasis on healthcare



and services to supplement manufacturing, the City is actively working to convert now vacant industrial facilities into vibrant mixed-use centers providing both employment and residential opportunities.

Galax's quaint downtown shops, delicious barbecue, and relaxing atmosphere are inviting and often capture the interest of tourists, active adults and retirees who decide to make Galax their home. The Galax Commercial Historic District is on the National Register of Historic Places and is designated a Virginia Historic Landmark. Many of its buildings date from the 1920's and today contain businesses, offices, and residences. The renovated Rex Theatre serves as a venue for various music events, community theater presentations and special public meetings. Every Friday night WBRF 98.1 FM broadcasts old-time and bluegrass music from its historic stage.

The City's location on Virginia's Heritage Music Trail, The Crooked Road, draws thousands of music lovers to the region each year. The Galax Old Fiddler's Convention has been held in August since 1935. Other festivals throughout the year highlight the musical heritage of the region which is also known for traditional instrument making. A distinctive

style of Appalachian dulcimer is named for Galax. Twelve miles away, on the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Blue Ridge Music Center celebrates a living musical culture and commemorates the historic roots of American music.

But Galax is “more than bluegrass;” it also has a thriving arts community. Headquartered in the historic First National Bank Building in the heart of Galax, the Chestnut School of the Arts opened in 2005 with a mission of promoting economic and cultural development by offering classes, events and exhibits in traditional music, heritage crafts and contemporary arts. All ages and skill levels are welcome to take classes in woodworking, pottery, stained glass, metalsmithing, sewing, painting, printmaking, and several other disciplines.

With its proximity to the Blue Ridge Parkway, the New River, and Grayson Highlands State Park, Galax offers abundant outdoor recreational opportunities, from water activities to mountain adventures. The New River Trail State Park, a 57-mile-long trail for hiking, biking, and horseback riding, as well as fishing and camping, passes through the city and four nearby counties. All four seasons of weather bring uniqueness and beauty to the area.

From quaint B & B’s to cabins by the creek, from unique shops to national chains, and with a strong economy in a wonderful natural setting, the City of Galax is an interesting community with varied attributes attractive to outdoor enthusiasts, artisans, entrepreneurs, musicians, and craftsmen. Galax has rightfully earned its designation as “The Best Pick in Virginia.”

Galax embraces its quality school system and City Council enjoys a good relationship with its appointed School Board. There are three schools: Galax High School (grades 9-12), Galax Middle School (grades 6-8), and Galax Elementary School (K-5). The school system includes many clubs and programs, career and technical education, gifted opportunities, and a wide variety of athletics, including cheerleading, football, volleyball, basketball, and baseball. State championships have recently been achieved in soccer and cross-country. Scholarships are offered through the Galax Foundation for Excellence in Education. Wytheville Community College provides technology enhanced educational offerings in The Crossroads Institute’s Higher Education Center. Other higher educational opportunities, including Virginia Tech, Radford University, and Emory & Henry College, are located within two hours of Galax.

Twin County Regional Healthcare, a part of Duke LifePoint Healthcare, operates a 141-bed facility in Galax that provides acute care, ambulatory care and an emergency department. Its services include behavioral health, cardiology, gastroenterology, occupational health, orthopedics, women’s health, and a birthing center.

Galax’s population of 6,517 (2019) is approximately 79% White, 14% Hispanic (of any race), and 5% African American. The median household income (2019) is \$33,542 and the poverty rate is approximately 24%. The median home value (2019) is \$102,153. The March 2019 cost of living index was 78.2.



City Services & Government

The City of Galax provides an array of municipal services including general government administration, public safety, public works, water and wastewater treatment, parks and recreation, tourism, and community development. The Galax Police Department is responsible for law enforcement and emergency medical response is provided by Galax-Grayson EMS. The Volunteer Galax Fire and Rescue is responsible for fire protection and response. Emergency communications and dispatch are handled regionally through the Twin County E-911 Regional Dispatch Center co-located with the Galax Police Department Communications in downtown Galax. The City also provides other services through participation in regional agencies such as the Carroll-Grayson-Galax Solid Waste Authority, the Galax Carroll Grayson Animal Shelter, the Blue Ridge Crossroads Economic Development Authority (BRCEDA), the Virginia Industrial Advancement Alliance (VIAA), and the Wired Road Authority, a public/private partnership overseeing a regional fiber network. The City Manager serves on the governing bodies of most of the regional agencies.

The City of Galax has 129 full-time employees and about 60-90 part-time employees, depending on the season, who are dedicated to and appreciated by the community that they serve. In addition, the City provides human resources services and payroll support for 44 full-time and 18 part-time employees of regional entities. Galax's annual budget includes a General Fund budget of approximately \$20 million, a Utility Fund budget of \$3 million, a Stormwater Fund budget of \$500,000, and a Schools Budget of \$16 million. The City also has an active Capital Improvements Plan focused on roads, utilities, stormwater, and schools improvements.

The City of Galax adheres to the Council-Manager form of government, with the City Council being the legislative policy-making body for the city government. The Council is composed of seven members, elected at-large to four-year staggered terms. The City Council elects a mayor, who has no administrative duties, from its membership every two years. The Mayor is the presiding officer of City Council and has the same powers and duties as other members of the Council, with a vote, but no veto. In addition, the Mayor is recognized as head of the city government for all ceremonial purposes, for purposes of military law, and for the service of civil processes. A vice-mayor is elected by the Council to preside in the absence of the mayor. The City Council appoints the City Manager, the City Attorney, and a City Clerk. Currently, the City Manager also serves as the City Clerk.

The Director of Finance, who is confirmed by City Council, serves as the City Treasurer. The Commissioner of the Revenue is elected by City voters and the positions of Sheriff, Commonwealth's Attorney, and Clerk of the Circuit Court are filled by those elected for Grayson and Carroll Counties. With no circuit court in Galax, the City pays for its pro-rated share of the costs of those county offices.

Serving as the chief administrative officer of the City, the City Manager is responsible for the day-to-day operations of City government, appoints and supervises employees, implements policies, and addresses priorities adopted by the Council. The Manager is also responsible for ensuring that all laws, ordinances, resolutions, and bylaws of the Council are faithfully enforced. In addition, the City Manager represents Galax to federal and state agencies and serves on various local and regional boards representing the City.



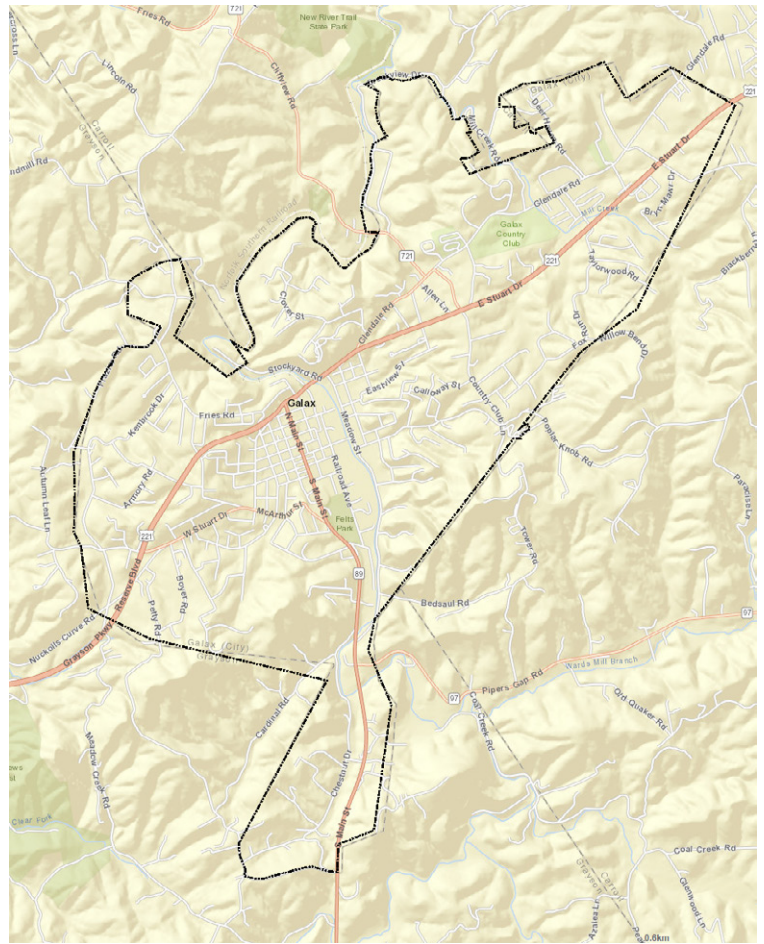
Challenges, Issues & Opportunities

The Galax City Council has adopted a Strategic Plan that defines the City's mission as providing, "high quality public services to sustain an excellent community in which to live, work and play." Its vision sees Galax as "a vibrant, diverse, friendly, citizen engaged community that pursues a culture of excellence." The plan, first adopted in December 2019 and subject to periodic review, serves as a guiding document, identifying Council's priorities and important projects, and its implementation is an important responsibility of the City Manager.

Among the strategic priorities identified in the plan are several that the new manager will be active in achieving. They include:

- The redevelopment of the former TG Vaughan furniture plant into a mixed-use destination for citizens and visitors.
- Promoting economic development and tourism, both locally and regionally, to provide employment opportunities that will retain and attract young adults.
- Working with regional and state partners in the development of the Wildwood Industrial Park.
- Completion of a communications and marketing plan to both enhance citizen engagement and promote the community to visitors.
- Guiding the Kipling Lane housing project which is envisioned to provide much-needed intermediate level housing.
- Evaluating staffing and compensation and developing a succession plan for retirements in key positions anticipated over the next few years.

An important activity over the next year will be a review and update of the City's Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The plan, which will complement the strategic plan, will address City Council's desire for continued balanced growth, advancing downtown revitalization efforts, supporting appropriate economic development, enhancing public amenities, and providing a range of housing opportunities. Both plans will inform an evolving Capital Improvements Plan focusing on stormwater management, transportation improvements, and utility infrastructure. Financing important capital projects will be a challenge to overcome. A major project on the horizon is an assessment of the water supply and treatment system.





Position Profile

City Manager, Galax

Qualifications, Education & Experience

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

- A Bachelor's degree in Public Administration, Business Management, Planning, or a related field; Master's degree preferred; experience equivalent to a Master's degree may be considered.
- Three to five years of successful leadership at a senior executive/administrator level in an organization with comparable responsibilities; possessing a broad skill set appropriate to the breadth of city government operations; and consistently increasing responsibilities in career growth. Local government experience in Virginia as a manager, deputy or assistant is desirable. Past service in a smaller community would be a plus.
- A record of being an active member of one's community, through participation in local service organizations and volunteer activities.
- 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 an ICMA Credentialed Manager would be a plus.
- Any combination of education and experience that qualifies an applicant may be considered in lieu of the more specific criteria listed above.

Personal Traits & Desired Characteristics

- Absolute integrity, ensuring ethical, equitable, honest, fair, open and personable interactions with all City employees, community members, and the City Council.
- Professionally competent, with confidence and directness tempered by humility, fairness, and calm.
- Excellent communications and interpersonal skills, including the ability to listen effectively and understand differing views; empathetic, thoughtful, deliberative and well organized. A confident public speaker.
- Strong leadership skills, in the government organization, the community, and the region; visionary, proactive, decisive, and responsive; able to facilitate the blending of differing points of view into a reasonable approach for community betterment with flexibility and an entrepreneurial spirit.
- Knowledgeable and supportive of the principles of the council-manager form of government and respectful of the different and complementary roles of the City Council and the City Manager.
- A role model, coach, and mentor for City employees; dedicated to the professional development of staff; able to empower employees, to delegate appropriately, and to raise up leaders with a focus on performance, collaboration, and accountability.
- Able to translate Council's decisions effectively to staff and citizens.
- Team-focused, energetic, and collaborative among City departments, with Grayson and Carroll Counties, and across the region.
- Project management experience and an understanding of basic engineering concepts; able to evaluate proposals effectively.

Performance Expectations

- Short-term, immediate actions will be to engage with staff and Council, review City policies and procedures, understand the budget, and get up to speed on active issues and projects.
- Recognizes the value of regional thinking and planning and is able to offer ideas and opinions to partners in a fair and equitable manner.
- Fosters and maintains relationships and alliances with State agencies for the betterment of Galax.
- Facilitating innovation, entrepreneurialism, and positive change while demonstrating an appreciation for the community's culture and history.
- Active and visible participation in community activities as a resident of the City.
- Accessible and responsive to citizen concerns and issues; listening, understanding, providing timely follow-up, and facilitating creative solutions, without being rigid or reactionary.
- Proactive in reaching out to City businesses, listening to their concerns, and being responsive when issues arise.
- A commitment to open and transparent government; promoting a positive and interactive relationship with citizens and stakeholders; encouraging citizen engagement.
- Effective communications with all stakeholders; presenting information in a form understandable to various audiences.
- Accessible to Council members and committed to keeping them all equally informed.
- Fair and equitable treatment of City employees and departments; committed to their growth and development.
- Finally, able to enjoy the community and the job, and to have fun!

Compensation & Benefits

Compensation for the City Manager will be competitive, depending on qualifications and experience, within the range of \$125,000 to \$150,000. The successful candidate will be offered a generous benefits package including participation in the Virginia Retirement System, health insurance coverage, paid time off, deferred compensation, professional development support and other benefits as identified in a negotiated employment agreement.

Application Process

Initial review of candidates will begin on March 29, 2021. Applications received after that date may be considered until the position is filled, however, it is anticipated that initial interviews with selected candidates will be conducted during the week of April 12, 2021. Timely submittal will ensure the most advantageous review. To be considered, please submit a cover letter and resume, with salary expectations and professional references, to The Berkley Group, via email at kimball.payne@bgllc.net. Questions may be directed to:

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For Additional Information

Visit: <https://www.galaxva.com/>

The City of Galax is an Equal Opportunity Employer