



# Town of Chatham

549 Main Street, Chatham, MA 02633

(508) 945-5100

[www.chatham-ma.gov](http://www.chatham-ma.gov)



## Select Board

Dean P. Nicastro, Chair  
Jeffrey Dykens, Vice Chair  
Stuart Smith, Clerk  
Shareen Davis, Member  
Cory Metters, Member

## Town Manager

Jill R. Goldsmith  
[jgoldsmith@chatham-ma.gov](mailto:jgoldsmith@chatham-ma.gov)  
Phone: 508-945-5105

TO: Honorable Select Board  
FROM: Jill R. Goldsmith, Town Manager  
DATE: February 4, 2026  
SUBJECT: ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 6 FILING: Re-Establishment of the Assistant Town Manager Position and Appointment

**Filing Date:** February 4, 2026  
**Select Board Action (if any):**  
**Effective Date:** March 6, 2026

Pursuant to the authority granted to the Town Manager under Section 5-1 of the Town Charter, I respectfully file this Administrative Order to re-establish the position of Assistant Town Manager and appoint the current Director of Community Development, Kathleen Donovan, to that role.

The Assistant Town Manager position was originally formalized in 2002 to strengthen executive leadership capacity and organizational continuity. Since that time, the scope and complexity of Town operations have increased, including expanded regulatory responsibilities, heightened priorities for public engagement, and the need for coordinated leadership across multiple departments and initiatives. Re-establishing this position reflects current best practices in municipal management and supports effective administration of Town government.

Effective upon the conclusion of the notice period required under Section 5-1 of the Town Charter, Kathleen Donovan, Director of Community Development, is appointed to the position of Assistant Town Manager.

Ms. Donovan has effectively served as second-in-command to the Town Manager since 2021 and routinely assumes the role of Acting Town Manager during periods of absence. She has provided leadership on numerous Town-wide initiatives that are of significant public interest and aligned with the priorities of the Select Board. In addition to her regular duties, Ms. Donovan also assumed the role as Interim Director of Natural Resources prior to the appointment of the current director, where she provided continuity of leadership and effective oversight during a period of transition. Her municipal experience is broad and well-rounded, encompassing community development, planning, zoning, inspectional services, conservation, and public works, and reflects a strong understanding of Town operations and interdepartmental coordination.

The Assistant Town Manager will retain responsibility as Director of Community Development, continuing to oversee housing, land use, parking, permitting, and related functions, while also supporting Town-wide operations in an executive capacity.

The Assistant Town Manager shall serve as the Town Manager's principal deputy and shall act as Acting Town Manager during periods when the Town Manager is unavailable. The position will assist with implementation of Select Board policy direction, coordination of cross-departmental initiatives, interdepartmental problem-solving, and other duties as assigned by the Town Manager.

This Administrative Order does not alter existing departmental reporting relationships or reduce the number of direct reports to the Town Manager at this time. The position strengthens executive capacity and provides organizational flexibility, should future operational demands warrant review of reporting structures this would be done with Select Board involvement.

This Administrative Order does not assign financial or fiduciary responsibilities to the Assistant Town Manager. Oversight of financial operations remains with the Director of Finance under the authority of the Town Manager.

This appointment is performance-based and reflects duties that have been performed in practice. It is not intended as succession planning for the Town Manager position. The purpose of this Administrative Order is to strengthen administrative capacity, continuity, and coordination in support of the Select Board and the organization as a whole. The proposed structure will be monitored for workload balance and effectiveness and may be adjusted as needed to reflect operational demands. The Town Manager remains accountable and responsible to the Select Board per the Town Charter.

Compensation associated with this appointment shall be reflected in the FY2027 operating budget, effective July 1, 2026, with the fiscal impact described in the accompanying staff report.

This Administrative Order shall be filed with the Select Board and the Office of the Town Clerk on February 4, 2026 and shall become effective on the thirtieth (30th) day following such filing, unless earlier affirmed or rejected by the Select Board in accordance with Section 5-1 of the Town Charter.

Thank you.

Attachment: Transmittal Memorandum

cc: Office of the Town Clerk (for filing of the Administrative Order)  
Town Website



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## Town Manager

Jill R. Goldsmith  
[jgoldsmith@chatham-ma.gov](mailto:jgoldsmith@chatham-ma.gov)  
Phone: 508-945-5105

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Select Board

FROM: Jill R. Goldsmith, Town Manager

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "JRG", positioned to the right of the "FROM:" line.

DATE: February 4, 2026

SUBJECT: Transmittal - Proposed Administrative Order #6: Re-Establish the Assistant Town Manager Position

I respectfully submit for your consideration proposed Administrative Order #6 to formally re-establish the Assistant Town Manager position, originally created in 2002 to strengthen organizational cohesion, operational capacity, and leadership resilience. The proposed Administrative Order promotes the current Director of Community Development, Kathleen Donovan, to that role recognizing her demonstrated performance while serving as Acting Town Manager and leadership on many priority community initiatives of the Select Board. The position will retain leadership oversight of the Community Development Department, ensuring continuity in a high-impact service and operations area.

## BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Ms. Donovan has effectively served as second-in-command to the Town Manager since 2021 and routinely assumes the role of Acting Town Manager during periods of absence of the Town Manager. In addition, she has led numerous Town-wide initiatives on behalf of the Town Manager that involve high levels of community interest and align with priority goals of the Select Board. This promotion formally recognizes duties she has been performing in practice and provides organizational clarity and continuity. Ms. Donovan served as Interim Director of Natural Resources prior to the appointment of the current director, where she provided continuity of leadership and effective oversight during a period of transition. Her municipal experience is broad and well-rounded, encompassing planning, zoning, and inspectional services, as well as conservation and public works. This cross-departmental background has given her a strong understanding of municipal operations, regulatory

processes, and interdepartmental coordination, all of which are directly relevant to the responsibilities of Assistant Town Manager.

As stated above, Ms. Donovan will retain her responsibilities as Director of Community Development, continuing to lead strategic initiatives related to housing, land use, parking, and permitting, while also supporting Town-wide operations in an executive capacity. Internal delegation within the department will continue to support effective workload management. Retaining Leadership of the Community Development Department:

- Ensures continuity on complex long-term initiatives such as housing permitting and land use planning
- Prevents loss of institutional knowledge during a period of high demand
- The dual role is clearly defined with executive responsibilities aligned with Town wide priorities consistent with practices of other Cape communities

#### Organizational Benefits of the Assistant Town Manager Position

Re-establishing the Assistant Town Manager position provides important organizational benefits that extend beyond reporting structure or departmental alignment. While this Administrative Order does not reduce the number of direct reports to the Town Manager, it strengthens executive capacity, continuity, and coordination across the organization. Should future operational demands warrant review of reporting structures this would be done with Select Board involvement.

Formalizing the role also improves operational resilience and continuity. Establishing a clearly defined second-in-command provides clarity during periods when the Town Manager is on leave or otherwise unavailable due to other executive demands, reducing reliance on informal or ad hoc arrangements and supporting uninterrupted service delivery.

In addition, the Assistant Town Manager supports the Town Manager in policy implementation and facilitation, helping translate Select Board direction into coordinated administrative action. This includes assisting with interdepartmental problem-solving, advancing priority initiatives, and serving as an executive point of contact on matters of significant public interest.

Overall, the Assistant Town Manager position reflects current best practices in municipal management, emphasizing leadership depth, continuity, and collaboration to support effective governance and service delivery. It strengthens executive capacity without unnecessary restructuring. It enhances policy implementation, interdepartmental coordination, and responsiveness to Select Board Direction.

#### Historical Context and Organizational Structure

The position of Assistant Town Manager was previously formalized in May 2002 by then Town Manager Hinchey as part of an organizational reorganization. At that time, the role combined

Assistant Town Manager duties with service by the person holding the Finance Director position and added oversight of the Town Clerk's Office.

The proposed Administrative Order does not recreate that structure. Instead, it modernizes the Assistant Town Manager role as an executive and operational position for strategic initiatives, consistent with contemporary municipal management practices and the increasing complexity of Town operations. Financial and fiduciary responsibilities remain appropriately under the Town Manager through the Director of Finance.

All fourteen other Cape Cod municipalities, including the Town of Nantucket, utilize an Assistant or Deputy Town Manager/Administrator model, either as a stand-alone executive role, combined with department head responsibilities, or with oversight of additional departments.

This is a performance-based promotion similar to the 2002 circumstances and the position is not specifically intended as succession planning for the Town Manager position. The purpose of the Administrative Order is to acknowledge the Town's operational environment has become more complex and with multiple cross-departmental initiatives underway simultaneously requiring executive depth to manage these demands sustainably. It will strengthen day-to-day administrative capacity and continuity in support of the Select Board and the organization as a whole. The Administrative Order does not create a new department and utilizes an existing position framework. It further aligns compensation and responsibilities with demonstrated duties.

#### FISCAL IMPACT

The fiscal impact for FY2027 is \$3,980.32, reflecting an internal promotion. Ms. Donovan currently receives a \$5,000 annual stipend for serving as Acting Town Manager; this stipend would be incorporated into her base salary, along with step increases, resulting in a FY2027 salary of \$185,161.60 effective July 1, 2026.

#### CONCLUSION

The Administrative Order will be issued under the Town Manager's authority to organize staff and assign duties. The proposed structure will be monitored for workload balance and effectiveness and may be adjusted as needed to reflect operational demands. The Town Manager remains accountable and responsible to the Select Board per the Town Charter.

The proposed Administrative Order is anticipated to be filed on February 4, 2026, with an effective date of the new title upon conclusion of the 30-day notice period (unless sooner affirmed or rejected), and implementation of the accompanying salary on July 1, 2026.

Specifically, Section 5-1 of the Town Charter provides:

*Section 5-1 Organization of Town Government*

*(a) Method of Organization – Town Departments. The organization of town government into operating departments for the provision of services and the administration of government shall be the responsibility of the town manager. Subject only to the express prohibitions in the laws of the commonwealth or the provisions of this charter, the town manager may by administrative order reorganize, consolidate, create, merge, divide or abolish any town department or office, in whole or in part, establish such new town departments or offices as the town manager deems necessary or advisable, and prescribe the functions and the administrative procedures to be followed by all such departments or offices.*

*At a minimum, the town manager shall provide for the following governmental functions: (i) administrative and finance; (ii) law enforcement; (iii) fire protection and rescue services; (iv) operation and maintenance of the town's roads, parks, buildings and other facilities; (v) management and protection of coastal resources; (vi) town planning and enforcement of zoning and building codes; (vii) enforcement of health and environmental regulations; and (viii) operation of the water and sewer systems.*

*Administrative orders made by the town manager shall become effective on the thirtieth (30) day following the day on which notice of the proposed administrative order is filed with the Select Board and the office of the town clerk unless the Select Board shall, within such period, by majority vote of the Select Board, vote to reject such administrative order or has earlier voted to affirm it. For the convenience of the public, copies of administrative orders and votes of the Select Board establishing the nature of the town organization and any amendments thereto shall be available from the office of the town manager and the office of the town clerk and posted electronically and via other means that allow access by the public.*

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration. Should you have any questions, please contact me directly.