

**TOWN OF DARIEN
CONNECTICUT**

Invites Candidates
To apply for the

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR
POSITION**



TOWN HISTORY –COMMUNITY PROFILE

History

Originally part of Stamford, the Town of Darien, once known as Middlesex Parish, was incorporated in 1820.

Until the advent of the railroad in 1848, Darien remained a small rural community of about one thousand farmers, shoemakers, fishermen and merchants engaged in coastal trading. A gradual increase in population occurred with the arrival of immigrants, who came from Ireland and later from Italy. In 1864, during the Civil War, the first home in the US for disabled veterans and orphans of soldiers was built in Noroton Heights. It was named in recognition of the founder, Benjamin Fitch of Darien. Following the war, Darien became a popular resort for prosperous New Yorkers who built summer homes. A few daily commuters to New York City then were forerunners of the many who have settled here and transformed Darien into a residential suburb of metropolitan New York.



Darien Today

Located on the southwestern coast of Connecticut, along Long Island Sound, Darien is part of affluent Fairfield County. There are two train stations in Darien, serviced by Metro North Railroad, for commuting to cities to the north and south of town. To the south, neighboring Stamford, a large CT community with many business headquarters, and New York City are easily accessible. To the north, Bridgeport and New Haven are frequent destinations. Amtrak is also accessible through the train stations in Stamford, Bridgeport and New Haven.

While Darien is one of the most expensive places to live, it has one of the lowest mill rates in the state. Darien residents enjoy two public beaches, a number of parks, and a newly acquired 63 acre property known as Great Island. Single family homes make up eighty-five percent of the property in Darien, and the Town offers a first-class public school system. Due to a lack of available undeveloped property, recent efforts have included redevelopment of old commercial properties into mixed-use locations with retail, restaurants, personal services on the first floor, and condos or apartments on upper floors with primarily one and two bedroom units. This will have the effect of increasing the population of this beautiful town.

DARIEN FACTS & FIGURES –CERC 2024

- ◇ Population—21,571
- ◇ Land Area—13 sq. miles
- ◇ Number of Households—7,116
- ◇ Median Age—40
- ◇ Median Household Income—\$250,000
- ◇ Median Home Value—\$1,601,600
- ◇ Median Rent—\$3,484
- ◇ Poverty Rate—5% vs State = 10%
- ◇ Public School Student Pop.—4,681
- ◇ Education Level—48%/BA & 37%/MS+
- ◇ Number of Town Employees— 155 FT
- ◇ Bond Rating—AAA
- ◇ Eversource Utility—Electric
- ◇ Aquarian Water, Town Sewer system connected to Stamford Plant
- ◇ Top Industry Jobs—1,171 Retail; 1,043 Arts, Entertainment & Recreation; 901 Finance & Insurance; 888 Accommodation & Food Service; 839 Health Care & Social Assistance

General Government Services—Refer to the next page for an Organizational Chart

- ◇ The Town has 3 separate volunteer fire departments, as well as a volunteer Emergency Medical Service, Post 53, which is staffed primarily by high school students.
- ◇ Public Works functions include civil engineering; road maintenance and repair, including Town and rail-road station parking lots; building maintenance; solid waste & recycling; fleet management for Town and PW vehicles; and sanitary and storm sewers. The Sewer division manages 14 pump stations and sewer lines (The Town contracts with the City of Stamford for Waste Water Treatment).
- ◇ Health department handles septic systems for 27 % of the population and wells for 8% of the homes.
- ◇ Police Chief reports to the Police Commission—the department includes two captains, 53 sworn officers, animal control, civilian dispatchers, crossing guards and traffic agents.
- ◇ Tax Collector had a 99.8% collection rate last year and also collects sewer user fees and sewer assessments. The information about sewer usage is received from Aquarian Water, a private company.
- ◇ Darien is part of the Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG), which serves as a regional planning agency and also manages transportation grant funding from the State and Federal government for member towns.

Form of Government

The Town has a First Selectman, who serves as the Chief Elected and Executive Officer. The First Selectman is part of the five member Board of Selectmen (BOS). The Board of Selectmen reviews, edits and approves the Town Administrator’s budget. The BOS also appoints all members of non-elected boards and commissions, including the Police Commission, which hires the Police Chief. The BOS hires the Town Administrator (TA), who serves as the Chief Administrative Officer for the Town. The BOS approves the hiring of all Department Heads, based on recommendations from the First Selectman and Town Administrator.

In addition, the Town has a Board of Finance (BOF) that is elected. The BOF reviews, edits and approves the BOS Proposed Budget and the Board of Education (BOE) Proposed Budget for presentation to the Representative Town Meeting. They also approve all additional appropriations that were not in the adopted budget.

The Representative Town Meeting (RTM) consists of 100 elected members from six districts, who serve as the legislative body for the Town. Members serve 2 year terms, with half of the seats up for election every year. The RTM approves ordinances recommended by members or the BOS. They also approve the final budget for the Town; any appropriations of \$50,000 or more that were not in the adopted budget; leases or purchases of property; and all capital improvement projects including those that need to be bonded. The moderator and committee chairs manage the RTM business.

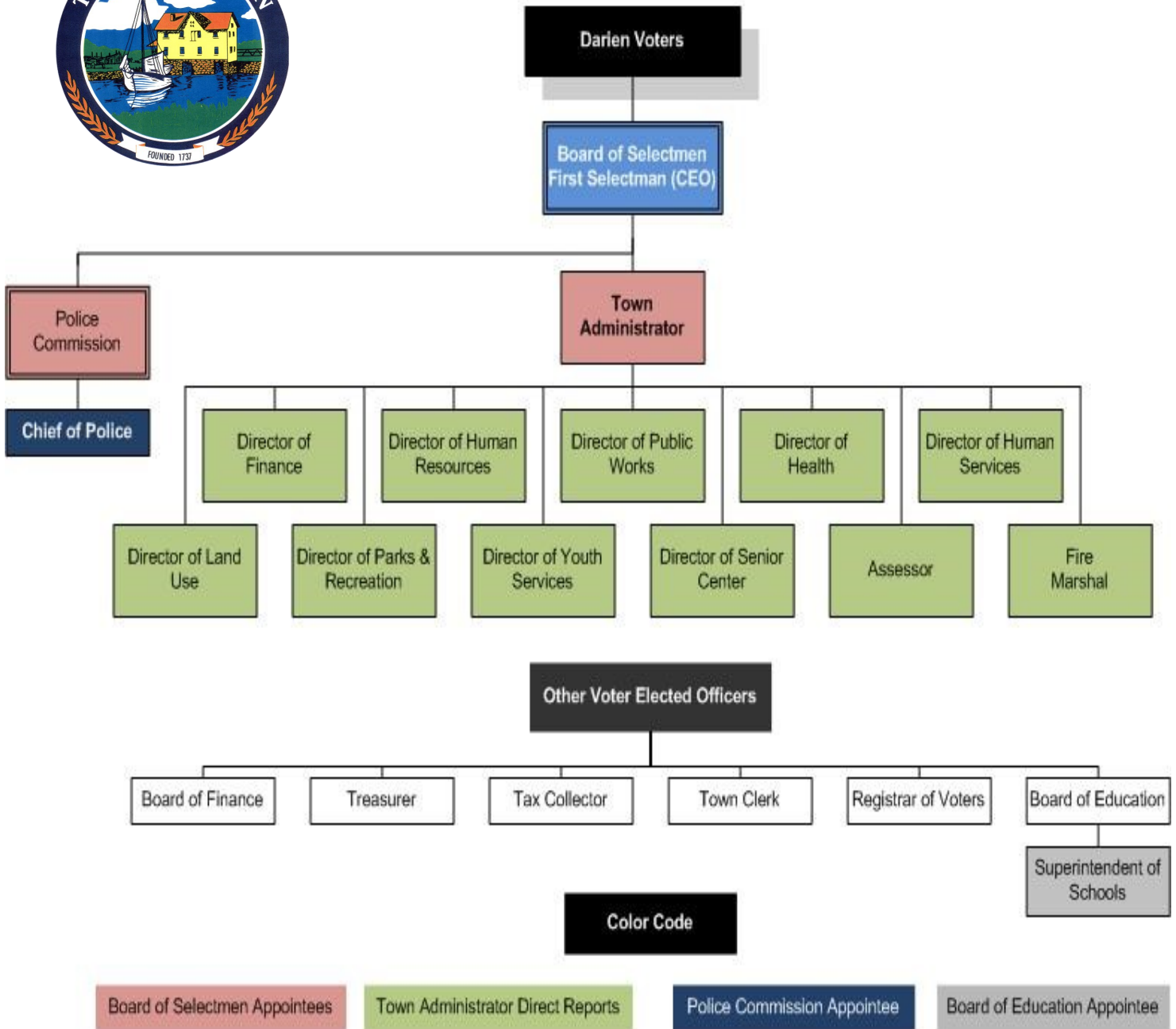
The members of the Board of Selectmen, the Town Treasurer, Tax Collector and Town Clerk are elected every two years. Other elected officials serve 4 year terms, with only a percentage of board seats open every other year. The next election is Nov. 2025.



Town Hall

Town of Darien, Connecticut

Organizational Chart



Town of Darien Vision Statement Adopted by the Board of Selectmen July 11, 2022

The Town of Darien seeks to innovate in a thoughtful manner, protecting the landmarks and natural resources of the town as we provide opportunities and services that benefit all of our residents.

Mission Statement Adopted by the Board of Selectmen July 11, 2022

The Town of Darien strives to continually provide high-quality, high-value services to its residents, taxpayers, and visitors.

Darien Budget Process

Department Heads submit their budget requests through Finance Department software. The Town Administrator, along with the First Selectman and Director of Finance, meets with every department head to review their budget requests. The Town Administrator then prepares a proposed budget for submission to the Board of Selectmen. The budget is presented to the Board of Selectmen (BOS) for review and approval during open budget workshop meetings. The BOS then presents their recommended budget to the Board of Finance (BOF) for approval. The BOF also receives the Board of Education (BOE) budget for edits and revisions or approval. Once both are approved by the BOF and a mill rate is established by the BOF, the full operating and capital budgets, along with a six-year capital plan are presented to the RTM for review and approval.

The RTM has the power only to reduce or approve line items.

Throughout the budget process, the Director of Finance is responsible for updating the budget in the budget software system, including narratives and other supporting documentation. The adopted operating and capital budgets, along with the adopted six-year capital plan, are presented in a PDF format, prepared by the Director of Finance, on the Town's website.



Town Administrator's Responsibilities

- Responsible for the supervision, direction and administration of all departments, agencies and offices, with the exception of the Board of Education, the Police Department and elected officials
- Ensures that all laws and ordinances governing the Town are executed
- Prepares and submits the Town's annual budget to the Board of Selectmen;
- In collaboration with the BOS, initiates and drafts regulations and ordinances, strategic plans and reviews proposed legislation
- Keeps BOS, BOF, RTM advised of the financial condition of the Town
- Prepares and makes presentations for the BOS, BOF, RTM or RTM Committees
- May represent the Town in front of Land Use Boards for Town projects
- Recommends solutions to various programs and issues that face the Town
- Assures the smooth daily operation of town business and the health, safety and well-being of the Town and its residents, including in the event of an emergency or disaster
- Appoints and removes all municipal employees in accordance with personnel and union contracts
- Executes and oversees all the purchases for municipal operations with the assistance of the Purchasing Agent, following best practices
- Prepares BOS Agendas with the First Selectman and serves as secretary for BOS to record votes
- Manages the parking regulations as set by the BOS, who also serve as the Parking Authority
- Serves as liaison to other municipalities, State, and Federal agencies as necessary
- Collaborates with the Directors of Human Resources and Finance in developing long and short-term plans
- Works with four union contracts (Police, Town Hall, Public Works and Emergency Telecommunicators)
- Develops and implements a risk management program including evaluating exposure, implementing loss control measures, and transferring risk by purchasing insurance and other means;
- Prepares annual six-year Capital Projects Plan and oversees the preparation of the Annual Town Report
- Manages Town website and plans and oversee IT strategy for the Town



CHARACTERISTICS OF THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

- ⇒ General characteristics: approachable, patient, calm, collaborative, excellent presentation skills, adaptable and flexible.
- ⇒ Experienced, with the ability to “hit the ground running” in a community with high expectations.
- ⇒ Desire to “do better” for the community by working for the residents and Town. Respectful to Boards, Commissions, elected officials and residents.
- ⇒ Innovative, yet consistent, with policy implementation.
- ⇒ Ability to maintain a largely internal presence with departments while the First Selectman focuses on the external.
- ⇒ Politically savvy, with the ability to learn the politics of the community while working within the changing dynamics of the Town and within the charter rules and regulations.
- ⇒ Ability to relay and respectfully explain reasons why a decision was made to staff and residents and guide them by providing alternative solutions if possible.
- ⇒ Ability to maintain and enhance the team structure that has been developed, and encourage staff and department heads to continue working together on common issues and projects to improve services.
- ⇒ Excellent interpersonal skills, effective communication skills, ability to listen and respond respectfully to stakeholders, and approachable for all staff, encouraging innovation and mentoring those efforts.
- ⇒ Ability and/or experience in evaluation of operations to determine if organizational changes are needed. Skilled in streamlining processes and increasing efficiencies and effectiveness of departments.
- ⇒ Excellent professional judgement, strategic thinking and the ability to see the whole picture as well as future impacts.
- ⇒ Ability to hear all sides, evaluate information to make decisions and/or recommendations by being responsive to new ideas from all parties.
- ⇒ Experience in succession planning, including creative methods for difficult recruitments.



QUALIFICATIONS

- **A bachelor’s degree in public or business administration or closely related field plus ten (10) years of progressively responsible experience in municipal management, five (5) of which was as a chief administrator, department head or an assistant administrator in a municipal organization is required (Charter requires municipal experience). Master’s Degree is a plus, with 9 years of experience listed above.**
- **Knowledge, skills and abilities should include: Finance, budgeting, administration, management of organizations, human resources, labor relations, and working with various stakeholders and citizens.**
- **Ability to: deal with strong personalities, manage people and professional Department Heads, provide strategic planning and management to anticipate future needs, manage large initiatives or projects, be organized and responsive.**

Opportunities & Challenges

- ⇒ A number of key staff are eligible for retirement within 1-5 years, which will mean recruitment in a difficult market, plus the need for succession planning. Need to address the barriers to recruitment, such as the difficult commute to Darien, by proposing new options such as access from train stations to town buildings and other non-salary benefits.
- ⇒ Dealing with the ongoing capital projects listed.
- ⇒ Learn administrative process with RTM (and RTM committees) for approvals in addition to the approvals by the BOS and BOF, particularly when the RTM is not in session.
- ⇒ Need to work with departments and the IT department to regularly review information technology software and equipment and to ensure the Town is using best practices, and modern IT systems with the goal of providing more online processes and simplifying of processes.
- ⇒ Need to regularly review potential to streamline operations and process.
- ⇒ The Town budget is lean. Therefore, innovative ways to provide services and the ability to respond to increased demand for services will be necessary, as will the ability to convey the need for infrastructure and equipment maintenance and repair to maintain excellent services to elected officials.
- ⇒ Ongoing review of purchasing, risk management, human resources systems to improve operations is necessary.

Current Capital Projects

- ◇ Renovations/Additions to Royle, Hindley & Holmes elementary schools
- ◇ Great Island Master Plan
- ◇ Pear Tree Beach improvements
- ◇ Short Lane property improvements
- ◇ Retaining wall repair-Noroton Heights Fire
- ◇ Fire Truck Replacement
- ◇ Hansen Road Bridge Replacement
- ◇ Rings End Dam Repairs



Opportunities & Challenges to Assist the Board of Selectman

- ⇒ Discussion to review and potentially update the purchasing regulations and bidding requirements
- ⇒ Research and preparation of policies, procedures or ordinances to address issues such as:
 - Work force housing and traffic issues;
 - The need for more parking in town and at train stations;
 - Senior population concerns;
 - Opportunities for young people to return to their home community.

Great Island Purchased by Town (\$85mil)

Development of a master plan is underway, with adoption of a plan expected in July 2025. Darien is at the beginning stages of the project and looking for community engagement. The Town has created the Great Island Advisory Committee (GIAC) to manage the process of inventorying the property and using consultants to offer assistance with ideas and proposed maintenance of the property. The Town Administrator is one of the staff liaisons to the GIAC, and will be on the ground floor of this exciting initiative. There will be a need to determine the impact on Town operations; and to get stakeholders involved in planning and advisory role to provide input on the impact of the various ideas and decisions.

Positives about Darien, CT

- ⇒ Community involvement and volunteerism is unusually high.
- ⇒ Located on Long Island Sound, the Town has 7 Parks, 2 beaches, 2 Nature Preserves plus boat launches, ball fields, trails and open space.
- ⇒ The community is incredibly supportive financially, through donations. There are a number of foundations in the community that support Town programs.
- ⇒ Town is financially stable with a top bond rating (Aaa) and one of the lowest mill rates in the State.
- ⇒ Town Hall and Town government is a great place to work. Departments are proactive and department heads are very professional and knowledgeable. Department staff tend to go above and beyond to meet needs for community.
- ⇒ Town Hall employees enjoy a 4-day work week, which alleviates some staff transportation challenges and promotes a healthy work/life balance.
- ⇒ Two train stations provide easy access to NY and CT shoreline towns and cities for commuting to work by residents and to Darien by non-resident employees. Parking at the train stations is available after work hours and weekends for leisure travel.
- ⇒ Excellent school system, with school buildings that have been renovated or are on the schedule for renovations.
- ⇒ Darien is a wonderful place to live and work. Many community activities, services, restaurants, entertainment, professional services and businesses. Recent development includes Transit Oriented Development, which includes condominiums and apartments.



Compensation and Application Process

The Town of Darien offers a competitive salary commensurate with qualifications and experience. The Town provides a generous benefits package which includes health, dental, life insurance and paid vacation and sick leave. Additionally, the Town provides a defined benefit pension/retirement plan. Relocation assistance is negotiable. **Please contact the Consultant for more details on position, the town and salary.**

Darien is an AA/EOE Employer

Website: <https://www.darienct.gov/>

https://library.municode.com/ct/darien/codes/code_of_ordinances

<https://www.darienct.gov/339/Community-Values-Statement>

If you are interested in this exciting opportunity, or need additional details, please contact Ms. Frank at the address listed. To apply now please submit your cover letter and resume to Ms. Frank. Position will remain open until filled; first screening date is September 30, 2024. Top candidates will be asked to complete a questionnaire, so early resumes will be reviewed quickly.

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