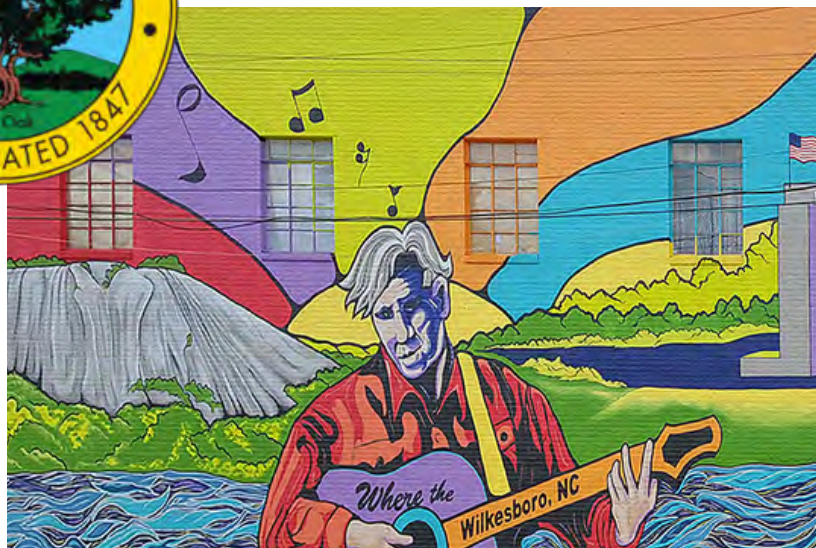


Inviting Applications for Town Manager



Town of Wilkesboro, North Carolina

Are You Our Next Town Manager?



Nestled in the scenic foothills of Western North Carolina and located in historic Wilkes County, Wilkesboro sits full of history, strong community spirit, and small-town charm. The Town is committed to preserving its unique and historic heritage while creating a community that fosters economic growth and seeks to enhance the quality of life of its citizens. Wilkesboro is home to approximately 3,600 residents and entertains its residents and visitors with a vibrant downtown, and abundant outdoor recreation opportunities, including access to the Yadkin River, nearby Kerr Scott Reservoir, and the surrounding foothills landscapes. Wilkesboro is home to MerleFest, considered one of the premier music festivals in the country, as well as FaithFest, one of largest faith based music festivals in the Carolinas.

Desired Attributes and Characteristics

- A strong listener who values transparency, communicates openly, and keeps the Town Council informed through consistent communication.
- An honest and approachable leader who understands and respects the role of the Town Council.
- A team builder and mentor who cultivates a positive organizational culture, supports employee development, and continues the Town's strong tradition of service-oriented leadership and dedicated staff performance.
- A skilled negotiator and strategic thinker with experience managing complex financial and infrastructure challenges, including utility systems, debt service, long-term capital planning, and sustainable growth initiatives.
- A financially disciplined administrator capable of developing long-term financial strategies, controlling expenditures, evaluating service delivery models, and clearly communicating the impacts of tax rates, operational costs, and major financial decisions to the Council and public.

Preferred Education & Experience: Master's Degree in Public Administration, Public Policy, Finance, or related field from an accredited four-year university; Five (5) plus years progressive experience working in a local government; Two (2) plus years of senior management or supervisory experience in local government.

Hiring Range: \$120,000 - \$150,000 DOQ

Residency within the Town is preferred, but not required. Ability to participate in the community is important.



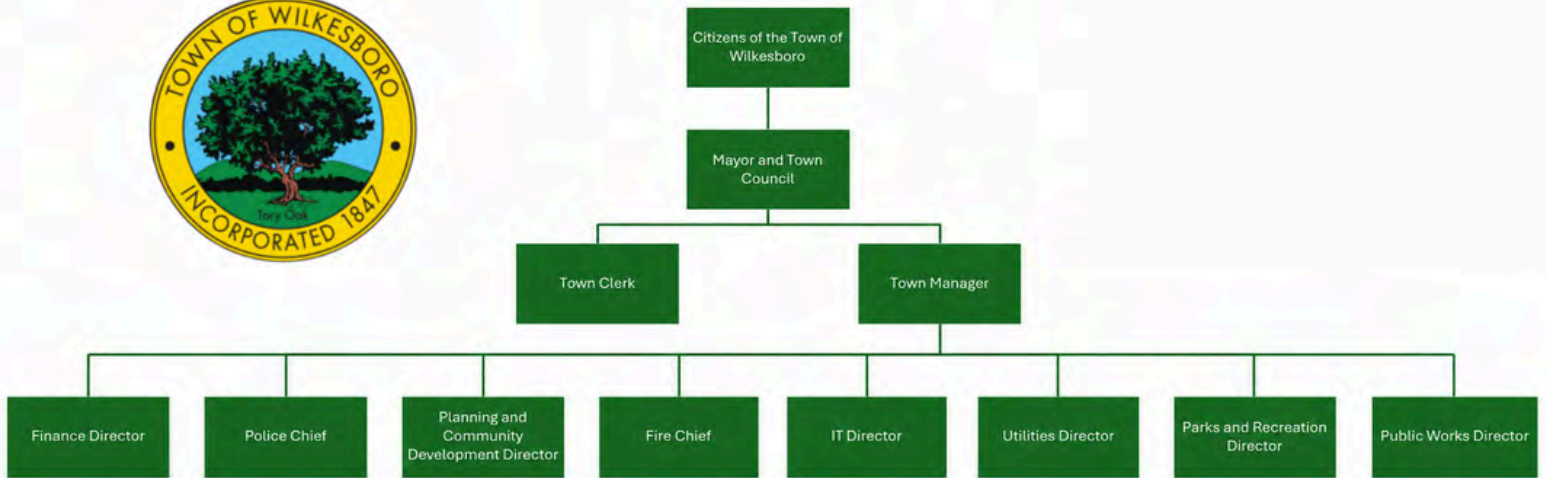


Excellent Management Growth And Project Opportunities

- **Strategic Direction:** The Town's focus over the next 2 – 3 years is on becoming more financially stable while maintaining growth and service demands. Future strategic planning will concentrate on improving long-term financial structure and budget control. Key initiatives are devising a long-term financial plan and a broader strategic plan to maintain consistent decision-making across fiscal years.
- **Economic Development and Housing:** Current economic growth initiatives revolve around maintaining and expanding the local tax base, especially through major industry like Tyson Foods and new development. Housing initiatives will be a priority, including breaking ground for the senior apartment complex, Gateway Commons. Continue the collaboration with North Wilkesboro to continue the development of the River District. Assist the town with resolving potential property tax losses while maintaining a tax rate that supports the town's services.
- **Operations and Staffing:** Service demand is rising while resources are tightening. The Town will need to monitor and improve operations, which include personnel management, departmental structures, and calls for service to maintain functionality. Efficiency and proper budgeting will be key factors in the success of the Town in near future.
- **Infrastructure and Utilities:** The infrastructure focal point will include the Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion, expanding utility capacity, and continuing downtown improvements. Manage planning initiatives to combat developmental pressures from the industry and housing with limited capacity.
- **Partnerships and Coordination:** Continued coordination with the Chamber of Commerce, EDC, High Country Council of Governments and nearby towns is important for development and infrastructure planning.



Town of Wilkesboro Government



The Town of Wilkesboro operates under the council-manager form of government, governed by a Mayor and Town Council members elected at-large to four-year staggered terms.

Mayor Dale Isom, 1st term, elected 2023.

Mayor Pro Tem Ronnie Walsh, 1st term, elected 2025.

Councilman Jimmy Hayes, 5th term, re-elected 2023.

Councilman Doug Setzer, 1st term, elected 2025.

Councilman Andy Soots, 3rd term, re-elected 2023.

The Town Manager oversees daily operations and municipal services to implement the Council's policies. The Town has 100 FTE in Parks & Recreation, Police, Public Works, Utilities, and Community Development. Succession planning has worked well, with someone ready or currently training for most key positions. Everyone at the Town, Council, and Staff pride themselves on the level of service provided to their residents and businesses.

In 2025, Wilkes County performed its statutorily required county-wide revaluation, the first since 2019. As of January 1, 2025, before any appeals, real property values increased 75% - 80% overall, with the Town of Wilkesboro seeing increases of 56% - 61%. However, business personal property values dropped 30%. The Town's tax rate decreased from 48 cents to 46 cents for FY 2026.

Challenges

- **Unit Assistance List (UAL).** The Town is currently on the UAL, with an unassigned fund balance of \$273,859 (3.3%) as of June 30, 2025. The current Finance Director was able to complete four financial audits in two years and the Town is now in compliance with the annual audit requirement.
- **Reliance on one major taxpayer and utility customer.** The Town is home to a large poultry processing plant, which employs over 1,000 people and represents 13% of the taxable assessed value in Town. It is also the source of the majority of the Town's water and sewer revenue.

Opportunities

- **History of Professional City Management.** The current Town Manager is retiring after 27 years in the position.
- **Partnership with New Council.** With a majority of the Council changing over the past three years, they are eager to work on targeted strategic planning aimed at understanding and managing the Town's financial health.
- **Large Capital Projects.** The Wastewater Treatment Expansion Project and the Joint Water In-Take Project with North Wilkesboro are both currently underway, with planned completion dates in 2028.
- **Downtown Development.** The Town has been successful in grant and outside funding for downtown streetscape and other improvements, and there is a desire to do more when financially feasible.

About the Wilkesboro Community

Located in the foothills of North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains, the Town of Wilkesboro offers small-town charm along with a rich history full of outdoor adventure. The town is conveniently located along US Highway-421 and I-77, which provides easy access to major destinations throughout western North Carolina. It is within driving distance of Winston-Salem, Boone, and the Blue Ridge Parkway, making it an ideal gateway to the mountains and the surrounding region. Founded in 1800, Wilkesboro proudly celebrates a history that is deeply rooted in Appalachian traditions. Known as the birthplace of Lowe's Home Improvement and home to generations of Blue Ridge Mountain heritage, the community combines historic traditions with modern attractions.

Downtown Wilkesboro features locally owned shops, restaurants, and gathering spaces that reflect the welcoming spirit of the community. Wilkesboro offers a wide variety of recreational and cultural opportunities, as the town is home to beautiful parks, access to the Yadkin River, and nearby trails for hiking, biking, and outdoor exploration. Wilkesboro is also nationally recognized for hosting MerleFest, one of the country's premier bluegrass music festivals, held annually on the campus of Wilkes Community College. Additional local attractions include the Wilkes Heritage Museum, farmers markets, and a beautiful arts and music scene that showcases the town's unique culture and creativity. With its combination of natural landscape beauty, rich historic heritage, and one-of-a-kind community support, Wilkesboro offers everyone an authentic North Carolina experience.

How To Apply

The Western Piedmont Council of Governments is facilitating the search process on behalf of the Town.

To apply, please visit <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/westernpiedmontcog> and click on the "Town Manager –Wilkesboro, NC" title.

Please note the following:

All applications must be submitted online via the WPCOG application portal (link above) – NOT the Town's employment application or any other external website.

Resumes and cover letters must be uploaded with the application.

Applicants should apply by July 9, 2026.

Candidates will be subject to an interview and assessment process. The first round of interviews is expected to take place in August 2026.

Direct inquiries to tasmin.mack@wpcog.org.

Equal Opportunity Employment

The Town of Wilkesboro is an equal opportunity employer.

