

Finance Department FY11 Budget

The Finance Department budget for FY11 may be funded at slightly lower levels than in FY10. Some increasing costs – such as technology support and additional elections – have been offset by a thorough departmental review of all expenses. Changes have been made wherever possible that would not impact the level of services to the general public or to employees.

Overview

	FY11	Change (\$)	Change (%)
Assessors	\$172,317	+\$5,000	+3.0%
Finance	\$613,483	-\$15,570	-2.4%
Human Res.	\$85,736	-\$9,499	-10.0%
Technology	\$540,382	+\$4,659	+0.9%
Town Clerk	\$108,336	-\$6,490	-5.7%
Elections	\$69,456	+\$21,656	+45.3%
TOTAL	\$1,642,210	-\$245	-0.0%

Assessors: Assessment of property is the first step in the process of tax revenue collection for the Town of Reading. The Assessment Division's function is to provide for the fair and equitable assessment of all taxable real and personal property. A three-member elected Board of Assessors sets policy for this division.

General Finance: Collections is responsible for collecting all taxes and other charges (including ambulance and water/sewer/storm water bills). They also receive and process all deposits (such as schools and recreation). Treasury is responsible for providing the cash for the operation of all Town, School and Light Department functions on a timely basis. In addition, it conducts all borrowing and investing activities, including those on behalf of the Town's Trust Funds (at the direction of the Trust Fund Commissioners).

Human resources: This division supports the Town (under the direction of the Town Manager), Schools (under the direction of the Superintendent), Light Department (under the direction of the RMLD General Manager) and Retiree benefit activities.

Technology: The Technology Division provides centralized computer network and telecommunications services as well as distributed internet, audio/video, software and personal computer support and geographic information systems (GIS) mapping for the municipal government (Town Hall, the Library, the Senior Center, Police, Fire/Emergency Management, Public Works, Water and Sewer). This division also coordinates many technology activities with both the School and Light Department.

Town Clerk: The Town Clerk is guided by Federal, State, and local laws and policies in overseeing Elections, voter registration, the census process, Town Meeting, and local licenses as well as historic and legal documents for the Town.

Staffing – wage costs

No changes to staffing are anticipated by this budget, and all wage costs are using existing FTEs at no COLA increase or step movement (except in the case of new hires for the six-month

probationary period). Due to more scheduled elections in FY11, departmental wage costs are higher in FY11 as shown below:

WAGES	FY10	FY11	Change
Assessors	\$149,317	\$149,317	\$0
Finance	\$495,053	\$493,983	-\$1,070
Human Res.	\$75,736	\$75,736	\$0
Technology	\$273,723	\$273,882	+\$159
Town Clerk	\$113,026	\$106,536	-\$6,490
Elections	\$18,300	\$37,956	\$19,656
TOTAL	\$1,125,155	\$1,137,410	+\$12,255 (+1.1%)

Staffing – impact to services

Since there are no changes to staffing, no significant impact to the level of services is anticipated in FY11. However, demand on services has increased over the past year. The Finance department serves the entire town (including the School and Light departments) in many benefit areas, and due to the economic downturn, the number of personal financial discussions have substantially increased. Additional demand for technology support has been met by the current staffing level – the addition of a technician a year ago has prevented a serious problem. An increase in electronic communications and preventative mailings to the general public has improved collections and reduced the number of complaints to the department. However due to the nature of the economy, some individual circumstances have required significant staff involvement before amicable resolution to billing issues are achieved. The Collector’s office has additionally absorbed some of the

responsibilities of the previous Community Services Coordinator of Volunteers position

Expenses

EXPENSES	FY10	FY11	Change
FINCOM	\$52,500	\$52,500	\$0
Assessors	\$18,000	\$23,000	+\$5,000
Finance	\$134,000	\$119,500	-\$14,500
Human Resources	\$19,500	\$10,000	-\$9,500
Technology	\$262,000	\$266,500	+\$4,500
Town Clerk	\$1,800	\$1,800	\$0
Elections	\$29,500	\$31,500	+\$2,000
TOTAL	\$517,300	\$504,800	-\$12,500 (-2.4%)

Banking services have been decreased, reflecting savings generated by installing four scanners in the collector’s office which will help reduce expensive lockbox charges. A banking RFP next summer may reduce these projected charges further, as the banking industry is returning to profitability and becoming more competitive for customers. Decreased hiring has reduced HR expenses by \$9,500 in this budget. As difficult financial times are forecast to last for at least a few more years, this reduction in expenses is appropriate. There is an increase to technology expenses, reflecting the ongoing need to keep software and virus protection measures current, as well as a new annual cost for document storage features on Town Hall copiers/scanners. A small increase in expenses is needed to cover the two additional elections in FY11.