

Reading

A Community of Excellence

Preamble

In 1624, Reading's first settlers arrived from distant lands after fleeing religious persecution and the lack of economic opportunity. Buoyed by hope, they risked their lives on long, dangerous journeys in search of freedom. These earliest immigrants brought with them a sense of vitality, a strong commitment to hard work, and a committed respect for unfamiliar cultures, faith traditions, and viewpoints.

We continue to this day to welcome new neighbors from both nearby communities and distant lands. We ask them to continue the tradition begun by the earliest settlers and to contribute their talents, skills and energy to Reading's future, while enjoying freedom to pursue their own version of the American dream.

Reading is a community that believes in equal opportunity, equal protection of the law and religious freedom. Reading citizens proudly answered the call to fight in wars to end tyranny and establish the republic, to end slavery and to destroy fascism. Today, Reading's sons and daughters serve in our nation's battle against present-day terrorism and in support of freedom.

As the Town's elected executive board, we recognize and accept our role as community leaders. We support the values of our democracy and especially the right to free speech and assembly. We welcome vigorous public discourse, even where disagreement may arise as a consequence. However, we also reserve the right to stand against those who would undermine our shared values or threaten our community's welcoming nature and sense of safety. We accept our leadership role in support of the operating principles of tolerance, civility, dignity and respect for all, so as to sustain our Town's cultural and religious diversity.

It is our enduring goal, in cooperation with other Town officials and staff, to continue to build trust in our community, and to implement and enforce applicable laws concerning discrimination, intimidation, illegal conduct and hate crimes.

Reading Board of Selectmen

May 30, 2017

Town of Reading Mission

The Town of Reading strives for excellence in all its services – from education to government – and seeks to enhance and enrich the social, intellectual, and leisure life of the community.

Municipal Government

In support of the Town of Reading Mission, Reading Municipal Government will:

- help residents identify with their community by supporting volunteerism and civic engagement,
- create opportunities for public discourse about community issues and encourage citizen participation in planning and decision-making
- commit itself to community-responsive services that incorporate best practices and a strong orientation to customer service
- support open and transparent government with convenient avenues for communication and access
- enhance the integrity and livability of its many fine neighborhoods by supporting community initiatives for preservation and improvements
- uphold the character of Reading by actively encouraging efforts to document and preserve the history of the community, its historic buildings and areas, and prized open spaces.
- embrace diversity by striving to provide varied housing choices and diversifying the municipal workforce by recruiting, hiring, and promoting persons of all backgrounds and races
- enhance the social, civic, and intellectual life of residents by offering a broad range of services and programs

Values

The municipal government of the Town of Reading will be guided by the following values:

Integrity and Transparency

- Reading municipal government and its employees and officials will be guided by the highest standards of ethics and integrity.
- Municipal business will be conducted in an open manner with opportunities for public discussion and input into decisions.
- The community will be kept informed with open communication.
- All official business will be conducted in a civil, professional, and mutually respectful manner.

Excellence

- Excellence will be the standard for all municipal services, with continuous review and evaluation of best practices, incorporating new methods and technologies, striving for efficiency and cost effectiveness.
- Reading municipal government will make decisions based on careful planning consistent with town-wide goals.

Diversity

- Municipal government will encourage diversity and respect for differences in the conduct of its business and in recruiting and hiring personnel and in providing enrichment opportunities for the community.

Community

The following are values that the community holds in high regards:

- Social, Environmental, and Financial Sustainability
- Tolerance, Civility and Cultural Diversity
- Volunteerism and Civic Engagement
- Historic Preservation and Open Space
- Recreational, Cultural, and Educational Opportunities