

# 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

# Reading Select Board

## **Board Ethics and Protocols**

**F**or the purpose of enhancing teamwork among members of the Select Board and between our Select Board and professional management, we, the members of the Reading Select Board, do hereby publicly commit ourselves collectively and individually to the following operational protocols:

1. The Select Board will work together to represent the interests and needs of all the residents in our community.
2. The Select Board will lead by example at all times to build trust. We agree to avoid words and actions that create a negative impression of an individual, the Select Board, or the Town. While we encourage debate and differing points of view, we will speak with care and respect.
3. Surprises to the Select Board or Town Manager will be the exception, not the rule. We agree to ask the Board Chair or the Town Manager to add an item to the agenda within a reasonable time frame rather than bringing it up unexpectedly at a meeting.
4. The Select Board works collaboratively to establish vision, create policies, ensure accountability, and fulfill the responsibilities as the executive branch of the Town as established in the Town Charter. The Town Manager is the Chief Executive Officer and works collaboratively to execute Board objectives, manage staff, day-to-day operations, and finances for the Town as outlined in the Town Charter.
5. During meetings, the Select Board will speak to items on the agenda and refrain from engaging in inappropriate debate. Requests for further information on issues will be referred to the Town Manager.
6. Communications between Town staff and the Select Board are encouraged. Board requests of staff will be directed to the Town Manager.
7. Any complaints or criticisms of personnel received by the Select Board or individual members will be directed to the Town Manager (further details are available in Select Board Policy Article 1.4 Communications).
8. The Select Board will consider research, best practice, public input, and financial impacts in decision making.
9. When executive sessions are held, Board Members will honor the confidentiality of the discussions.
10. The Select Board and the Town Manager will facilitate goal setting for the Town.
11. The authority of the Select Board is in the body as a whole, not in individual members. We agree that an individual Board Member will not take unilateral action.
12. When Board Members attend meetings of other committees or boards as liaisons from the Board, they understand that they are speaking as individuals and not for the Board except when reporting a decision of the majority of the Select Board.