

## **FY 10 Budget – Fire Department**

The Reading Fire Department is responsible for fire suppression, the emergency medical system, fire prevention and emergency management. The Fire Department is also responsible to coordinate and apply for all reimbursement for State and Federal disaster declarations. In calendar year 2008 the Fire Department collected \$641,492 of revenue of which \$625,346 was received from ambulance revenue and \$16,146 was received from permit and inspection fees.

**Fire Suppression:** In calendar year 2008, The Fire Department responded to 4,262 incidents of which 2,192 were requests for fire and other emergency responses and 1,969 were requests for medical assistance. We responded to 98 fires that were required to be reported to the State Fire Marshal’s Office. Included in these were 33 residential fires, 19 commercial fires, 6 vehicle fires and 40 outside fires.

**Emergency Medical Care:** In calendar year 2008, the Reading Fire Department responded to 1,969 medical incidents and transported 1,030 patients. The Reading Fire Department provides emergency medical care at the Advanced Life Support

### **Fire Department Service Statistics for 2008**

Bell Alarms and Still Alarms	2,192
Emergency Ambulance Calls	1,930
Inspections	363
Permit Fees collected	\$16,146
Ambulance Fees Collected	\$625,346

level (ALS) to sick and injured patients. This is the highest level of pre-hospital care available and we are continually expanding this program as the budget permits. Our statistics indicate approximately 66% of the patients transported required Advanced Life Support treatment.

In 2008 we continued our efforts to increase the quality of patient care we provide. Advanced Life Support equipment was placed on our fire engine that responds out of the West Side Fire Station and several new medications were added to our medical kits.

**Fire Prevention:** Is responsible to ensure all life safety systems for new construction and renovations are designed and installed properly. This requires pre-construction meetings, plan review, code research and continual site visits to ensure proper installation.

For existing buildings the Fire Prevention Division is responsible to ensure all life safety systems are maintained properly. Other areas of responsibility include ensuring the safety and code compliance of flammable and combustible product storage, coordinating the maintenance of Department vehicles and equipment.

**Emergency Management:** The emergency management function identifies hazards to the community; plans are then developed and tested to create a coordinated response to any

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type of disaster. Housed within Reading's emergency management system are two separate functions, Emergency Management and the Local Emergency Planning Committee: Reading is also part of the North East Homeland Security Region (NERAC). NERAC is one of the 5 Massachusetts homeland security regions created by the Executive Office of Public Safety.

The primary goal for Emergency Management is to identify threats to the community and to prepare for all disasters whether natural or manmade, coordinate the response of a wide range of agencies and assist in the recovery phase. A secondary goal is to ensure the Town of Reading is in compliance with all Federal and State requirements to enable the community to remain eligible to receive reimbursement for Federal and State disaster declarations.

Federal and State legislation requires every community in the country to have a Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). The LEPC identifies areas where the population is most at risk from a hazardous materials release, facilities and transportation routes that contain hazardous materials and resources that would be used to mitigate an incident. To pool resources the Town of Reading has joined with eleven other communities and formed the Mystic Regional Emergency Planning Committee.

**Community Education:** The Reading Fire Department provides community education through our S.A.F.E. Program. This fire safety education program is delivered in the Reading Public School System and an in-house developed age appropriate curriculum for each grade level K through 5. The program continues to receive a high level of support from School Administrators and children. This program is funded by an annual grant of \$4,700 provided by the State.

**Fire Alarm:** The municipal fire alarm system in Reading is maintained by two part time positions. When appropriate, we are connecting new and remodeled buildings to the municipal fire alarm system to ensure a rapid response to an incident.

**Training:** Our in-service Firefighter training program is organized under a single Training Officer, who develops and delivers an in-depth training program to each of the four Groups. The program has been designed to improve Firefighter safety, enhance performance and to unify the four Groups. Due to budget reductions this highly successful program will be eliminated in FY 10.

**FY 10 Budget Highlights:** No changes were made to the 49.0 FTE positions in the FY09 Fire Department budget. The overtime account has been increased due to the need to deliver a 24 hour Emergency Medical Technician refresher course to 26 personnel. Our in-service training program has been eliminated due to budget reductions. The expense budget has been level funded.