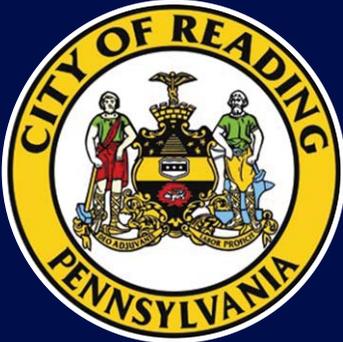


City of Reading, PA

Chief, Department of Fire & Rescue Services



Neher &
Associates®

The City of Reading

The Mayor and City Council of the City of Reading are seeking an experienced fire safety professional to serve as Fire Chief and to manage the day-to-day affairs of the Department of Fire & Rescue Services for this community of about 82,000 citizens. Initially incorporated as a borough in 1783, Reading became a city in 1847, and now ranks as the fifth largest city in Pennsylvania and the sixth largest municipality.

The City of Reading is the county seat of Berks County, Pennsylvania and the center of the Greater Reading Area. The City covers just under ten-square miles in southeastern Pennsylvania and is largely bounded on the west by the Schuylkill River, on the east by Mount Penn, and on the south by Neversink Mountain. Reading is approximately one and one-half hours from Philadelphia and two and one-half hours from New York (by auto). The City lent its name to the now-defunct Reading Railroad, which brought anthracite coal from the Pennsylvania Coal Regions. The railroad is one of four railroad properties in the classic English-language version of the Monopoly board game.

Reading was one of the first localities where outlet shopping became a tourist industry. The City's cultural institutions include the Reading Symphony Orchestra and its education project Reading Symphony Youth Orchestra, the Goggle Works Gallery, the Reading Public Museum and the Historic Society of Berks County. The Reading Pagoda, located atop Mount Penn, is also a popular recreational stop for tourists and residents and is the most visited attraction in Berks County. Residents also enjoy a variety of choices of outdoor activities and sports including the Reading Phillies (a double-A Eastern League baseball team), the Reading Royals (East Coast Hockey League Ice Hockey team), the Reading Express (an American Indoor Football League team), Reading United (Soccer), and Reading Buccaneers (Drum and Bugle Corps). Reading has more than six million visitors annually.

Five institutions of higher education are also located in Reading: Albright College, Alvernia College, Berks Technical Institute, Pace Institute, and the Reading Community College. The federal and state highways system allow good entry and egress to and from Reading and airline service is provided by the Reading Regional Airport (general aviation) with commercial service being provided with a short drive to Harrisburg International Airport, Lehigh Valley International Airport, and the Philadelphia International Airport.

In December, 2007, NBC's Today show featured Reading as one of the top four "Up and Coming Neighborhoods" in the United States as showing potential for a real estate boom based on areas for big change, renovations, cleanups of parks, waterfronts, and warehouses. The reviewer also noted Reading's proximity to Philadelphia, New York and other cities. Today the overall community offers a wide range of housing from extremely modest to luxurious homes.

The City of Reading operates under a Home Rule Charter with a strong Mayor form of government. The new form of government was approved by voter referendum on November 7, 1993 and began in 1996. The Mayor is elected at large for a four year term and is accountable for the executive branch of City Government. There are also seven members of the City Council, six of whom are elected by districts and one (the Council President) is elected at large. The Council serves in overlapping four-year terms. The current Mayor is Thomas

McMahon and the Council President is Vaughn Spencer. The Mayor is the Chief Executive Officer of the City and is responsible for enforcement of the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the ordinances of the City of Reading. He/she also has the authority to appoint all Department Directors with the confirmation of the City Council. The City Council is charged with the responsibility of developing legislative initiatives and budget priorities. It also oversees the performance of the management of the government to improve delivery and outcomes and monitors spending to ensure compliance with the approved budgets and financial plans of the City.

The City of Reading was designated a financially distressed municipality under Pennsylvania's Financially Distressed Municipalities Act, also known as "Act 47," on November 12, 2009. Act 47 provides for the restructuring of debt of financially distressed municipalities; allows for the levying of taxes not normally authorized and/or at rates above statutory maximums, provides for an outside consultant to review the municipalities finances, prepare a recovery plan, and give assistance in the implementation of the recovery plan; authorizes municipalities to participate in Federal debt adjustment actions; and provides for consolidation or merger of contiguous municipalities to relieve financial distress.

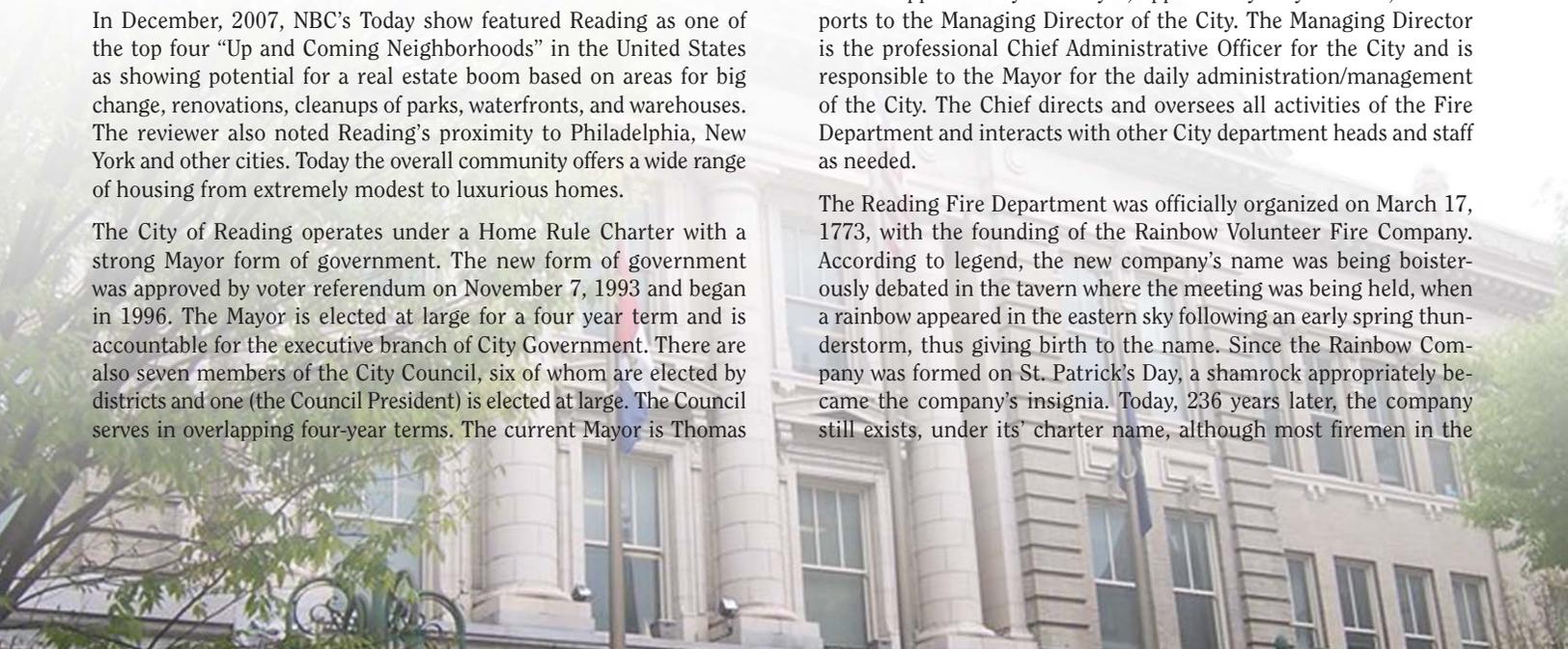
Public Financial Management in Philadelphia was assigned to prepare Reading's recovery plan and after much Community, City, County, and Commonwealth input, the final version of the recovery plan was adopted by City Council on June 11, 2010.

The mission of the City is to "Provide responsive dynamic government in a way that will enhance the quality of life for everyone in our community." The City's vision statement goes on to elaborate that "The City of Reading puts people first realizing we are all part of the renaissance of our community so that Reading becomes the most desirable small city in Pennsylvania." The Mayor and City Council are proud of the efforts of key City Management and staff to continue to improve the quality of services and professionalism of the City staff, and also value involvement and interaction with the community.

The Position and City of Reading Fire Department

The Chief of the City of Reading Department of Fire and Rescue Services is appointed by the Mayor, approved by City Council, and reports to the Managing Director of the City. The Managing Director is the professional Chief Administrative Officer for the City and is responsible to the Mayor for the daily administration/management of the City. The Chief directs and oversees all activities of the Fire Department and interacts with other City department heads and staff as needed.

The Reading Fire Department was officially organized on March 17, 1773, with the founding of the Rainbow Volunteer Fire Company. According to legend, the new company's name was being boisterously debated in the tavern where the meeting was being held, when a rainbow appeared in the eastern sky following an early spring thunderstorm, thus giving birth to the name. Since the Rainbow Company was formed on St. Patrick's Day, a shamrock appropriately became the company's insignia. Today, 236 years later, the company still exists, under its' charter name, although most firemen in the





city are full-time. The Rainbow fire station is located at 8th & Courth Streets, where it has been since 1870.

From this fledgling company, the department grew to a total of fourteen volunteer fire companies by 1914. Full-time apparatus drivers were hired by the individual fire companies in the 1870's, when the department began using horses to pull the apparatus to fires. The city paid each fire company an annual gratuity, from which the company then paid the drivers, bought supplies, and maintained the fire stations. The city built and owned most of the fire stations, however to this day, two stations are still owned by the individual fire companies, and the city pays rent to house apparatus at those locations. The Liberty fire station at 5th & Laurel Street is the most notable of the privately owned stations. Built in 1876 by the company, and still owned by them, it has been preserved in all of its 19th century splendor. A visit to the second floor meeting and sitting rooms is a hundred year step back in time. Over many years, the department has progressed from primarily volunteer fire fighters and from horses to steam engines to the modern equipment of today.

Although the City of Reading Fire Department is still considered a combination paid/volunteer department, it now consists of about 140 full-time uniformed personnel and two civilian employees. Approximately 24 volunteer firefighters supplement the paid force. Also now officially known as the Department of Fire and Rescue Services, the Department operates seven (7) engine companies, three (3) ladder companies, and a heavy rescue unit out of seven fire stations.

The companies are manned by four platoons of firefighters working 10-hour day shifts and 14-hour night shifts for an average 42-hour work week. Each platoon is staffed by a Deputy Chief (non-union), a Platoon Chief, shift Lieutenant and twenty-one firefighters and four "jumpers". The Fire Marshal heads the Fire Prevention and Fire Code Enforcement Division, and two Lieutenant Fire Prevention Officers are responsible for the annual inspections of commercial properties. A Lieutenant Training Officer is responsible for all of the Department's training and testing.

In January, 2001, the City took over Emergency Medical Services (from a private provider), which is now under the direction of the Fire Chief. The EMS Division consists of one Deputy Chief/EMS Manager (non-union), 24 paramedics, 3 wheelchair van drivers and 1 transport clerk/coordinator. All firefighters are trained as Emergency Medical Technicians, and to supplement the ambulances, the engine companies are equipped with automatic external defibrillators (AED) and oxygen to provide first-responder capabilities in their districts.

There are four major Divisions within the Department: Fire Administration, Special Services, Fire Suppression, and Emergency Medical Services. The total annual budget for the Department is approximately \$14.7 million. All Divisions and services report either directly or through key management to the Fire Chief. The current Chief, William Rehr will be retiring on 12/31/10 after thirty five years of service, twelve as Chief.

The new Fire Chief will be faced with the two-fold challenge of completing negotiations with the IAFF for their contract beginning

January 1, 2011 and implement the relevant initiatives and changes to the Fire Department and IAFF contract included in the Act 47 recovery plan.

In general, the Fire Chief is responsible for planning, directing, organizing and controlling the activities of the City of Reading Department of Fire and Rescue Services through his/her management team and officers. Typical duties and responsibilities of the position include:

- Directs and oversees the activities of the Department.
- Responds to alarms and directs activities at the scene of larger fires or incidents.
- Plans, implements and reviews departmental short and long-range goals and develops recommendations for the protection of life and property in the City.
- Develops general policies for the administration of the Department and establishes operational standards.
- Evaluates needs and makes recommendations for the construction of fire station, facilities, and the purchase and maintenance of apparatus and equipment.
- Prepares annual budgets and controls expenditures.
- Directs administrative functions within the Department including planning and personnel administration, grievances, departmental discipline and conduct, selection, hiring, and promotions, and evaluation of staff.
- Coordinates and meets with elected or appointed officials, other Fire/EMS officials, community and business representatives and the public on all aspects of the Departments' activities concerned with fire safety, protection, prevention and emergency medical services.
- Promotes the City's and Department of Fire and Rescue Services missions through continuous quality improvement, best practices, good staff training and support, and clear communications.
- Works closely with Police, Fire and other agencies and departments to help ensure public protection and safety.
- Assumes other duties and responsibilities as assigned by the Mayor and City Managing Director.

Issues, Challenges, and Opportunities

Challenges/opportunities include:

- Complete construction of a new \$2.8 million fire station in Schlegel Park to replace aging Oakbrook & Liberty stations.
- Continue to improve EMS financial performance with the goal of self-sufficiency.
- Reduce firefighter and civilian injuries.
- Continue to achieve a four-minute response time to at least 80% of calls.

- Reduce the number of fires by 10% by continued aggressive fire prevention practices and fire code enforcement.
- Reviewing and addressing safety prevention and response strategies for aging housing stock and vacant buildings in downtown area, row houses and narrow streets.
- Succession planning and hiring/recruitment needs for as many as three of four Fire Department Deputies that may be leaving City service in next year or so.
- Facilitating transfer of code enforcement responsibilities to the Community Development Department.

The Candidate

Education and Experience

- Possession of a four-year college or university undergraduate degree with major course work in fire science, public administration, business administration, or a closely related field is required and
- Ten years of experience in fire or emergency medical service work, four years of which must have been equivalent to Captain or Battalion Chief.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

The successful candidate should have a thorough knowledge of modern fire suppression, prevention and emergency medical services principles, procedures, techniques, and equipment as well as strong leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills. This person should also have knowledge/skills in:

- The principles and practices of public administration.
- Applicable laws, ordinances, departmental standard operating procedures and regulations.
- First aid and resuscitation techniques and their application.

In addition, he/she should be able to:

- Train, supervise and develop subordinate personnel.
- Perform work requiring good physical condition/health.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with a wide variety of people, including members of the public, staff and colleagues, the City's Managing Director, Mayor, City Council, and other fire, emergency services and public safety organizations and colleagues within the county, region and state/commonwealth.

Management Style and Personal Traits

The successful candidate will be someone who exercises good judgment, is able to make effective decisions, and communicates well orally and in writing.

He/she should also be someone of high integrity, is comfortable handling complicated issues and difficult situations, is results-oriented, strategic, and safety minded. He/she should be a good team builder and leader and be credible with staff and the community.

The person should also be able to analyze complex problems, be a good motivator, be confident and self-assured, yet open to the ideas and concerns of others. He/she should have a strong customer service orientation, and be facilitative rather than confrontational in nature.

Finally, the person selected should truly enjoy public safety and fire protection, and have a strong commitment to quality and public service.

Compensation

The salary range for this position is currently \$75,000 to \$90,000. The City of Reading also offers a competitive fringe benefits package. Details are available upon request. The successful candidate will be required to establish residency in the City of Reading within twelve months of appointment.

How to Apply

If you are interested in this outstanding opportunity, please submit a detailed resume as soon as possible to:

Robert Neher, Jr., President or
Rahn Sibley, Vice President

Neher & Associates

299 Westlake Drive
Suite 200
West Sacramento, CA 95605
Telephone: (916) 443-2421
Facsimile: (916) 443-5949

Applications are preferred electronically at:
robertneher@executivesearchneher.com

Should you have any questions with regard to your own interest, or a recommendation of a colleague, please contact us at the numbers above. Leading candidate applications will likely be reviewed with the City in late October to early November.

An Equal Opportunity/AA Employer.

