

Auburn Sewerage District Role and Function of Trustees

By Superintendent, John Storer

The Auburn Sewerage District is a quasi-municipal utility providing sewer collection services to over 5,300 residential, commercial, and industrial customers located within the City of Auburn. We do not provide any treatment of the sanitary waste. All waste is conveyed to the Lewiston-Auburn Water Pollution Control Authority (LAWPCA) located on the banks of the Androscoggin River in Lewiston. LAWPCA is the licensed authority that treats all public sanitary waste generated in Lewiston and Auburn.

The Auburn Sewerage District was formally organized by a Charter granted by the Maine Legislature in 1919. The fiscal and operational decisions of the District are made by a seven-member Board of Trustees that is appointed by the Mayor of the City of Auburn and the Auburn City Council. The City Council appoints 6 of the Trustees on staggered 4-year terms. The Mayor is allocated the 7th position, but historically the Mayor has appointed a designated representative (usually a current City Councilor) to provide a direct liaison back to the City Council. The Trustee meetings are open to the public and are tentatively scheduled to take place at 4:00 PM every third Tuesday of the month at the District office building at 268 Court Street.

The Sewerage District employs a full-time Superintendent to implement and oversee the day-to-day business operations of the District. To collect, handle and transport the sewerage waste generated within the City of Auburn, the Sewer District operates and maintains 23 wastewater pump stations, over 2,000 manholes, and 135 miles of pipe ranging from 8-inches to 54-inches in diameter. The projected 2014 Budget is expected to be \$3.96 million.

Serving as the Superintendent, it is helpful to have Board members with diverse and varying backgrounds. I believe it is beneficial to have a few long-standing members, such that there is continuity and institutional knowledge in regards to some long-standing issues.

Although there is nothing specifically listed in the original District Charter, historical practice has tried to accommodate a representative from each of the 5 City Wards.

In my opinion, any citizen of Auburn could serve effectively as a Trustee. The person would just need to devote sufficient time and attention to reviewing monthly reports and data. Related skills as a private business owner, engineer, chemist, fire service, accounting, legal, financial, etc. might provide some valued skills to diversify the Trustee make-up.

Auburn Housing Authority was incorporated in 1966 and built its first housing development, the Lake Auburn Towne House, in 1969. We now have 11 developments in Auburn and Mechanic Falls with a total of 522 apartments and also operate the federally funded Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program. This program allows eligible low income households to rent private market apartments that are not "project-based." Currently, this program has 538 vouchers under contract because of the federal budget sequester but is authorized to issue up to 590 vouchers provided that full federal funding is restored. Auburn Housing Authority's mission is to provide decent, safe and affordable housing in good neighborhoods for lower income persons. The Authority shall strive to create opportunities for residents' self-sufficiency and economic independence, and shall assure fiscal integrity by all program participants.

Pursuant to state law, we have a seven member board, two of whom must be residents of subsidized or assisted housing. Over the years, we have had a broad spectrum of commissioners, representing many interests, including, but not limited to: accountants, insurance agents, teachers, school administrators, social service agency employees, government employees, small business owners, retirees and others.

Auburn Housing Authority typically meets at 7:30 a.m. on the last Wednesday of each month except July, usually for between one hour and an hour and a half. Occasionally there may be a special meeting in addition to the regular meeting schedule to deal with real estate acquisition or something requiring immediate action. Packets of information are usually mailed out the prior Thursday, giving commissioners a few days to review the material, which includes various departmental reports, statistical information, and financial reports, as well as materials pertaining to agenda items. The vast majority of business is conducted in regular (public) session, with occasional exceptions made for confidential discussions allowed under state law held in executive session (pursuant to state law).

Important skills of commissioners include: ability to attend and participate in meetings; willingness to read & interpret sometimes lengthy board packets in advance of meetings; ability to review and interpret sometimes conflicting information to develop policy in cooperation with other board members; maintain a reasonable level of interest in the functions of the authority without interfering in the day to day operations of the agency, which are managed by the executive director and management staff.

Below is a list of our developments:

Lake Auburn Towne House, 74 Lake Auburn Ave. (Elderly) Public Housing
Family Development, Valerie Circle, Broadview Ave. vicinity (Family) Public Housing
Barker Mill Arms, 143 Mill Street (Elderly) Section 8 Substantial Rehab
Merrill Estates, Spring Street, Mechanic Falls (Elderly) Public Housing
Lincoln School Apts., 56 Sixth Street (Family) Public Housing
New Auburn Place, 11-15 S. Main St. (Mixed) Market rate owned by ARDC, a 501c3 affiliate
Auburn Esplanade, 20 Great Falls Plaza (Elderly) Section 8 New Construction
Broadview Acres, 456 Broad Street (Family) Public Housing
Vincent Square Apartments, 80 Mill Street (Elderly) LIHTC*, Privately Owned/Managed by Auburn Housing Authority
Roak Block, 156 Main Street, (Elderly) Section 8 Substantial Rehab (also includes commercial spaces)
Webster School Apts., 95 Hampshire Street, (Mixed) LIHTC*, Privately Owned/Managed by Auburn Housing Authority

*LIHTC stands for Low Income Housing Tax Credit, which is affordable, but not subsidized housing