

City of Auburn

To: Mayor LaBonté and the Auburn City Council
From: Clinton Deschene, City Manager
Subject: November Monthly Reporting - *Public Works & Engineering, Parks & Recreation, Library, Assessing, and City Clerk*
Date: January 4, 2013

Public Works and Engineering

- **Productivity-** APW processed 567 Work Orders and closed out 433 work orders with a balance of 124 work orders still open(and new) for the Month of November. Of the 567 Work Orders 230 were processed by our Fleet Services Team closing out 213 leaving 16 on-going repairs.
- **Employees-** The Public Works Department finalized the hiring of a new employee this month. A new Fleet Manager has been hired, his name is Ted Corbett and he comes to APW with over 20 years of industry experience in Fleet Management in a Public Works environment. This addition to the management team is a big plus for the department. If you get the opportunity to meet Ted you will see that he is professional, amiable and highly competent. Many new things to come from APW Fleet Services!
- **Update-** The Month of November begins Public Works Winter Operational period. Officially from November 15 to April 15 the crew and staff are on call 24/7 for Winter Operations. Even though we don't have a coating of white snow on the ground reminding us that Winter is here we have had several Winter Storms that the PW crew responded to by salting and sanding roadways around the City. Not every Winter Event brings fluffy white snow, some are tricky rain/sleet/ice events that require constant vigilance and tons of materials.
- **Holidays-** The arborist crew spent the month of November installing Holiday Lights around the City as well as coordinating the cutting, transportation, installation and decoration of the Christmas tree. This same crew also decorated one of the Department's Trucks for the Holiday Festival of Lights Parade.
- **Facilities-** PW coordinating with Finance Department to finalize contractor for siding replacement.
- **Winter Preparation-**
 - The crews continued reviewing and monitoring their plow routes for hazards and issues. At the beginning of the month notifications were hung on doors in the way of informational door knockers that instructed home/property owners of any item or issue they may have on or around their property that may impact Plowing operations this winter. Most residents complied with the notice to move items.
- **Sweeping-** as part of the City's Storm Water Runoff compliance street sweeping is an ongoing task. Targeted areas of the City were swept during October as well as areas hit hard by fallen leaves/debris. In order to keep basins open sweeping needs to be done.

NOVEMBER MONTHLY REPORTING

1.4.13

- **Cleaning of Basins** – ongoing process to ensure that basins are not clogged so that rain events and melting snow will not overflow the roadways and cause potential icing in these areas.
- **Tree Trimming Operations**- these operations were limited this month while the crew hangs Holiday Decorations around the City. Some nuisance, hazard and ROW issues were addressed during the month.
- **Paving and Patching Crew** –
- Worked with RR on rail replacement on high street. RR will not pay for our services but if we don't do the work they will not do the work and the roadway/crossing will be a hazard, potholed, rough, etc. So, PW coordinated road closing, notifying the public and did the pavement cutting, patching. RR never used to contact us at all when this type of work occurred, so even though they won't pay they are at least notifying us. (PW has sent an invoice for work and materials to the RR in hopes of receiving a payment)
- **Roadside Ditching and Shoulder Work-**
 - This crew worked to battle a never ending issue with beavers around the City. The saying 'busy as a beaver' is valid, these buggers are continually plugging up our culverts causing erosion issues and potential roadway flooding. APW has built some metal screens to stop the damming of culverts but we still have an area (Jordan School Road) causing us issues. PW has also solicited bids from contracted animal control persons, though this hasn't been acted upon as of yet.
 - Several low shoulder issues were repaired as well as several additional gravel roads were graded during the month. These operations are being wrapped up for the season.
- **The Sign Crew**
 - The sign crew has been creating/installing special sign requests, repairing and fixing damaged signs as well as systematically replacing all the out of compliance street signs throughout the City.
- **Special Projects:**
 - Completed Raymond Park retaining wall project. Removed old, rotted, broken railroad ties and replaced with pre-cast concrete retaining wall blocks. The choice was made to use large blocks that could not be removed by hand. This would eliminate vandalism/removal. PW also had the concrete contractor prepare a quote for pre-cast stairs that could be placed around the performance platform. This would replace the old broken wooden bench seat and allow for the removal of the wooden railing that is continuously vandalized. The quoted price has been forwarded to Parks and Rec.
 - The department rented a material screening unit to process the thousands of yards of ditching material stockpiled in 'the pit'. The crew screens out unwanted materials from the pile and in doing so create usable loam for future projects. The crew processed over 3,624 yards of loam at a cost of \$12 per yard. If the department were to buy loam for projects we would pay \$17 per yard.

NOVEMBER MONTHLY REPORTING

1.4.13

➤ **Trainings:**

- The department arranged to have a member of the Maine Department of Transportation's Local Roads Program come and perform a Winter Operations training program for the crew. The trainer is considered an expert in Winter Operations and trains hundreds of operators all around the State on such topics as plow operations, winter hazards, safety, maintenance, plowing techniques and overall 'survival' of the Winter for Snow plow operator.
- The crew was also trained on proper use and operation of the Cirrus Ground Speed Control systems. This system is used to regulate and record the amounts of Salt and Sand the Department puts on the roadways. The process is not as simple as turn the spinner on and drop the salt/sand. There are formulas, settings and environmental conditions dictating where/when/how much material to use. These systems help PW control costs and make the roads safe based on industry best practices.

- **BOL Compliance-** completed training the crew on annual Fork Lift certification and fire extinguisher trainings.
- **Recycling Operations-** during the month of November we collected 50.78 tons of recycled material. This is an increase for the month over last year's November numbers by 4.9 tons.
- Engineering staff underwent training from Lucity Staff on the deployment and data collection process for the new pavement management program.
- Staff continues to work with the Lewiston/Auburn Bike-Ped Committee on the development of a Complete Streets Policy for adoption by both Cities.
- Staff is also working with ATRC's Bike-Ped Advisory Committee on a 5 year update to long range facilities plan Bridging the Gaps.
- Dig safe location requests are slowing down as the season comes to an end.
- Central Maine Credit Union --- utility installation is complete -- site stabilization is complete for the winter, loam installation and plantings are complete-- sidewalks are complete and parking lot has binder on it for the winter will be finished in the spring.
- Panera Bread / Aspen Dental – Site work has been completed. Work continues on the Aspen Dental Building.
- Academy St. Town Houses -- utility installation is complete -- site stabilization is complete for the winter, need to loam in the spring -- sidewalks are complete and parking lot has binder on it for the winter.
- Rivershore Housing – Foundation walls have been completed and they are working on underground utility work.
- Tambrands -- utility installation is complete -- site stabilization is complete for the winter, need to loam in the spring

NOVEMBER MONTHLY REPORTING

1.4.13

- Estimates have been received for the work at the Oak Hill Vault.
- 2011 Neighborhood Project(Winter, Summer, Dennison)- Winterizing and touch up work is ongoing. Project to be completed next spring after the Auburn Water District has completed their work.
- 2012 Neighborhood Project (Cleaves, Old Farm Hill)- Project is complete
- 2013 Neighborhood Project- E. Dartmouth has received the base course paving and curbing work. The Public Works Department has completed the construction of a turn-around at the end of the street. Surface paving will occur next spring.
- 2012 Paving Project- The portion of Turner from Joline Dr to CMCC has been winterized and surface pavement will occur next spring. Remainder of the project to be completed in spring 2013.
- 2013 Paving Project- Trapp and Twin Roads have been winterized. Surface pavement scheduled for next spring. Manley Rd and Hotel Rd also scheduled for next spring.

Parks and Recreation

- November marked the start the holiday season, as well as, the beginning of winter programming at the Parks & Recreation Department. Youth basketball registrations were completed this month and player evaluations were conducted. The youth basketball program is a developmental program that places emphasis on participation, skill development and sportsmanship. The measure of success in this program is how much a player has improved from the beginning of the season to the end. A total of 256 participants are registered for the program in grades K-12.
- Adult basketball registrations were also completed this month. A total of 27 teams and 280 players across 4 different leagues are registered. The adult leagues play games on 5 out of 7 nights of the week.
- Pillo hockey wrapped up its 5 week season, with a total of 26 participants registered among 4-7 year olds.
- The first skating session of the season continued throughout the month. In this program, children and adults are introduced to the basic skills of ice skating: forward and backward skating, turns, edging and balance. A total of 27 participants are registered for the program.
- Planning for the 13th annual winter Festival began this month. This event provides a variety of fun outdoor activities for the community to enjoy. The aim of the festival is to encourage people to step outside and enjoy the winter season. It's a chance to try an activity you've never tried before, or one you haven't done in a long time. to A full week of activities are being planned running from Friday, January 25th through Sunday,

NOVEMBER MONTHLY REPORTING

1.4.13

February 3rd. Activities such as snow shoeing, ice skating, skiing, snowboarding and sledding are just some of the activities that can be taken part in.

- The Twin Cities Holiday Celebration and Festival of Lights took place on Monday, November 26th. The event was well attended, and ushered in the holiday season in the twin cities. A de-briefing meeting was held by the twin cities holiday committee in which several improvements were discussed. A change in the day of the week the celebration is held will be made to a Saturday to facilitate a number of improvements to the event. Attendance, logistical challenges, parade formation and procession, tree-lighting ceremonies, parking and traffic concerns will all be better addressed by making this change. In addition, conversation also took place on creating a static parade route, rather than switching back and forth between the two cities.
- As part of a city-wide effort, the application for the Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant was completed and submitted to the Maine Department of Conservation for review. The application was submitted for the New Auburn Greenway project. The New Auburn Greenway will provide a key transportation corridor link between downtown Auburn and downtown Lewiston that can be utilized by bicycles and pedestrians. The New Auburn Greenway project will connect to the Bernard Lown Bridge, run along the Little Androscoggin River to South Main Street and eventually cross South Main Street and connect to Barker Mill Housing and New Auburn. The improvements will create a multi-user (bicycle and pedestrian) trail for recreational and transportation purposes that will be safe and well maintained. Currently, a path/trail does not exist, so the scope of this work will dramatically improve, not only the transportation connection, but also the general aesthetics of the area along the river. It is expected that we will receive notification of grant awards sometime in January.

Library

- Head Start Family Literacy Nights @ APL
 - The Auburn Public Library Children's staff is collaborating with Androscoggin Head Start to bring family literacy evenings to the library. On Thursday November 29th APL hosted a Math Literacy evening for all area Head Start Families with more than 200 people attending. Families engaged in math literacy activities with their children and parents learned about financial literacy.
- The copper finials on the roof which have long symbolized the Library are in dire shape because some years ago they were patched with tin sheet metal. They have rusted out and also undermined the integrity of the areas where they are attached. The total cost of replacement is \$7,200 which the library is raising by various means including appeals to donors and a donation box in the lobby. To date we have raised almost half the needed amount.



NOVEMBER MONTHLY REPORTING

1.4.13

- Teen and Children's librarians have begun planning a teen parenting information night in the spring. From this initial event, we hope to gain greater insight into areas where teen parents need assistance and how the library and other agencies might work together to provide programming for this group. The program is building on the information provided to us by a Bates College class that researched successful programs of this kind.
- We are ramping up volunteer recruitment and reward efforts. A special training for teen volunteers was held last week, and volunteer applications and other materials have been redesigned. At the recommendation of the Board of Trustees, we will also be inviting volunteers who have logged significant hours to our Annual Meeting of Corporators. Thus far this fiscal year we have recorded 1433.25 volunteer hours. Although this is still down 2% from last year (partly because of a cutback in the ABLE program) it is well ahead of FY10 and 11, and we're optimistic that we will catch up to FY12.
- The trial of Kewane Pontoo, the man who attacked an APL children's librarian last April, was continued for another month to allow time for a psychiatric evaluation of Mr. Pontoo.
- The Library is preparing a grant request, funding for which will allow us to offer valuable additional services.
 - Small Business Incubator Grant – APL would offer office space and basic services (wifi, printing, phone, etc.) to a small business start-up chosen by a group which would include Roland Miller, Mary LaFontaine, Chip Morrison and representatives of SCORE, AVCOG and LAECG. The start-up would receive counseling from representatives of partner agencies and free space for up to two years. SBI's have been shown to significantly reduce the 80% failure rate of small businesses in their first year.

Assessing

- One in Four Property Reviews - The assessing office has completed the field inspections for 2,046 properties for the one in four year property reviews. All of the information and valuation changes have been entered into the Patriot System. This project is complete with the exception of loading some building photographs.
- I'd like to commend the assessing staff for their efficiency in completing the one in four year property reviews in a timely manner. We would not have been able to complete this project without the cooperation of the Planning and Engineering department for front counter coverage and vehicle sharing. This is a clear example of teamwork and I thank all of you.
- Business Equipment Reimbursement – The staff has spent the majority of the month processing personal property business reimbursement forms for our local businesses. These forms have to be processed by the assessing staff and returned to the State by December 31, 2012.

NOVEMBER MONTHLY REPORTING

1.4.13

- One commercial and three residential abatements were processed this month.
- We reviewed and inspected one commercial, five small multi-family and four residential properties.

City Clerk

- Deputy Registrar training was conducted on November 1st. Eleven people attended the training which lasted approximately 2 hours.
- The deadline for requesting absentee ballots was Thursday, November 1st. We extended our office hours until 7:00 P.M. on that day to accommodate residents wanting to register to vote and/or request an absentee ballot.
- The presidential election was held on November 6, 2012. The number of votes cast was 11, 449. That is approximately a 72% voter turnout.
- We had a total of 81 workers hired for this election. Of those, 19 were City Employees.
- 822 people registered to vote on election day alone. We now have 16,419 registered voters in Auburn.
- The recount for Legislative District 70 was held in Augusta on November 15, 2012.
- All new voter registrations, changes, and voter participation was entered into CVR by Friday November 16th prior to the State deadline.