

City of Auburn

To: Mayor LaBonté and the Auburn City Council
From: Clinton Deschene, City Manager
Subject: February Monthly Reporting - *Public Works & Engineering, Parks & Recreation, Library, and Assessing*
Date: March 15, 2013

Public Works and Engineering

Productivity-

- APW processed 651 Work Orders and closed out 482 work orders with a balance of 159 work orders still open(and new) for the Month of February. Of the 651 Work Orders 297 were processed by our Fleet Services Team closing out 256 leaving 41 on-going repairs/pending repairs. Fleet services is working hard to keep up due to the fact they are down 2 mechanics and all the snow storms we have had cause extra wear on the equipment.

Special Events/Projects/Coordination-

- PW Welder assisted the Police PAL center with making some repairs to newly acquired kitchen equipment. The repairs enabled Tom to continue his kitchen classes.
- Public Works and Parks/Rec have been working together to coordinate Spring and Summer projects. One of which is preparations around the City prior to Memorial Day. Another project topic being planned for is the repair of a softball field.

Citizen Engagement-

- On February 13, 2013 Denis met with the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1603 to outline our goals for the upcoming Memorial Day holiday. During this meeting I met Keith Davis, the City's point of contact for organizing the flag placement. Keith leads the Veterans Cemetery Association, who organizes the flag placement each year. We agreed to hold a meeting over the upcoming weeks to develop a strong process moving forward. Our first order of business is to develop an accurate list of veterans buried in our Auburn Cemeteries. This is already underway with the help of Auburn resident Roland Jordan. I met with Roland on February 18th and he provided a comprehensive list of all cemeteries in Auburn with all the Veterans designated. This was a tremendous help towards accomplishing an accurate list that can be compared to the list held by the Veteran's Cemetery Association. In our meeting Roland also offered assistance in arranging training for Public Works employees on proper headstone repair/placement. Throughout our cemeteries we have many head stones that have either tipped over time or been knocked over. We cannot possibly fix them all prior to Memorial Day, but our goal through the training is to continue working towards getting the headstones re-set properly. This will take a tremendous amount of time to accomplish, but this activity will be worked into our busy schedules to accomplish this over the next several months.

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- In early February representatives from the Good Sheppard Food Bank toured the Public Works facility allowing them time to ask us questions in regards to Fleet Services. They were very interested in what we do and us them. We were able to pass along to them our Fleet Maintenance setups, the type of work we do etc... We accepted their invitation to visit their location and take a tour sometime in March.

Facilities-

- APW building experienced more mechanical breakdowns with the building's garage doors this time. We have 16 large garage doors that are used frequently and they break from wear. The bigger the door the larger the cost to repair. We had two doors that required repair. The building's pressure washer system (used to clean trucks of salt and sand) also broke necessitating repair.

Winter Operations-

- We have had multiple winter events this month. With snowfall totals for the month exceeding 52 inches!! These storms have kept us extremely busy. Our Plow crews and Supervisors have worked long hours and every weekend during February. They have done an exceptional job at keeping the roads clear and safe. There may have been a few hiccups throughout the month but overall these employees have done a terrific job.
- Along with plowing the roadways the Public Works and Parks Department clears/plows/snow-blows sidewalks around the City. There are approximately 59 miles of sidewalks throughout the City. During the Winter months PW and Parks clear aprox 43 miles, not all b/c we cannot get to them all. We only have 4 vehicles to do this work. The 43 miles is broken out into 4 routes that take 8 to 16 hours to complete properly. The operators on these vehicles also have to operate a plow truck during the storms. This means for the sidewalk to get cleared operators have to be pulled from the plow trucks. The decision to pull plow operators for sidewalk operations is not an easy one, many factors go into the timing of this decision (school, time of day, day of week, type of storm, etc..) To make matters worse one of the 4 sidewalk buggies has broken down leaving us with only 3 to do the same amount of sidewalks. This unit is the oldest unit (17yrs old) and scheduled for replacement as long as CIP request is approved, if not the City will not be able to maintain the 43 miles of sidewalk during the winter as it does now.
- Public Works performed several snow picking operations this month as well. With a City of this size we cannot possible clear all the snow banks from the streets but we do focus on the higher priority streets as outlined in the PW Winter Operations Plan. Picking snow not only helps with visibility issues, narrow streets and parking concerns it also removes large amounts of dirt/sand/debris from the road so when the bankings melt we have less to clean up in the Spring/Summer time as mandated by the Federal Government to do.

Winter Budget-

- Out of the 6 budget account lines PW uses to track Winter Operations we have exceeded our budget on two line items, Salt and Winter Over-Time hours. We are currently 11% over the budgeted amount for Salt and 6% over the budgeted amount for Winter OT Plowing. The month of February hit the OT line hard because we had storms on every weekend as well as overnight- all OT shifts. The other budgeted line items are looking good, Calcium is at 70%, Fuel is at 65%, plow/grader blades is only at 10% b/c

we purchase new blades based on what was broken the previous winter (i.e. we will replenish our inventory this Spring for next winter based upon what we have used this winter and what we need for summer operations on our loaders/graders/bulldozer.) Our Sand budget is incorporated into our Gravel account, this account is 99% expended but our inventory levels are fine. We still have 60% of sand left and some stockpiles of gravel materials to support us for Spring/early summer operations. We order these ahead b/c gravel pits have a delay on materials during the Spring. Winter sand for next year is ordered later in the summer (next years budget). Public Works overall budget is in line with where we need to be for this time of year. Let's all wish for Spring!!

Paving and Patching Crew –

- The crew has been working hard to address all the potholes, frost heaves and damaged roadway areas throughout the City. This time of year with weather fluctuations we get more potholes and heaves. There are literally hundreds of potholes throughout the City and the crew(s) go out on a priority basis to address what we deem as the worst holes. This covers the City's liability for damage claims. Once the on-going list has been addressed the crews patrol areas of the City based on Plow Routes. Our crews have been addressing potholes in areas that are State Responsibility (Littlefield Bridge, sections of Hotel Road, Route 4, River road, etc..) Though the State is responsible they do not always address issues in a timely manner so Public Works does what is best for the residents by patching the holes. PW does however report the issues to MDOT and record the work on work orders.
- The sign crew has been chasing down many damaged signs. Mostly Keep Right Signs found on medians throughout the City. During winter events vehicles and trucks tend to hit these when driving in poor weather conditions. Add to that accidents the total sign damage numbers go up.

Trainings-

- Multiple Tool Box Talks were done covering safety topics with the crews. These are done by Supervisor with small groups of crew members.
- One supervisor attended a training session put on by EJ Prescott to learn about new drainage/storm water practices and equipment/product. This knowledge gets applied to spring/summer/fall operations when PW fixes and/or installs culverts, catch basins, ditches.

Recycling Operations-

- During the month of February we collected 41.01 tons of recycled material. This is a decrease for the month over last year's February numbers by 2.4 tons. This lower number can be attributed to several factors: Firstly-we continue to have issues with the old recycling trucks continually breaking down. These breakdowns have limited our ability to place the spare truck at MMWAC because it was needed for the daily runs. Without a truck at MMWAC we miss collecting material there and when the trucks both breakdown we lose the ability to collect all together. Though in these instances we use other trucks to collect the material and that impacts our totals to a degree. Hopefully once the weather begins to turn warmer the trucks will have fewer weather related issues, until

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then PW will do all that it can to provide this service. Secondly- the numerous winter events impact collection, not as many people put bins out when the snow is deep or the storm is occurring thus resulting in lower numbers. If you recall, last February we had mild temps and few storms.

- 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 continue at a slower pace this month. The work has been centered on notifying utility companies when their trenches are in need of repair.
- The Turner St Sidewalk Improvements project is being prepared to go out to bid.
- The final plans and specifications for the Riverside Drive project as well as the South Main Street Project were submitted to Maine DOT for authorization to advertise.
- A revised Preliminary Design Report was submitted to MDOT for the Helm Bridge replacement project which saved approximately \$300,000 in construction costs.
- A utility meeting was hosted by staff with all the utility companies within the City to coordinate this summers' upcoming work.
- The Engineering Department received the two new vehicles purchased as part of last years' budget. The newly purchased vehicles as well as the refitted pickup have been setup for the upcoming construction season
- Staff attended an erosion control seminar at EJP in Gardiner
- The Main Street Mill & Fill contract documents were prepared to go out to bid.
- A number of meetings were held between the City and our GIS consultant to discuss catchbasin mapping as it relates to the City infrastructure needs and meeting the City's regulatory requirements.
- Staff completed ongoing updates for changes to the tax map parcels.
- Staff continued to work on street addressing issues
- Plans and a legal description were prepared for the property acquisition of 9-15 Broad St
- Right of way acquisition negotiations for South Main Street reconstruction were ongoing in order to gain permission to go out to bid with the project.

Parks and Recreation

- The month of February continued with winter programming and special event planning. Youth basketball, indoor soccer and skating instruction concluded, and adult basketball continued through the month. Planning for Wednesdays in the Park performances and

the Spring Celebration continued throughout the month. Other Spring program planning for adult softball, tee ball and youth lacrosse also took place.

- Wright-Pierce continued work on the athletic fields needs assessment, conducting stakeholder meetings with a number of public and private organizations in an effort to gather information for the assessment. A draft report of the assessment will be available shortly.
- An effort to catalog City facilities utilizing GIS mapping continued during the month of February. City facilities are in the process of being inventoried and mapped with our GIS software. Included in the GIS mapping will be listings of all available recreation, public space and cemetery information. This information will also assist staff to have inventories on hand for maintenance planning and capital improvement planning as well as, developing a facilities master plan.
- The parks department performed maintenance during multiple winter storm shifts which consisted of plowing, sanding, snowblowing and sidewalk maintenance. We have collaborated together with Public Works to ensure that sidewalks, winter relief lots and the immediate area around Auburn Hall receives the needed attention during winter storm events. In anticipation of Spring, preventative maintenance on seasonal equipment also took place, as well as, infrastructure maintenance such as park bench repair and picnic table repair.
- During the month of February, the Parks Department 2013 Spring work goals and Memorial Day goal summary were discussed, planned and developed. The work goals incorporate routine regular maintenance and areas of particular focus prior to the Memorial Day holiday. As a component of the work goals, we recognize that inter-departmental coordination is necessary to achieve these ambitious plans. Prior to Memorial Day the Parks Department and Public Works Department will implement a collaborative and targeted approach to ensuring the City is well groomed and ready for the holiday. An essential point to consider is these tasks/activities are contingent upon changing circumstances and weather conditions and may vary from the plan as stated.
- A plan to address the condition of the Lakeview Fields on Gracelawn Road was discussed this month. Particularly, Lakeview 1 (field closest to the Public Works building) is in need of leveling, grading and re-seeding. Tentatively, we have slated repair of this field as soon as weather permits, with the understanding that this field may not be used during the upcoming softball season. Public Works will assist with placing material on both the outfield and infield, and grading the new material to allow for sheet drainage. After seeding and hydro-mulching, the young grass will need approximately two growing seasons (Spring & Fall) before play resumes. The condition of Lakeview 2 will be addressed after softball season concludes in the Fall.

***Work on the Twin Rink facility continued throughout the month. Meetings focused on the design and layout of the new arena took place with the general contractor, the architectural firm, the City's consultant and City staff. A rendering of the facility is being developed and will give a

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snapshot of the building and immediate surrounding area. The position of Arena Manager for the new facility has been advertised with an application deadline of March 18th, or until position is filled.

Library

- The Library is happy to report a record number of average daily visitors in February with 864 people a day – we're so glad the weather didn't stop people from using their library!
- Contributing to the cheerful commotion was the 4th Annual Farmers' Market which drew 445 including the most popular participant, Joe Grey's lamb Demarus, who thrilled children by cavorting around the Library wearing Pampers.
- In keeping with Council goals, the Library's summer reading programs will invite participants to engage with their community.
- In the Children's Reading Program, puppet and world traveler Pinecone Pete will be taking a "staycation" this year and discovering points of interest right here in Auburn. The "Pinecone Pete Digs into Auburn Contest" will start on June 17th. Children will be able to guess which Auburn landmark he is visiting and enter their name into a weekly drawing for a free book. We have also firmed up plans with the Rec Department to take books and a weekly reading program to the summer campers.
- The Adult summer reading program theme will be "Discovering Auburn's Treasures." Prizes will be awarded to those who accumulate points by participating in events and contributing to local history projects. The kickoff event will feature the Auburn Youth Orchestra.
- As part of Money Smart Week in April, Adult Services will partner with T.D. Bank to present a family budget workshop which will be followed up with an Excel spreadsheet workshop so families can learn to create their budget electronically. A workshop will also be held that week on social commerce sites such as Living Social.
- The Library's biennial distribution of customer service surveys will be conducted for the next two weeks. The short surveys cover various aspects of service including the building, staff, materials and website.



Assessing

- We completed the annual field reviews for the personal property canvas. The review process helps us to identify the new businesses and close the businesses that are no longer in operation. This project has to be completed before we can send out our mass

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mailing of the 706 Asset forms and Business Equipment Tax Exemption forms. We have 1,089 personal property business accounts.

- The department's activity for the month was centered on permit inspection reviews, updating ownership information from the deeds and addressing abatements.
- Karen worked on the tax share agreement for the Finance Department which has to be completed annually.
- February 7th was the abatement deadline. We have an appeal of a three unit multi family dwelling scheduled for March 5th. In addition, we have 3 residential and three commercial abatements pending a final decision.