

City of Auburn, Maine

Office of the City Manager



TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Clinton Deschene, City Manager
RE: Weekly Report
DATE: Weeks Ending November 28 and December 5, 2014

Assessing

- Katelyn D. downloaded and entered the September deeds and loaded all current permits in the system.
- The Prospect Hill Golf appeal was postponed due to illness of the appellate.
- Joseph St. Peter, a new appraiser, has been cleared to start work December 15th.
- I have been loading the property data and valuing the properties Dana B. inspected.

Auburn Public Library

- The Library is gearing up for the holidays. We have plenty of programs planned including our annual Gingerbread workshop on Dec. 6th, which is a gift to the Library from the Masonheimer family. The two planned sessions are full and there is a waiting list.
- Please stop by and see our unusual Christmas tree and Menorah on the second floor. Adult services staffer Will Chapman has created these.
- There will be an Old World Hanukkah Concert on Mon., 12/15, at 6:00 p.m. Sruli Dresdner, the new rabbi at Temple Shalom in Auburn and his wife Lisa will perform. Sruli and his wife Lisa are international Jewish performers and personalities, and have been featured on PBS-TV and National Public Radio. They have headlined at Jewish Festivals from Cracow, Poland to Jerusalem, Toronto to Texas. Come join us as we note the start of Hanukkah with song and celebration. This is a family program suitable for all ages.
- James Ritter, the current Director of Reader & Information Services at the Maine State Library, has been chosen to succeed Linda Lord as State Librarian. The appointment will be effective January 1st. Jamie will do an excellent job for the State Library and all Maine libraries. Linda Lord has worked tirelessly on the local, state, and federal level for libraries for many years and will be missed. As part of her duties as a member of the Friends of the Maine State Library board of directors, Mamie Ney participated in the final interview process.
- The Library has submitted a grant request to the Institute of Library and Museum Sciences for two 3-D printers. The Library will also be a part of an IMLS grant being sought by Cornerstones of Science for family science programming in libraries. If successful, we will be one of three Maine libraries participating in the pilot program.

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- The Library has had two storm-related closings. We closed two hours early for the storm on Thanksgiving eve. We opened three hours late for the storm on Weds., 12/3.
- Plans are underway for our annual indoor Farmers Market which will be held on Fri., Feb. 27th. We are expecting to add new vendors and craft demonstrations.
- Follow the Library on Facebook or link to our website at www.auburnpubliclibrary.org for more information about all of our programs, new books, and more library news.

City Clerk

- Entered the Voter Participation History (approximately 10,000 voters) into CVR (Central Voter Registration System) for the 11/4/2014 election to meet the 12/5/14 statewide deadline
- Received approximately 90 petitions and began validating the signatures
- Mailed out reminder letters and renewal applications to cab companies (8) and taxi drivers (109) letting them know that their licenses were due to expire at the end of December and they would have to renew for 2015.
- We issued;
 - 5 birth certificates
 - 81 death certificates
 - 8 marriage certificates
 - 2 marriage licenses
 - 16 burial permits
 - 3 Taxi Driver licenses
- Received 6 business license renewal applications, and issued one business license

Community Development

- Reine Mynahan attended a presentation on “Moving Toward More Targeted Approach to Strengthening Families and Communities”, a Leadership Unplugged presentation by Maine Development Foundation. The speaker was Tony Cipollone, President of John T. Gorman Foundation. This topic was of special interest as the Citizens Advisory Committee considers many issues to strengthen neighborhoods as part of the Consolidated Plan process. It was clear that Gorman Foundation understands that kids do well when parents do well.
- The first meeting of potential partners was held with St. Mary’s Nutrition Center to talk about establishing community gardens. The planning work will be done in the winter months.
- When Hal was doing a progress inspection at 132 Hampshire Street, he discovered the new siding had been spray painted on three sides. We are waiting to hear from a contractor to see if the siding can be cleaned or has to be replaced.
- A Community Development client who applied for a complete property upgrade through the rehab program was also approved by Community Concepts for weatherization. The Community Development Loan Committee approved her loan package with the understanding the weatherization improvements would be paid by Community Concepts. After completing a weatherization audit, Community Concepts performed a second income review even though the first review was still valid. Subsequently, they denied the project because of an income change. After repeated efforts with MaineHousing for reconsideration, through the assistance of Senator John Cleveland MaineHousing finally agreed to allow Community Concepts to move forward under the first income determination.

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- The Lead Subcommittee of the L/A Public Health Committee finalized its 5-year strategic plan. The plan will now be submitted to the L/A Public Health Committee for comment.
- The Citizens Advisory Committee held its 5th meeting with 12 members in attendance. At the request of the committee, Eric Cousens attended the meeting to talk about code enforcement. Eric provided a copy of the Housing Code and spoke about the inspection process. Nine Bates College students gave a presentation on the surveys done in the Union Street, Downtown and New Auburn Target Areas. A total of 77 surveys were logged into survey monkey software and analyzed by the students. There were different priorities stated by residents of each target area. The final report will be available next week.

Finance

- The final CAFR (Comprehensive Annual Financial Report) for Fiscal Year 14 is printed and was handed out to the City Council on Monday, December 1, 2014. The auditors will come and do a presentation at the December 15th meeting.
- The Finance Director with the help of Rosemary Mosher (ICT) updated the CIP database and sent it to the department heads. Their CIP requests for FY 2016 are due back to Finance by Friday, December 19, 2014.
- The Finance Director has begun preparing the budget worksheets for the departments to submit their FY 16 budget requests. These will go out to all departments after Christmas and be due back to Finance by the end of January 2015.
- The Facilities /Purchasing Manager has been working on various projects (listed below):
 - Cordjia attended a meeting with the State Fire Marshall regarding Ingersoll Repurposing, went favorable, permits should be in hand in the next few weeks.
 - Ingersoll-Final design and specifications scheduled to go out to bid by Dec 5th
 - The bid for the lighting upgrade project at Public Works has been awarded to DeBlois Electric, (low bidder). The City will receive \$40,000 in Efficiency Maine incentives, which will cover more than half of the project.
 - Still negotiating details on the HVAC efficiency upgrades at Public Works.
 - Opened Sweeper bids
 - Worked on the plan for Developing Facilities Team and Centralized Budget
 - Completed the Hasty Window specifications and put out to bid
 - Assisting Community Little Theatre with Natural Gas Conversion

Fire

- Deputy Allen and FPO O'Connell attended a training seminar on "Forensic Photography" in South Portland.
- FPO O'Connell & Deputy Allen did a C of O inspection and fire alarm test at the Hobby Lobby construction site.
- Chief Roma continues to provide presentations to both print and visual media concerning the public's need to utilize 911 as the primary phone number to report an emergency. He continues to speak about the implementation and startup of the AFD's new emergency medical transport service.
- The Auburn Fire Department continues to prepare for both potential Influenza and Ebola situations. A meeting was held with Safety Officer Lussier, DC Low and BC Milligan regarding ongoing updates in these areas.
- Crews continue training our probationary firefighters for their upcoming 6 month skills evaluations.

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- The Auburn Firefighters and AFD Honor Guard participated in the visitation and funeral for Evelyn Brown, “The Cookie Lady” who passed away last week.
- Deputy Chief Geoff Low returned from his Executive Fire Officer program in Emmitsburg, Maryland at the National Fire Academy.
- Crews attended “Tree Lighting” ceremonies at Clover Manor and Schooner Estates, along with participating in the City’s “Festival of Lights” parade.
- For the week of November 20th to December 3rd, we responded to 180 calls for service. These include, but are not limited to: 14 fire alarm calls, 4 fire calls, 120 Emergency Medical calls including 1 Mutual Aid call for New Gloucester Ambulance, 8 Motor Vehicle Accidents, 1 with injuries, 11 service calls and 23 Hazardous Condition calls including 1 Natural Gas Leak, 1 Bomb Threat and several wire down calls during the storms. We provided no fire mutual aid and received no mutual aid during this period.

Health and Social Services

- With the help of the Community Service team this office distributed 6 food boxes including turkeys over the Thanksgiving holiday which served a total of 21 people.
- Christmas requests are still coming in for families without means to get presents to their children. Auburn Fire Department’s program, Truckload of Christmas, is still accepting the families.
- In November we billed DHHS for \$9,304.04 for assistance granted during that month. Rent is still the biggest portion of the assistance. Followed by electricity this past month due to the many pending disconnections.
- I recently met with Senator Eric Brakey, Lewiston Social Service director Sue Charron and Mayor McDonald at Senator Brakey’s request. He is planning on proposing legislation regarding undocumented people and TANF timed out households who apply for general assistance.

Human Resources

- The Human Resources Staff has been working on the benefits changes in preparation for the new calendar year, including the annual open enrollment for health, income protection and vision plans, life insurance calculations for the W-2’s and recalculation of the health insurance waiver payments to reflect 2015 premium adjustments. All changes must be completed for the Finance Department by the first payroll in January.
- I attended a presentation by the Municipal Human Resources Association on the interrelationship of legal requirements of Family Medical Leave, Americans with Disabilities and Workers’ Compensation Laws. Compliance with these legal requirements can be a challenge.

ICT

- Staff conducted the first Public Information Session on MapAuburn, the City’s new online mapping portal. Although we followed the public notification process and additionally contacted at least three professional organizations in the greater Auburn area, the session was not well attended. We will make additional efforts to get the word out for the upcoming evening session (Thursday, 12/11).
- Auburn’s old WebMap, the GIS viewers used by staff, stopped working (the public-facing map viewers are still functional). It would take several dedicated days to completely rebuild the viewers to make them functional. Because these old viewers were scheduled for

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retirement in the next several months anyway, we will focus our resources on enhancing MapAuburn to insure all of the applications needed by staff are available and that all users have the needed training. We added two new mapping applications this week and are working on several more.

- Completed updates to the 2016 CIP database for the Finance Department. This year we added the capability for department managers to enter information directly into a copy of the database. This will streamline the process and reduce the data entry time for Finance.
- We recently ran a security scan of our network, and the results were sobering. The scan exposed a series of potential vulnerabilities, mostly due to lenient security policies on our part. The greatest impact on staff will be a new requirement to make passwords more robust and to change them more frequently. Consequently, starting in January, staff will be required to update their passwords every 180 days. Many accounts were found to still be using temporary passwords issued by IT staff while we worked on their PCs. Passwords will be required to contain at least 8 characters, be of mixed case, and include numbers and special characters. We'll be informing staff over the next few weeks and will be available to help.
- The electronics that control the door into the Second Floor East wing shorted out and it could not be secured. A temporary fix has been effected, but we'll hold off on replacing the damaged hinge until the FY16 budget process is complete. We will be requesting a fairly major upgrade of the access controls for next year. If approved, the recalcitrant hinge will be replaced in that upgrade. If not, we'll be replacing the hinge in the spring.

Planning

- Permits in November: 65; Estimated Construction Cost: \$733,695; Fees Collected: \$6,878.00
- Transportation Center- The Council approved the location and funding and staff held a kick off meeting with Casco Bay Engineering and developer Tom Platz on the next day. We are on schedule for a start of construction in August 2015.
- City Electrician, Charlie DeAngelis has been on vacation for the week and Mike Soucy has been busy with callouts and Christmas lighting. Much of the holiday lighting has been damaged over the years and while some required more repair than usual this year, some will not be able to be used again. Most of the damaged lighting is from the Vincent Square area and the Center Street Overpass area.
- Housing efforts Update - Zack and Hal have begun work on Code Enforcement focused on the CDBG area once again. One of the first projects after Hal's return was to check the vacant properties. In February of this year, we counted at least 46 vacant properties in the CDBG areas. As of today, that number is down to 33. CDBG has demolished a few buildings and quite a few others have new owners and are inhabited or being rehabbed, a promising trend that will hopefully continue.
- Community Rating System – Each year staff provides documentation to FEMA and the Insurance Services Office (ISO) to ensure that we meet all minimum standards for floodplain management. For a number of years we have been doing more than the minimum and that has resulted in our rating being improved from a 10 to an 8 which allows anyone in Auburn to purchase flood insurance at a rate that is reduced by 10% over standard pricing. We have completed the annual review and the reduced rate will continue into 2015. It is unlikely that we could get below a 7 rating but that will be a goal for coming years and could result in an additional 5% off of premiums for Auburn property owners.

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- St. Louis Church Preservation - City Planner Greene facilitated a Special Exception, Site Plan Review and Variance Request at the Planning Board's November 18 meeting, for the St. Louis Church in New Auburn. The plan was approved making way for a new owner who has now taken ownership of the property. Staff and the Council will need to discuss how the City can help support the effort to save this historic landmark over the coming months.
- Mt. Apatite and Maine Army National Guard JLUS – We are getting close to closing out the grant for the project with the Office of Economic Adjustment. The Final Performance Report has been accepted and the final financial report is close to being complete. We are excited to put the study phase behind us soon and get to work on implementation.
- The annual Home Occupation renewal letters were sent this week for renewal on January 1st. The purpose of the Home Occupation Permit is to allow the secondary and incidental use of a residence for the conduct of appropriate occupations whose external activity levels and impacts are so limited as to be compatible with and not adversely affect the character of the surrounding neighborhood. This is a great way to allow for the startup of non-retail small businesses with very limited traffic.
- As of December 1st we are 42% of the way through the year and have collected 39% of projected revenues. Our largest revenue item is building permits which traditionally will slow beginning in October and November but has stayed strong later into the year than usual. Considering the current discussions regarding additional projects we are still optimistic about meeting or exceeding revenue projections for the year.
- 33 South Goff Street – The structure was condemned and so far no one has come forward to propose a remedy. We will be securing the City right to demolish it and working with CDBG to package a group of structures for demolition for better pricing.

Police

11/20-11/26 Weekly Report

- The department handled 536 calls for service this week. Officers conducted 114 motor vehicle stops and 14 field interviews. Officers investigated 103 offenses of which, 13 of which were felonies, generating 28 arrests, 27 criminal summonses and 3 juvenile arrests. Officers responded to 68 motor vehicle crashes.
- Interviews were conducted for the vacant Police Officer position. A final candidate was selected for the second phase of the selection process.
- Deputy Chief Moen taught a class for the recruits at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy.
- Chief Crowell attended a human trafficking meeting at the US Attorney's Office.
- Chief Crowell made a guest appearance on the Ray Richardson radio talk show to discuss inaccuracies of the ACLU's press release regarding Bias Based Policing.
- On Thanksgiving, department staff and PAL Volunteers made and delivered 19 Thanksgiving Meals to families in need.
- Officer Kelly attended a Street Survival Seminar.
- Black Friday in the retail district went smoothly. Several stores hired officers for additional security. Traffic & Parking Enforcement adjusted schedules to work during the peak times of Black Friday.
- The first parking ban of the season went smoothly, no vehicles were towed.

11/27-12/04 Weekly Report

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- The department handled 458 calls for service this week. Officers conducted 89 motor vehicle stops and 7 field interviews. Officers investigated 55 offenses of which, 5 of which were felonies, generating 25 arrests and 17 criminal summonses. Officers responded to 36 motor vehicle crashes.
- Chief Crowell, Deputy Chief Moen and Lt. Cougle met with Tim Holden reference arena security.
- Chief Crowell attending a Bridges Out of Poverty Meeting.
- Interviews were conducted for the vacant Information Assistant position. A final candidate was identified to move forward in the second phase of the selection process.
- Sgt. Boulet oversaw the Festival of Lights Parade. No issues were reported.

Public Services

- Tuesday night into Wednesday, crews were out hitting the roads and hills, plowing, salting and sanding Auburn. Auburn received about 2 inches of snow which changed over to sleet and freezing rain.
- After storm vehicle cleaning/maintenance and fixing plow blades
- Snow removal in the Downtown area, Main St, Lower Turner St., Center St., Court St., Spring St., Elm St.,
- Plow sidewalks 63's run
- Mechanics and crew were busy building tires and chains
- Snow removal at Central Fire Station
- Clean up Auburn Hall and Mechanics Row
- Open basins on 4, 10, 3 and 11's run
- Tree work: Pettengill Park, Festival Plaza, 102 Goff St, 55 Hillside Av, and Auburn Hall
- Spot sanding roads and sidewalks in Auburn as well as school areas.
- Winterized sweepers and put into storage at Parks
- Install decorations around Auburn
- Trash run: Bonney Park
- Excavation Technician inspected excavation sites, applications for fill, drive opening, pole permits etc., as well as marked all Dig Safe locations
- All construction projects are wrapped up for the winter

Recreation

Week of November 24th through November 29th

- Registrations continued for Youth Basketball (grades 1-12) and PreK – K Instructional Basketball. Youth basketball is a developmental program that places participation, skill development, and sportsmanship above points scored. The measure of success is how much a player has improved from the beginning of the season to the end. PreK – K Instructional Basketball is a five week instructional program, where players will learn about basic basketball fundamentals. The techniques of dribbling, passing, and shooting will be the primary focus, with other basketball strategies coming into play. This introductory program is designed to provide the young basketball player with the skills needed to learn the basics of a fun game that will last a lifetime.

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- Player evaluations were held for 3-6th grade youth basketball players on Monday evening. Currently, a total of 165 players are registered in this age group. Practices will begin next week.
- Player evaluations were held for 7-12th grade youth basketball players on Tuesday evening. Currently, a total of 81 players are registered in this age group. Practices will begin next week.
- Adult Men's basketball will begin this coming weekend. A total of 25 teams are registered in the league this season.
- Pickleball has continued to be a big hit as week eight of the program started on Tuesday. Pickleball is a tennis-styled sport that is played on a badminton sized court indoors or outdoors. The "Pickleball" is a plastic ball with holes that is served, volleyed, and rallied back and forth over a net using a wooden paddle. As of Tuesday, there have been 160 participants, with new members coming in each day of the program. Pickleball will take place every Tuesday and Thursday, 9:00am-11:00am in the Hasty Community Center Gymnasium. The fee is \$2.00 for Auburn Residents and \$3.00 for Non-Residents.
- The 8th Annual Holiday Celebration/Parade of Lights planning process continued. December 3rd has been selected as the date for the event this year. Center Street Dental has again been secured as the premier event sponsor. The planning committee for the December 3rd annual L/A celebration would like to showcase the community's multitude of festivities in an effort to make Lewiston-Auburn a holiday destination spot! As such, organizations that wish to submit information pertaining to a December 2014 holiday event will benefit from print and online highlighting of their festivities. Submissions may be submitted to Lewiston's Community Relations Coordinator Dottie Perham-Whittier via www.lewistonmaine.gov/holidayla. For more information on the parade or to obtain an application, contact Program Leader, Jeremy Gatcomb jgatcomb@auburnmaine.gov. Currently, 33 organizations/groups have committed to take part in this year's parade.
- Youth open gym continued. This free, after school program is for Auburn students and runs Monday-Friday from 2:30 – 4:15 PM.
- Staff attended a Winter Festival planning meeting on Tuesday.
- Planning for upcoming youth and adult winter programs continued.

Week of December 1st through December 6th

- Registrations opened for Youth Indoor Soccer, ages 4-7. In this six week program, players will be introduced to the basic techniques of soccer in a fun and positive environment. Emphasis will be on learning through fun games and small-sided play. Other skills such as communication and sportsmanship will also be incorporated.
- PreK – K Instructional Basketball began on Sunday. PreK – K Basketball is a five week instructional program, where players will learn about basic basketball fundamentals. The techniques of dribbling, passing, and shooting will be the primary focus, with other basketball strategies coming into play. This introductory program is designed to provide the young basketball player with the skills needed to learn the basics of a fun game that will last a lifetime. Currently, a total of 54 players are registered for the program.
- Practices began for 1-6th grade youth basketball players. Currently, a total of 168 players are registered in this age group.
- Practices began for 7-12th grade youth basketball players. Currently, a total of 90 players are registered in this age group.

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- Practice and game schedules are available online for both youth and adult basketball: www.teamsideline.com/auburnme
- Adult Men's basketball continued. A total of 24 teams are registered in the league this season.
- Adult Women's basketball practices/scrimmages began. A total of 6 teams are registered in the league this season.
- Pickleball has continued to be a big hit as week nine of the program started on Tuesday. Pickleball is a tennis-styled sport that is played on a badminton sized court indoors or outdoors. The "Pickleball" is a plastic ball with holes that is served, volleyed, and rallied back and forth over a net using a wooden paddle. As of Thursday, there have been 182 participants, with new members coming in each day of the program. Pickleball will take place every Tuesday and Thursday, 9:00am-11:00am in the Hasty Community Center Gymnasium. The fee is \$2.00 for Auburn Residents and \$3.00 for Non-Residents.
- The 8th Annual Holiday Celebration/Parade of Lights took place on Wednesday. After a stormy start to the morning, the weather cleared, which made for an enjoyable parade experience for all. A total of 29 organizations/groups participated in this year's parade.
- Youth open gym continued. This free, after school program is for Auburn students and runs Monday-Friday from 2:30 – 4:15 PM.
- Planning for upcoming youth and adult programs continued.