

City of Auburn, Maine

Office of the City Manager



TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Howard Kroll, City Manager
RE: Weekly Report
DATE: Week Ending December 19, 2014

Assessing

- All personal property 801 forms received thus far have been processed to meet the state mandated deadline for submission.
- Karen visited the Augusta Assessing Office with Howard K., Deb G., & Jill E. to gather information on their office operations.
- Joseph St Peter began training as a city appraiser on Monday December 15th.
- Katelyn has loaded into the CAMA system all address and name changes request to date and began processing the November deeds and declarations.

Auburn Public Library

- The Library will close on Weds., Dec. 24th, at 1 p.m. for the Christmas holiday. Regular hours will resume on Fri., Dec. 26th.
- A very special thank you to Rabbi Sruli Dresdner, the new rabbi at Temple Shalom in Auburn, and his wife Lisa for the wonderful Hanukkah concert they presented on Mon., Dec. 15th. We had a capacity crowd and everyone joined in the celebration. Their music, stories, and jokes were outstanding.
- Please stop by the Library and check out our book Christmas Tree and Menorah. They are works of art.
- The Knitting Group will meet at 5 p.m. on Mon., Dec. 22nd. Please join us to finish that last minute holiday project.
- Mad Science will present a family holiday program on Mon., Dec. 22nd, at 6 p.m. Their visits are always a treat and a big draw. No pre-registration is necessary, but attendees should arrive early to ensure a good seat.
- There will be a Teen Gaming Hour on Fri., Dec. 26th, from 4 to 5 p.m. Come and share your news about holiday gaming gifts.
- To celebrate school vacation there will be a free family movie on Mon., 12/29, at 11 a.m. Join us for some Winnie-the-Pooh fun.
- The L/A Film Forum session, "Hemingway's Garden of Eden," for Mon., Dec. 29th, has been rescheduled for the same time on Mon., Jan. 5th.
- Check out our programming calendar for special vacation week events. Calendars are available throughout the Library or online.

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- The entire staff wishes the communities of Auburn, Lewiston, and Minot a happy and safe holiday season.
- 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

- Mailed out 18 business license renewal letters.
- Issued 4 business licenses and received 4 renewal applications.
- Issued 8 birth certificates, 24 death certificates, 1 marriage certificate.
- Applications for Banner space across Court Street have started coming in for 2015.
- After entering in the voter participation history last week, staff has been reviewing the incoming voter list against the voter participation history checking for accuracy.
- Reviewed Boards and Committees for term expirations and will begin the application process.

Community Development

- The Citizens Advisory Committee held its 6th meeting. This was a joint meeting with the City of Lewiston's committee where 13 Auburn and 7 Lewiston CAC members were in attendance. The presentation included demographic information about households living in poverty, persons with disabilities, and those who are homeless. Our consultant from Planning Decisions also reported on the results of a social service consultation with 50 area service providers as well as a meeting with Lewiston-Auburn Alliance for Services to the Homeless. The Auburn committee felt social service funding should address the issues of youth and their family at the same time. More work will be done on this topic.
- Yvette Bouttenot attended a 2-day training on affirmatively furthering fair housing. HUD has recently created a new planning tool that will replace the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing (AI). The AI is the process we followed 2 years ago when we developed our last fair housing plan. The change in regulation is due to HUD not seeing a clear connection between the AI and community plans. The new rule will require more emphasis to address significant barriers to fair housing choice such as segregation and access to opportunity. The final rule will affect the 2020 Consolidated Plan.
- Reine Mynahan attended the press conference to announce the receipt of the Lead Hazard Control Grant by the City of Lewiston.
- A Request for Proposals was released for consulting services to build a municipal network to provide wireless internet services in the Downtown, New Auburn, and Union Street Target Areas. Proposals will provide us with prices for three levels of services: initial planning with a preliminary cost estimate, an alternate for a design with cost estimate, and alternate for business models.

Finance

- The final CAFR (Comprehensive Annual Financial Report) for Fiscal Year 14 has been sent to the Government Finance Officers Association for review for the Certificate of Excellence program.
- The Finance Director, Assessor, HR Director and City Manager visited the City of Augusta to look at how they run their Assessing Department and how it interacts with other departments.

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- The Facilities /Purchasing Manager has been working on various projects (listed below):
 - The final bid documents for Ingersoll were put out to bid
 - Conducted Pre-bid meeting for Ingersoll Project
 - Continued negotiating details on the HVAC efficiency upgrades at Public Works
 - Mechanical preventative maintenance on several buildings in process
 - Compiling information for the Workers Comp renewal application
 - Held a meeting with staff and engineers on Central Fire's floor issues
 - Completed Pre-Bid Meeting on Hasty Window Project
 - Worked on Downtown WIFI consultant RFP
 - Resolved camera issues in the Parking Garage
 - Dealt with roof leaks and parking garage issues

Fire

- FPO O'Connell attended a training with Marc Stambach at the Bates Mill on 12/11/14.
- FPO O'Connell did a C of O at Coastal Med Tech and a reinspection of the County Jail.
- Crews continue to provide a service to the children of Auburn with its "Truckload of Santa" program. Additionally, crews delivered Santa to the United New Auburn Christmas celebration on Sunday 12/14.
- Crews continue training our probationary firefighters for their upcoming 6 month skills evaluations.
- Ray Lussier continues to provide IMT training for all AFD personnel.
- Firefighters and staff attended and worked the City's Annual Holiday luncheon at the Hasty Memorial Armory.
- For the week of December 14th to December 17th, we responded to 76 calls for service. These include, but are not limited to: 4 fire alarm calls, 0 fire calls, 55 Emergency Medical calls, 7 Motor Vehicle Accidents, all with injuries, 6 service calls and 1 Hazardous Condition call and 3 cancelled en-route calls. We provided no fire mutual aid and received no mutual aid during this period.

Health and Social Services

- Last Friday, 12-12-14, I spent the day in Augusta attending Winter Training for General Assistance; representatives from LIHEAP, CMP, Oil industry were among the many presenters.
- We processed 18 applications this week for General Assistance, consisting of 29 people.
- As always we get a lot of families and singles claiming to be homeless, when they are doubling up with other people. HUD does not consider those households as homeless. Therefore they don't qualify for other state programs for the homeless. It's a challenge to get them set up in another rent.
- I'm trying to coordinate the many requests for help with gifts for children with the many charitable organizations and singles wishing to help. A total count of individuals will be posted after the holiday.
- The Maine Welfare Director's Association will be proposing language for the legislation season on changes to the General Assistance program.

Human Resources

- Staff has been working on the implementation of the Patrol contract including cleaning up the document for signing, making changes on the new retirement plan; enrolling employees in the PPO 500 Plan, sending notifications to retirees of new health insurance options and establishing the Health Reimbursement Accounts with the third Party Administrator.
- The annual open enrollment period ended on 12/15 and all changes in the health insurance, dental insurance and Vision plan have been forwarded to the Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust.
- Joseph St. Peter joined the Assessing Department this week. He has a number of years of experience in the private real estate appraisal field. He is a welcome addition to the Assessing Team.
- The Human Resources Staff is assisting the Police Department with their Respiratory Fitness Program. Respiratory Fitness Questionnaires are being mailed out to all of the Police Officers this week. The medical information will be forwarded to our occupational health services provider for review to ensure that the officers are medically cleared to wear face masks. The object of the program is ensure the officers are protected if they have to respond to situations and emergencies where the masks are necessary.
- The staff continues to work on year end changes including the calculations on taxable portion of life insurance benefits and calculations of waiver payments based on January premium increases.

ICT

- Created a new staff-only viewer for our MapAuburn site. This viewer uses, for the first time, our 2013 aerial imagery. The size of the imagery (142 trillion pixels) has made it difficult to incorporate it into the MapAuburn viewers. Once the new GIS Server is in place, this will be less of an issue. Until then, we found a way to include the imagery. Performance is slow, requiring user patience, but at least we have found a way to make it available. Over the next week we will add the imagery to other viewers.
- Representatives from ESRI, the GIS software company, came to Auburn this week to interview our GIS staff and several of our planning users. The ESRI staff wants to learn how users, like Auburn, are using the new online technology, and they are seeking input from us on ways to improve the technology. They will also be working with us to solve several of the problems we have encountered during our initial use of the mobile technology. These ESRI representatives are charged with looking for new applications that would be useful to users such as Auburn. This may provide us with an opportunity to participate in future software development in a way that will benefit our users.
- Staff hosted a second, evening, public information session on the new MapAuburn website.
- We discovered this week that the 911 Communication Center has been receiving a lot of emergency calls on our Mitel VoIP phone system. This will force us to take a new look at how the system is maintained and supported. Since its implementation, we've understood that a certain amount of downtime was inevitable, and acceptable, as no mission-critical voice traffic was flowing through it. Short interruptions were inconvenient and disruptive, but not dangerous. As we plan for this new role, we will need to make the system more robust and resilient. This may require adding some redundancy to the existing system.

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Planning

- City Electrician, Charlie DeAngelis has repaired all of the Holiday lighting that was repairable. We did have another complaint this week regarding lights in New Auburn and it turns out that someone besides the City Electrician has been adjusting the timers for the lights. That has been corrected but please report any unauthorized “tinkering” with the lights as it is occurring so that we can reduce the staff time required for maintaining the lights.
- Trash has been a major problem and we will be discussing better ways to address repeat violations that may require some ordinance changes. In the past week Zack Lenhart has responded to a number of tenant complaints for no heat, no smoke detectors, icy pathways, etc. Zack has also been working with the owner of the property on the corner of Dennison and Gamage that has become higher profile than most code cases; much progress has been made and a plan is in place to have the remaining violations abated by January 1st.
- The Planning Board approved a new Auto Zone Store on Center Street and forwarded a favorable recommendation to clear up an inconsistency between our zoning and future land use maps in the area of Old Danville and Woodbury Hill Roads.
- Mt. Apatite and Maine Army National Guard (MEARNG) JLUS – We received the Real Estate Planning Report that we have been waiting for from Army Corps of Engineers and will be reviewing it to strategize on next steps. The report misses some key points regarding land uses, zoning and mineral rights that staff sees as critical to an accurate assessment of value. The report also conflicts with community desires expressed during the very public JLUS planning process and we will need to work with MEARNG to see how to address those issues as part of future discussion.
- 33 South Goff Street – We are scheduling an environmental review of the property with help from Engineering and will have legal authority to demolish the structure in early January. Actual demolition schedules will depend on the demolition contract awards and contractor schedules but we will keep you posted.
- Downtown Form Code- The City Planner is helping Alan Manoian develop a new Form Code for Downtown and the New Auburn area. Doug is working on graphics and mapping.
- Transportation Center- The City Council approved the new Downtown Transportation Center location and matching funds on December 1. Doug organized a December 2nd meeting with the City, ATRC representatives, Casco Bay Engineering and developer Tom Platz to begin working on the site planning. Previous boring information was passed along to Mr. Platz.
- Agriculture District Study- The proposed Agriculture Study was presented to the Council at a November 24 workshop. A meeting was held with City Officials and Stephanie Gilbert, of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Conservation. The meeting was very productive and both the city and state are working internally to refine the proposed study

Police

- The department handled 500 calls for service this week. Officers conducted 134 motor vehicle stops and 14 field interviews. Officers investigated 66 offenses of which, 5 of which were felonies, generating 22 arrests, 15 criminal summonses and 1 juvenile arrest. Officers responded to 46 motor vehicle crashes.
- James Davison has been hired to fill the vacant patrol officer position. Davison has prior experience with us as well as Portland PD. We welcome James back as he starts on Dec 29th.

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- Officer Gagnon, assigned to Maine Drug Enforcement, followed up on intelligence that he's been receiving for the past several months. Based on recently learned information, he and another agent conducted some surveillance in Lewiston over the past weekend. As a result, they arrested two suspects on four counts of aggravated trafficking schedule W drugs, class A. A search of their vehicle yielded a half ounce of crack cocaine, seventeen Oxycodone 30 mg pills, a small amount of heroin, Fentanyl and Suboxone. They also seized was a loaded .22 caliber hand gun recovered from the passenger side between the seat and the door. A subsequent search warrant was executed at their residence in Auburn. Agents were assisted by APD patrol division during the search as well as S/A Madore. The search of the residence yielded approximately 83 grams of cocaine HCL, 70 grams of heroin, 52 grams of crack cocaine, 33 grams of Fentantyl, 126 Oxycodone 30 mg pills as well as a bag full of assorted pills; believed to be mostly Suboxone. The street value of the drugs seized at the house is approximately \$60,000. Several firearms were seized as well to include a loaded 9mm hand gun under a pillow on the bed, a .380 hand gun on the kitchen counter and several rifles.
- Chief Crowell, Sgt. Schmieks, SRO Carl and the remaining RAD instructors held a meeting and set future class dates until June 2015.
- SRO Poulin is working with several of his schools in determining residency issues. Often he has been asked to track down current addresses for parents and students. In 15 cases he has determined the children are living out of district or have addresses that are for another school. He continues to work with the schools to solve this issue.

Public Services

- Crew were asked by Council to pick up the St. Louis Bell at Cote Crane for a photo opportunity at a press conference held in the New Auburn area.
- Snow removal continues in the New Auburn area
- Crews opened the sidewalk on Caron Lane
- Crews prepared the ice rink at Chestnut Park
- Crews cleaned basins on 3, 4, 10, 11 and 4 runs to make sure they are cleared of debris.
- Crews were out all week patching potholes throughout the city
- Crews assisted in the preparation of the Holiday Luncheon
- Crews sanded sidewalks throughout the City to ensure the public's safety
- Public Services and Arena employees took a CPR and Defibrillator class
- Crews installed snow fence in the South area of Auburn
- The tree crew completed tree work at 59 Penley Corner Road and Newell Avenue
- Third shift crews, paved RR Crossings, Court Street, restocked sand and performed maintenance on PW vehicles
- The Mechanic's performed maintenance on the Public Services fleet as well as other City vehicles
- Crews spent time restocking the sand and salt sheds
- Crews were out in Auburn spot sanding on dirt roads
- Crew member continues his PM's on small implements in the tool crib
- Crew member has been busy rebuilding chains and repairing mailboxes
- Crew member continues to keep the Highway facility in tip top shape
- The second shift have been busy addressing issues that arise during the 3:00 to 11:00 PM
- The weather has been a bit unpredictable we continue to spot sand, scrape when necessary

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- We have put an emphasis on keeping the basins open for potential heavy rain.

Recreation

- Registrations continued 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 continued. 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 57 players are registered for the program.
- Practices and games continued for 1-6th grade youth basketball players. Currently, a total of 170 players are registered in this age group.
- Practices and games continued for 7-12th grade youth basketball players. Currently, a total of 96 players are registered in this age group.
- Practice and game schedules are available online for both youth and adult basketball: www.teamsideline.com/auburnme
- Adult Men's basketball games continued. A total of 24 teams are registered in the league this season.
- Adult Women's basketball games continued. A total of 6 teams are registered in the league this season.
- Pickleball has continued to be a big hit as week 11 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 220 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.
- 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.