

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 January 9, 2015

Assessing

- The BOAR hearing for Prospect Hill Golf Course has been rescheduled for January 26th.
- Katelyn and Joe visited the Registry of deeds to discuss more efficient ways to provide the assessing office with monthly deed transfers.
- Joe contacted the Maine Revenue Service to discuss receiving the declarations of value electronically.
- Karen and Joe met with Rosemary Mosher to discuss the newest GIS version and the potential integration with the Assessing Department.
- Joe is working with tech support at Patriot to get information on the updates available for the CAMA system.
- Katelyn continues to process the BETR reimbursement forms for the late filers.
- Katelyn downloaded and processed the October deeds.
- Karen continues to train Katelyn and Joe on the office functions and Patriot CAMA system.
- Karen is reviewing commercial appraisals presented to this office.

Auburn Public Library

- The Library enjoyed a very busy holiday season with a number of special programs for both the holidays and school vacation. The Library was closed for each holiday and a half-day for each holiday eve.
- The Library is pleased to welcome Susan Geismar, as our new development assistant. Susan has an excellent background in development and many valuable community connections.
- Our part-time children's associate June Roberts-Sherman is leaving the Library to take a full-time position with the Maine Department of Transportation. June not only provided excellent service to our younger customers and their families, but she was always willing to share her extraordinary artistic talents with us. She will be missed. We are in the process of filling this vacancy.
- We are very grateful to our supporters who made significant year-end contributions.
- The Library is currently experiencing boiler and temperature sensor problems. We are working with our vendor to get repairs completed as soon as possible. There may be delays due to the need of OEM parts. The general public areas are fairly comfortable, but our administrative offices and History Room are chilly.

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- The Library recently joined with other local organizations to support a National Endowment for the Arts grant proposal from ArtVan, a mobile arts therapy organization that provides a creative and collaborative environment to encourage youth who have little or no arts access to fully express their imaginations, relationships and experiences within themselves, among their peers and across our communities. This grant would allow the organization to create programs that would draw on the area's cultural diversity and past to connect our communities. The Library will participate in the proposed program as much as possible.
- The Library has submitted its capital improvement plan budget for fiscal year 2016, which includes the continuing repair and preservation of the building's exterior.
- The Library Café, an independent business, is for sale. Interested parties should contact Daphne or Bill Berta directly by calling 207.784.2300.
- The Library is participating in the City's annual Winter Festival which runs Feb. 6th through the 8th. A snowman building event is scheduled for Friday afternoon. The Library is partnering with the Auburn Ski Association to present a "fireside chat" about Maine's skiing history on Friday night at 6:30 p.m. The Children's Room is hosting a family movie at 1 p.m. on Saturday. For additional information please check the City's website or the Festival's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/Auburn2014WinterFestival>. (The link is correct with the 2014 reference.)
- Upcoming programs include:
 - The United States and Russian Space Race Tuesday, Jan. 13, at 2 p.m. Alan Elze, Lewiston-Auburn Senior College Professor will focus on the evolution of the space program in the U.S. and how it went from a military to a civilian program.
 - Teens! Life Skills: Health & Safety, Tues., Jan. 13, at 4 p.m. -- Paul Drowns, Community Cooking Educator from the Nutrition Center of Maine at St. Mary's will be here to present a program just for teens, ages 12-18. What are you eating? One of the best ways to decide if snacks are good for you is to learn to understand nutrition and ingredient labels. Another good way to make sure snacks are healthy is to make them yourself. We'll take a look at ingredients, and we'll make something delicious from scratch! Registration is required.
 - KIDS! DIY TWEENS! Make a Birdfeeder, Weds., Jan. 14, 4 p.m. Create a backyard hanging feeder for the birds, using oranges and pinecones. Free. All materials provided by the library. Space is limited so please register.

City Clerk

- Received 65 petitions and validated 490 signatures
- Mailed out 442 Dog Licensing reminder notices
- Licensed 14 Taxi Drivers and 17 Taxi Cabs
- Processed 133 Voter Registration changes, cancellations, and new Voter Registration Applications received from the Secretary of State's Office (Bureau of Motor Vehicle Division).
- Processed an additional 53 cancellations in the Central Voter Registration System (moved or deceased)
- Filed approximately 300 voter registration cards
- Business licensing – Received 1 new and 13 renewal applications, issued 35 licenses (renewals), and mailed out 11 reminder letters
- Vital Records – Issued 9 birth certificates, 86 death certificates, 7 marriage certificates, 6 marriage licenses, and 27 burial permits

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- Banners – Received 2 applications
- Reviewing and updating the City Clerk web pages

Community Development

- The Lewiston-Auburn Cash Coalition is sponsoring a financial workshop on February 11, 2015. “For Love & Money” will be hosted by the Lewiston Public Library from 6:00 – 8:00 PM in Callahan Hall. Concurrent break-out sessions will be offered on topics including budgeting, credit scores, setting financial goals and weatherization & heating costs. Professionals will be on hand to discuss these topics in detail.
- Reine Mynahan worked with other city staff to develop a scope of work for a Request for Proposals. The RFP is for landscape architectural/engineering services to conduct citizen participation, design a new walking path along the Little Androscoggin and Androscoggin Rivers between Main and Broad Streets, and prepare technical specifications and bid documents. Proposals will be due January 20th.
- Proposals were opened for wireless internet services for the Downtown, New Auburn, and Union Street area. The bids were \$\$20,259 from CES Network Services and \$30,000 from TilsonTech.
- A second meeting was held with staff from St. Mary’s Nutrition Center to continue the discussions about establishing community gardens. The committee reviewed a map of city-owned properties in the target areas. Criteria is being developed that will help the committee identify the best location for the first community garden. The committee then proceeded with a visit to many of the potential sites in an effort to start narrowing down the site selection.
- The lender to a mortgage for 14 Second Street has accepted the city’s offer of \$97,500 in settlement of the debt on that property making it possible for the City to acquire the property at fair market value. A closing is scheduled for December 29. The remaining tenant has already relocated. Upon the closing, utilities will be turned off and the building left vacant until demolished.
- Frank O’Hara, consultant to the City for the Consolidated Plan, Councilor Adam Lee, and Reine Mynahan met to discuss how to organize the next CAC meeting. This meeting begins the discussion of priorities for the coming five years.
- Reine Mynahan met with Lead Grant partners from Goodwill Industries and Healthy Androscoggin to talk about an effort to help train some of the youth who are enrolled in the Youthbuild Program. A meeting has now been scheduled with one of the local contractors to begin the conversation of how we can create apprentice opportunities with many of the environmental contractors who will participate in the Lead Grant Program.
- The Citizens Advisory Committee held its 7th meeting. All CAC members were present except for one. The agenda differed from the information gathering meetings that have previously been held. This meeting was directed towards setting priorities. The broad parameters of the upcoming 5 year program have been determined by the group. The strategy of the plan will be presented at the last meeting of the Consolidated Plan effort.
- Several heating loan closings were done for people who have run out of oil.
- The first application for financing from the Muslim community is in the making. Community Concepts will be the broker agency. This project is the pilot for how we move forward with Sharia-compliant financing for the rest of the Muslim population.

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Finance

- Tax Office - Reminder notices were sent to dog owners that have not registered their dogs yet. The notice was sent prior to the late fee being assessed (\$25, if paid after 1/31/15), to give residents an opportunity to pay without the late fee.
- Finance Director - I have been finalizing the proposed CIP for FY 16, and updating the budget worksheets so we can begin the budget process for FY 16.
Met with the Fire Department (Frank Roma, Geoff Low and Dean Milligan) to discuss the EMS Transport program in preparation for a Council update on the program year to date.
- The Facilities /Purchasing Manager has been working on various projects (listed below):
 - The bids for Ingersoll repurposing were due Thursday, January 8, 2015. They will be reviewed and a recommendation will be brought forward.
 - Bids were received for window project. References are being checked on the low bidder. The project came in higher than anticipated and may need to be done in 2 phases. We have not awarded the bid yet.
 - Met with Ravi Sharma and Tom Poulin (APD) to review the kitchen at Hasty.
 - The Workers Comp renewal application has been completed and sent to the State.
 - Worked on CIP for FY 16.

Fire

- All crews had training on IMT with Ray Lussier
- FPO O'Connell and DC Allen met with Pepsi Bottling Group to discuss modifications to their operations and its possible effect on fire response.
- Crews did training on Ice Rescue equipment and techniques. Also Crew did training on FD-CPR or saving our own.
- Crews continue training our probationary firefighters for their upcoming 6 month skills evaluations.
- AFD Personnel participated in the City's Holiday Luncheon.
- DC Allen and BC Richard met with Rick Field from Eastern Fire to see a demonstration of their new hazardous materials gas meters.
- The department initiated its annual BLS refresher training.
- For the week of December 18th to January 7th, we responded to 253 calls for service. These include, but are not limited to: 17 fire alarm calls, 3 fire calls including 1 structure fire with injuries, 206 Emergency Medical calls, 13 Motor Vehicle Accidents, 6 with injuries, 25 service calls and 6 Hazardous Condition calls. We provided 2 fire mutual aid and received 1 mutual aid during this period. We also provided 5 EMS Mutual Aid calls during this period.

Health and Social Services

- December's billing was submitted to DHHS for our reimbursement, in December we paid out \$8,153 in general assistance funds. Our YTD expenditures for this year is \$50,471 compared to \$71,654 in the first 6 months of last fiscal year.
- On Wednesday January 7, 2015 we had our annual audit by the state, 56 records were reviewed. Everything was found to be in compliance and according to the State Statutes.
- A special thank you to all those who helped make Christmas special for 21 families, 58 children and 17 seniors. Special thanks to the Fire department's, Truck Load of Christmas program, the Tranquil Lodge in Auburn, the Auburn Community Service Team, and Public Safety department. They all took on families, and or households and helped provide great Christmas to those less fortunate.

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- We received many supplies of personal items from the Auburn Fire Department administration personnel. A heart-warming thank you to them.

Human Resources

- The Human Resources Department signed up two new employees. James Davison is a new patrol officer. Amanda Tierney is the new Information Assistant replacing Kristal Goff who transferred to the Lewiston/Auburn 9-1-1 Administrative Assistant position.
- Numerous changes were implemented as a result of the new Patrol/Detective contract. 29 officers enrolled in the PPO 500 plan as of 5:00 pm on 12/31 to be effective on 1/1/15. All of the information has been forwarded to Maine Employees Retirement System to implement the new retirement plan for all of the Police Officers. One Officer will be participating in the new In-Service Retirement Plan for Police Officers.
- Ray Lussier, Safety Coordinator; Derek Boulanger, Facilities Manager/Purchasing Agent and I met with a representative of a security company to discuss options for installing emergency alarm buttons at various locations within Auburn Hall and other facilities. He made some suggestions and will be following-up the meeting with written proposals in a couple of weeks.
- Ray Lussier attended an Emergency Planning Right- to-Know workshop in Lewiston presented by a representative of Maine Emergency Management.

ICT

- Began diagramming out a new structure for our existing GIS, using relational tables and relationship class functions, rather than our current flat-file structure. Once this is in place it will reduce the update time required for several of our map layers. This structure will provide a model for future inclusion of other data from other City application databases.
- Created a new, improved MapAuburn GIS Parcel Viewer. This viewer takes advantage of newly released (2 weeks ago!) technology that allows us to create a more fully functioning interface. The new interface gives users the ability to query specific fields (address, parcel ID, owner), to measure area or length, to add their own annotation by drawing or adding text, and to print their maps to a PDF file. We will begin switching all of the MapAuburn maps over to this new interface.
- Developed a first draft of the MapAuburn User Guide. The guide is available on our website. We have identified a number of improvements that need to be made, and we will post an updated version in the near future.
- Completed a Utilities Viewer for internal staff use.
- Created a new, oversized (3' x 7') wall map of Auburn for the School Department.
- Created a new version of the Auburn Street Atlas, which incorporates the Taxi Zones and Rates. This will be posted on our website and made available to Taxi Drivers.
- Staff continues to work with the 911 Communications Center to make their phone systems more robust. The current Mitel VoIP controller is at least eight years old and is not suitable for calls of an emergency nature, nor was it ever intended for its current usage. Occasional outages, which were an acceptable inconvenience in an administrative environment, are not tolerable in a potential emergency situation. City IT staff is recommending that the CommCenter acquire two new controllers for redundancy. We believe that this is a critical need, and, as it was not funded by the CommCenter, we anticipate taking the funds from existing unused Operating Budget.

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- The recent holiday closings proved a challenge for staff using the new Elevator software. Setting the elevator to lock down at Noon proved simple enough, but when setting it back to normal for the Friday after Christmas, I overlooked about half the changes that I'd made. I was on the road, and there were many distractions! When notified by staff that the elevator was not accessing the 1st and 2nd Floors, I immediately realized what must have happened and remoted in from Buffalo and made the necessary changes. A remaining elevator concern is its behavior when an occupant selects a floor which is not authorized. For example, the Police Department on the 3rd Floor is not accessible to the public or most staff. If a rider gets into the elevator cab and selects the 3rd Floor button, it will light momentarily and then go out again, and the elevator stays still, awaiting its next instruction. If the rider fails to realize that the elevator is not moving, they are likely to stand there waiting to arrive at their destination. After 90 seconds of inactivity, the elevator lights go out, and the rider is left standing in the dark. Sometimes the rider doesn't realize that they can select another, authorized, floor and they may become anxious, thinking that they are trapped in the elevator. Some push the Help button, which places a call to the 911 Communications Center, others use cell-phones to call 911. The issue is sufficiently complicated that I don't think it can be conveyed through improved signage in the cab. If anyone has an idea, please convey it to IT staff (through HelpDesk@auburnmaine.gov) or to Facilities Manager Derek Boulanger or Safety Coordinator Ray Lussier.

Planning

- The Planning Board will discuss the following on Tuesday January 13th:
 - Continued workshop discussion of a Form Based Code for Downtown and New Auburn
 - Continued workshop discussion on Moderate Density Residential zoning and the Future Land Use Plan
 - Continued workshop discussion on Planning Board Policies and Procedures.
- The Army Corp of Engineers has proposed a land swap for the ASLL ball fields in exchange for a portion of Mt. Apatite Park and the City has replied with a number of questions regarding land values and information in the report.
- Staff is working on permitting a number of upcoming development projects including new retail, restaurant, service and industrial sites.
- Plans for the Downtown Transportation Center are progressing.
- The RFP for the design of the New Auburn Greenway is on hold while we schedule a discussion with the council to see if you want to designate a portion of the Comprehensive Plan Acquisition and implementation Funding to the design of the Riverway Road identified in the New Auburn Village Center Study.

Police

- The department handled 1,659 calls for service this week. Officers conducted 429 motor vehicle stops and 31 field interviews. Officers investigated 202 offenses, 18 of which were felonies, generating 58 arrests, 62 criminal summonses and 7 juvenile arrests. Officers responded to 86 motor vehicle crashes.
- K9 Rocky has returned to duty after a three week hiatus due to emergency surgery.
- On December 18th, Lieutenant Harrington met with the New Auburn Neighborhood Watch Group.

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- On December 22nd, officers responded to a burglary in progress at a marijuana growing facility located downtown, two subjects were arrested as they exited the building with trash bags full of marijuana.
- On December 29th, the Department hosted its quarterly Coffee with a Cop event at 84 Court St.

Public Services

- Public Services embarked on a special program for our seniors this year. With the help of Home Depot donating buckets the Public Services crews fill and delivered to date 115 buckets of sand to seniors who signed up.
- Public Services crew are in winter mode (sanding/salting/snow removal when needed)
- Crews removed snow in the Downtown area: Court St, Lower Turner St, Library Ave.
- Crews were all around the City patching pot holes.
- Crews removed Christmas Lights
- Crews were busy picking litter on Poland Rd. that fell off of trucks
- Mechanics performed truck maintenance on City vehicles
- Crews were busy plowing and sanding sidewalks around town
- Our carpenter was busy repairing/replacing mail boxes
- Our parts coordinator has been busy taking inventory on parts for vehicles
- Mechanics have performed Calibration of trucks to ensure the proper release of materials are used during a storm.
- 2015 MPI Project- Broad Street Mill & Fill from Mill Street (laundry mat) to Mill Street (Broadview Estates) will be available for bid on 1/12/15.
- Demo Contract- 14 Second Street, 88 Newberry Street, 115 Whitney Street and 33 South Goff Street. Abatement and contract documents being prepared.

Recreation

- Registrations opened for Adult Dodgeball. The fast-paced and action-packed game of dodgeball is back! Teams will participate in a 6 week regular season, culminating with a single elimination playoff tournament. Space in this program is limited, signup today!
- 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. This program is scheduled to begin on Sunday. Currently, a total of 44 players are registered for the program.
- PreK – K Instructional Basketball continued and concluded. 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. A total of 57 players participated in the program this season.
- 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 99 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 games continued. A total of 24 teams are registered in the league this season. Approximately 288 players participate in this league.
- Adult Women's basketball games continued. A total of 6 teams are registered in the league this season. Approximately 72 players participate in this league.
- Pickleball has continued to be a big hit as week 12, 13 and 14 of the program continued. 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 260 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.
- Staff attended a Winter Festival planning meeting on Wednesday. Auburn's Winter Festival is a celebration of everything Winter. The 2015 Auburn Winter Festival will begin on Friday, February 6th and conclude on Sunday, February 8th. Festival events and activities take place at a variety of locations. Some activities include: sledding, snowmobile rides, skiing, snowboarding, snowshoeing, ice skating, ice sculptures, torchlight parade, music and more! Stay tuned for more information on activity schedule and event locations. Join us at the Winter Festival Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Auburn2014WinterFestival>
- Staff continued work on the FY16 budget.
- Planning for upcoming youth and adult programs continued.