



TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Howard Kroll, City Manager
RE: Weekly Report
DATE: Week Ending December 11, 2015

Assessing

- Staff met with the owner of one of the condominium complexes to discuss concerns over valuation.
- We are continuing to research the sales for the sales ratio study in order to get the most accurate details on the sale to determine whether it is arms length and usable. Sometimes it is necessary to reach the seller of the property which can be very difficult and time consuming.
- A recent sale of condominiums at the Platz building at 20 Great Falls Plaza prompted staff to do a full on site inventory of the businesses on all seven floors. There are times when a sale occurs that more than one unit is transferred and it is important to update the percentage of ownership, which affects the assessment. The best way to do this is an onsite inspection. The information we gathered will be sent to the owner of the building for verification.
- Staff is working to put together an informational public meeting for local business owners and/or their accountants. The meeting is to educate the business owners/accountants on the Form 706 business asset filing, the Business Equipment Tax Exemption and the Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement programs. We get many calls from business owners concerning these programs and we are hoping they will take advantage of this type of meeting. It will be scheduled for early Spring.
- The Maine Legislature passed a bill increasing the amount of the Homestead Exemption over the next two years. The Homestead Exemption is currently \$10,000. For the 2016/17 tax year it will increase to \$15,000 and in 2017/18 it will be \$20,000. Staff is working on the estimated tax implications of the increase.

Auburn Public Library

- The Board of Trustees will hold its regular monthly meeting on Weds., 12/16, at 7:30 a.m. in the Library's conference room.
- The staff met for its regular monthly meeting on Weds., 12/9.
- The Library Director and the Teen Librarian attended College4ME-Androscoggin's annual College Day luncheon on Fri., Dec. 4th.
- The Library Director attended the monthly L/A Arts Auburn Art Walk meeting.
- School tours for the first group of Sherwood Heights students were given on Tues., 12/8.
- The Gingerbread House workshops for Sat., 12/12, are full.
- The Library's \$5,500 request to the Maine Community Foundation for a "technology zoo," which includes Apple products and a 3-D printer, has been funded through a private donor.
- Upcoming programs include:
 - Futures Lab – Mon., 12/14 at 6 p.m.: NEW! Students -- teens and adults alike, who are working on their post-secondary aspirations, are welcome in our Computer Lab on specified Monday evenings. Whether a student is just starting his/her college search, completing online applications or working on financial aid paperwork, there will be a college navigator and/or a representative from College for Maine Androscoggin on hand to answer any questions which might arise.
 - Family Hannukah concert - Thurs., 12/17, at 6 p.m.: We are delighted to welcome back Rabbi Sruli Dresdner of Temple Shalom Synagogue and his wife Lisa. Come join us as we celebrate Hanukkah with music and song. This is a family program suitable for all ages. 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.
 - Let's Talk About It: Persepolis – Thurs., 12/17, at 6:30 p.m. at Lewiston Public Library. In partnership with the Lewiston Public Library and the Maine Humanities Council, the Auburn Public Library presents an exciting book discussion series on Islamic culture. "Persepolis" is Marjane Satrapi's memoir of growing up in Iran during the Islamic Revolution. In black-and-white comic strip images, Satrapi tells the story of her life in Tehran from ages six to fourteen, years that saw the overthrow of the Shah's regime, the triumph of the Islamic Revolution and the devastating effects of war

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with Iraq. A snow date for this event is Jan. 7th at 6:30 pm. Location: Lewiston Public Library

- KIDS! Big Kids' Music Together – Sat., 12/19 at 1 p.m.: Join Caroline Coffin for a special big kids Music Together class for children ages 5 - 7. Music Together is a research-based music and movement program designed to support the musical development of babies, toddlers, preschoolers and their caregivers. Recognizing that all children are musical, and can achieve basic music competence if exposed to the proper environment, Music Together provides a rich array of musical experiences to unlock their potential. Please register.
- 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

- We Issued the following:
 - 9 birth certificate
 - 44 death certificates
 - 5 marriage certificates
 - 0 marriage licenses
 - 7 disposition permits
 - 1 taxi driver license
 - 1 business license
- Received 8 business license applications
- Prepared the 12/8/2015 Council Workshop packet
- Staff helped set up for the Inauguration
- Received more petitions (An Act to Raise the Minimum Wage and An Act to Establish the Fund to Advance Public Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education, and an Act to Legalizing Marijuana, an Act to Amend the Laws Governing Welfare) and staff verified approximately 1,100 signatures
- The City Clerk attended the Maine Town and City Clerks' Association's Certification Committee meeting
- Worked on approximately 50 new voter registrations, entering them into the Central Voter Registration System and sending Voter Registration Acknowledgement cards
- Completed scanning the Voter Participation History into the Central Voter Registration System

Fire

- Staff attended a plans review meeting with Planning and Permitting.
- Staff performed 2 building inspections and 1 follow-up inspection.
- Crews performed 9 Company inspections with 4 of these License inspections.
- Crews brought Santa to Big Lots from Engine 5 Station.
- Crews participated in the New Auburn Santa parade.
- Crews responded to a structure fire on Winter Street.
- Crews performed probationary testing for our three new firefighters.
- Staff attended a class on Fatal Fire Investigations hosted by the Maine State Fire Marshal's Office.
- Staff and Command personnel attended a Table Top Exercise at CMCC for a response to an Active Shooter Incident at the College.
- For the week of December 3rd to December 9th, we responded to 90 calls for service. These include, but are not limited to: 1 Structure Fire, 1 extrication from machinery, 61 Emergency Medical calls, 6 Motor Vehicle Accidents - 5 with injuries, 4 hazardous condition calls, 9 service calls, and 8 Fire Alarm calls. We provided no mutual aid assists and received 1 mutual aid responses during this period. We provided no Paramedic intercept during this period and did 1 medical transport in Lewiston for UAS.

Health and Social Services

- It's been quiet this week with business as usual.
- Within 2 weeks of getting a work permit, one of our asylum families found a job with an employment agency.
- Names of families were given to the organizations that help families with Christmas gifts for the children this week.
- I received my first contract for repayment of general assistance based on the new law 22 MRSA 4315 which went into effect October 15th.

Human Resources

- HR Staff held a number of employee meetings for the annual open enrollment for health, dental and vision plans and to provide updates on other benefits related items.
- The Safety Coordinator participated in a FEMA Tabletop exercise with other City Incident Command Staff and CMCC staff on responding to a shooting on a college campus.
- Staff attended a Local Government HR Association meeting. Rick Dacri, an HR consultant, provided a presentation on conducting compensation studies. Anne Wright, newly appointed Director of the Maine Municipal Health Trust, also spoke

about the recent challenges in setting the annual health insurance premium adjustments for the various plans offered by the Health Trust.

IT

- Staff provided technical training to Planning staff for advanced use of ArcGIS Online. This included instruction on how to create custom maps by searching for add additional data layers to existing maps. It also included additional instruction on modifying an Excel spreadsheet to enable mapping capabilities.
- Staff attended a Webinar on Best Practices in GIS, presented by the National Alliance for Public Safety GIS Foundation (NAPSG). It provided a number of interesting cases for use of GIS in Emergency Response, in targeting fire inspection programs, and in incident preplanning. We discussed this information with the Fire Chief and will share the link to the webinar recording as soon as it is posted on NAPSG's website.
- Staff participated in the Active Shooter Virtual Training that was held at CMCC. The training provided valuable insight into the types of information used by first responders when faced with this type of emergency. This information should prove valuable as we begin to design GIS applications for Emergency Preplanning and Response situations.
- Great Falls TV staff have been working on equipment upgrades, working with the vendor, Telvue, to get the new broadcast server ordered and beginning prep work and logistics and scheduling time for the technicians to come up and install the system.
- GFTV staff have also been working on getting quotes for the upgrade of the broadcast equipment in the Council Chambers.
- GFTV recorded the Parade of Lights celebration starting in Lewiston and ending in Auburn. The footage was edited into a nice little program of the event. We have placed it on our Video on Demand service for folks to watch via the internet and we have put it into GFTV's Channel 11 program line-up- for the month of December.
- Staff also attended the City Of Auburn Inaugural celebration and recorded the event as a two-camera location shoot. Staff edited the program and had it ready for airing in two days. We have placed the finished program on our Video-on-Demand service and we have also scheduled it on GFTV channel 7, in place of and at the same time slots as the regular live and rebroadcast Council meetings would have been, with two extra play outs on the week-end nights at 7pm each night. We also are creating a complimentary DVD of the event for each elected official along with one for the City of Auburn and one for the Auburn Library.

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- Staff met with members of the School Department to explore ways that we might work together on video and broadcasting.

NSBA

- General - Merrymeeting Behavior Health Meeting ~ Tavern
- Ice
 - Men's League
 - Women's League
 - High School/Middle School Practices & Games
 - Public Skate
 - Maine Gladiators
 - LA Seniors
 - LA Seniors Elite
- Marc's Meetings
 - CMCC ~ Ice Time
 - Director's Meeting
 - Special Events 30/60/90
 - Winterfest
 - Adopt Ice Program Meeting
 - HS All Star Game Meeting with MBR (Matty & Jon)
 - Bridgton Academy ~ Mike Warde
 - Mayor LaBonte's Inauguration
 - Tour with Bill Cary
- Partnership Meetings
 - Wei Lei
 - Pine Tree Pest
 - ManSocks
 - Alzheimers Association
 - Get Etched
 - Hilton and Hampton Inn
 - GoZone Fitness (Sent proposal)
- Jason Ops Tasks
 - Ice Maintenance
 - Olympia Maintenance
 - Meeting w/State Industrial Products
 - (Schedule Flexed due to staffing)

Planning

- Form Based Code-Notification letters were sent to all affected property owners within the proposed Form Based Code areas for Downtown Auburn and New Auburn a couple weeks ago. The letter provided basic information on Form Based Code and a link to the City's website for additional information. These property owners and general public were invited to a second public hearing at the December 8th Planning Board meeting. Some interested owners came to City hall to meet with staff and ask questions during regular hours and about a dozen attended the hearing to listen and comment. Comments resulted in some tweaks to the recommended ordinance but response has been positive over all and the Planning Board has forwarded a favorable recommendation to the Council. This ordinance represents a major change in how the City guides growth in the downtown for a use based focus to a building and public realm form based approach. This will encourage consistent patterns of development within some signature historic areas and allow more flexibility on how interior spaces are used than the former approach. The Form Based Code is ready for a Council workshop when agenda space is available.
- The City Planner spoke to the New Auburn United Neighborhood Association on Tuesday, November 24th to update them on the New Auburn Riverway and Greenway design, the Barker Mill Trail and the Form Based Code proposal. The trail is going out to bid soon and the Riverway and Greenway design will publicly kick off on January 7th at the Boys and Girls Club.
- The City Planner is coordinating a review of the Central Maine Urgent Care facility at 593 Center Street and preliminary plans for the new park and ride facility at the I-95 interchange.
- As of November 30, 2015 we are 42% through the fiscal year and have expended 44% of our budget. Some annual expenses are paid this time of year and this is not unusual. In response to limited staffing due to an injury we have shifted some salary funds to contract our portions of the Main Street lighting replacement project that was planned for staff installation.
- Code Compliance - Over the past week 15 Pleasant St. was placarded by the Fire and Planning Departments as unfit for occupancy. The building is vacant and the front porch unsafe. 17 Pleasant St. (same owner, same parcel) has been ordered to repair a deficient fire escape. The property management company will be relocating any tenant(s) in the building that needs the fire escape as a second means of egress until it has been properly repaired. 26 Washington St. N. was also recently placarded. Tenants had been living in the dwelling without a permanent heating system or hot water facilities. The debris around the fire-damaged building at 358 Court St. has been cleaned up and a thirty day notice to

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remove the damaged building has been issued, the compliance date is January 10, 2016. Code cases are at normal levels for this time of year but no-heat issues are minimal with warmer than expected temperatures and favorable oil prices.

- November was a good month for permits with almost \$2.9 Million in estimated construction costs and a little over \$15,000 in permit fees collected. We continue to be challenged by people understating new construction costs because they are afraid the stated values will affect their assessments. We are considering standardizing per square foot construction costs based on industry accepted guides as some other communities are doing to ensure our data is as accurate as it can be for reporting purposes. This year looks like a good overall year if some of the projects in the planning phase come through for construction in the first half of 2016.
- Staff is looking forward to working with the new Council and we are here to provide information or answer questions if Councilors want to better understand what we do.
- Eric Cousens attended the 20th annual Androscoggin River Watershed Conference and was nominated to the Board.

Police

- The department handled 579 calls for service this week. Officers conducted 139 motor vehicle stops. Officers investigated 72 offenses of which, 8 of which were felonies, generating 19 arrests, 24 criminal summonses and 7 juvenile arrests. Officers responded to 44 motor vehicle crashes.
- The department has completed its promotion process for Sergeant. Effective January 4th, Det. Syphers, Det. Moore, Cpl. Bouchard and Cpl. Dailey are promoted to the rank of Sergeant. Cpl. Bell and Cpl. McCamish will be transferring from patrol to Criminal Investigations.
- Deputy Chief Moen and Officer Chaine attended a three day Communications Unit Leader class at Maine Emergency Management Agency.
- Deputy Chief Moen was named the Chairman of the Policy and Procedures Committee for the Maine Chiefs of Police Association.
- Chief Crowell, Lt. Cougle, Lt. Harrington and Lt. Watkins attended an active shooter table top exercise at Central Maine Community College.

Public Services

- Staff attended LA Bike/Ped Committee meeting on 12-9-2015.
- Staff completed survey of the Community Garden Lot at 61 Webster Street.
- Staff worked on tax map updates for the upcoming 2015-16 tax year. Splits, merges, right of way takings, and corrections. Produced CAD files and sketches

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for updating of GIS and assessing records. This is an ongoing task for the upcoming year.

- City's Green Space Litter pick-up – Every morning crews scan the downtown area for any litter/debris, clean up cemeteries, trash up when mowing city area green spaces, remove trash on Union Street Bypass, Minot Ave, Washington St.
- Demolition of 351 Main Street is complete
- Barker Mill Trail RFP complete
- Stormwater compliance ongoing
- Crews were busy picking up numerous items left on the side of the road (debris, T.V.'s, mattresses, tires etc.)
- Hot patching continues around the City as needed
- Crews continue installing snow fence where needed
- The tree crew worked near 394 Lake St, 9 Laureat Av., 576 Trapp Rd., 104 Second St, 349 South Witham Rd, Pownal Rd, Beech Hill Rd.
- Our staff continues to assist the Electrical Department.
- The hot patching crew were busy around the City, as well as checking out N. River Rd.,
- Our staff continue to assist the Assessing Department
- Crews were busy replacing bricks on Main St.
- Several bids are out on the street: 2016 Reclamation Project, One Ton Rack Body and Plow, Four Wheel Drive One Ton Dump Truck with Plow and a New Loader
- Crews dismantled a fire pit on the Riverwalk near the end.
- A basin was installed on Riverside Dr. near Brook Street to alleviate a flooding problem
- Crews assisted with traffic control during projects around the city
- Crews put more posts in the ground to hold up the snow fence
- Back filling of curbs was done throughout the city, this is to prevent damage to the curb during winter operations.
- The cutting of bulk cross link chain and hook installation has been started this week, which will continue until completed.
- Crews worked at 61 Webster St. (Community Gardens) lot preparation was completed.

Recreation

- Winter Festival - Winter Festival planning is still plowing forward. We have officially received the needed funding to support the ice sculptor and the ice rink in the down town. Very exciting! We are also looking into a possible shuttle system for that weekend to allow people to travel from site to site without needing a car. The event will be held January 29th, 30th and 31st, and although

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there will still be a few events spread out throughout Auburn, our main focus will be to centralize most of the activities to down town Auburn, specifically Festival Plaza. The next meeting for the planning of the event will be held Tuesday, December 8th at 5:30 at the Norway Savings Bank Arena.

- Youth Basketball - Youth basketball has begun practices – participation as a whole is up 7% over last year.
- Adult Basketball - Adult basketball has launched its season
- Open Gym - Open gym is now closed on Wednesdays to accommodate the high number of facility rentals we experience on that day
- Vacation Camp - Vacation Day Camp registrations have started. We have 9 currently signed up, but expect that number to double by the time of the program. Program runs the week of December break, December 27th through the 31st. Goal of the program is to provide a fun and safe place for kids to go during the day while parents are at work. Program will be run similar to our Summer Camp program, however lunches will not be provided.
- Ski & Snowboard Clinic - Auburn Rec and Lost Valley have teamed up to bring the children of auburn some ski or snowboard lessons. Signups through the Rec are offered at a discounted rate. Cost is \$85 for 6 weeks of lessons, with other additional options available as well (Rentals, additions ski passes, ect.). Registrations just opened this week, we are currently at 3 signed up. Registration is open through the end of December so we expect that number to grow. Program starts the first week of January.
- MPS Indoor Soccer Camp - Indoor soccer is aiming to start the last week of January. Planning to get advertisements out next week to all schools. Cost will be \$50 and program will be held in Ingersoll Turf Facility.
- Family Formal - The Family Formal will be an updated spin on the traditional Father Daughter Dance. Event takes place February 20th at the Norway Savings Bank Arena. Tickets will be \$25 per parent and child duo. Light snacks and drinks will be included. Still looking for sponsorship for this event.
- After School - After School program is still on hold as we finalize the break down on how the program will run with PAL.