

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 March 27, 2015

Assessing

- Katelyn continues to train in the field.
- Joe is finishing up his residential permit inspections to meet the April 1 deadline.
- Karen is training Joe to do commercial inspections.
- The auditor from the State spent all day Wednesday reviewing the Tambrand's and Formed Fiber TIFs for the 2012 tax year and the 2014 BETE applications. Audits are done on a yearly basis. He will return to finish in a couple of weeks.
- Over 550 taxpayers have provided proof of age eligibility for the Homestead if proposed changes are adopted in the Governor's budget.
- Karen received notification from the attorney representing Gendron & Gendron that they have withdrawn their request for a tax appeal hearing before the Board of Assessment Review scheduled for March 31, 2015.

Auburn Public Library

- The monthly Leadership Team meeting was held on Weds., 3/25. Among the topics discussed were professional development and circulation guidelines.
- There was a physical altercation outside the Library on Weds., 3/25, among three teen boys. The police were notified and one teen was transported to the hospital. The police issued one-year no trespass orders to two of the boys. The Library will take internal discipline measures against the third.
- Mamie Ney attended the ILEAD training in Bangor. The team (Lewiston, Bethel, Norway, Auburn, and Maine Medical Center libraries) worked on the development of their technology for seniors in Androscoggin and Oxford counties project. The next immersion meeting will be in June. Project development will run through October.
- The Library's budget was presented as submitted to the City Council as a part of the City's budget as a whole.
- The Reference Department is creating an employment handbook based on the notices of job openings, job fairs, and more sent out by Lewiston's Career Center.
- On Sat., 3/28, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., the Library is collaborating with the Lewiston Public Library on the annual Teen Opportunities Fair which will showcase volunteer and internship opportunities. Information about college opportunities and advice on applying for jobs will

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also be featured. The event takes place at LPL's Callahan Hall and is just for teens, ages 13-19. There will be refreshments and door prizes.

- Our upcoming programs include:
 - KIDS! Family Place Play & Learn: As part of the Family Place Initiative at the Auburn Public Library, we will be holding a free parenting/playgroup series for parents and their young children ages 1-3. Our next session begins on Friday, April 3rd and will run for four weeks through Friday, April 24th 2014. The sessions will be held in the Androscoggin Community room and run from 10-11:15 am. Play and Learn is designed to familiarize parents and their young children (12-36 months) with library and community services. It will give parents the chance to spend time with their child while meeting other families with young children. Play, sing, create a craft, and learn to have fun with your child. Community resource professionals will be on hand to discuss topics such as reading readiness, dental health, nutrition, physical fitness and behavior. For more information, please contact the children's room at the Auburn Public Library 333-6640 - ext. 3.
 - KIDS! Free Family Concert with Miss Nancy: Tues., 4/7, at 2 p.m. Join national award-winning children's singer-songwriter Nancy Stewart for a fun-filled concert. Kids of all ages will enjoy the contagious sing-along fun that is part of every Nancy Stewart Show! Miss Nancy's appearance is courtesy of the Annual Literacy Connections Conference which is sponsored by the Barbara Bush Foundation.
 - This year's L/A Film Forum concludes on Mon., 3/30, at 6 p.m. with the showing of "The Future." When Sophie and Jason decide to adopt a stray cat, their perspective on life changes radically, literally altering the course of time and space and testing their faith in each other and themselves.
 - **New series: Primetime Adventures: U.S.A. Road Trip** Tues., 4/7, at 2 p.m. The first in a series of presentations in partnership with the University of Southern Maine Senior College at Lewiston Auburn.
- 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

- Verified signatures on Nomination Petitions for School Committee-we currently have two candidates (1 for the At Large seat and 1 for the Ward 5 seat)
- Research and updates on Boards and Committees
- Worked on the April 6th Council agenda packets and the March 17th Council minutes
- Issued 3 Taxi Driver licenses
- Assisted the Assessing Department with a large mailing
- Issued 3 birth certificates, 74 death certificates, 5 marriage certificates, 2 marriage licenses, 20 burial permits
- Received one application for 1 week of banner space
- Business Licenses – received 4 renewal and 2 new applications and issued 2 renewal licenses
- Completed the State Vital Share for January and February
- Conducted inventory for the Secretary of State Elections Division on State tamper proof ballot boxes, locks, and keys

Economic Development

- Received communication from EDA Project Engineer (Philadelphia Office) of official EDA approval of Dingley Pooled Wetland Mitigation Project Construction Contract between City of Auburn & Power Engineers, Inc.;
- Compiled final submittals for EDA “Dingley” Construction Contract, contacted all parties, and initiated the construction project discussions and associated activities;
- Conducted ongoing business visitations & follow-up in the Norway Savings Bank Ice Arena/Auburn Mall District;
- Engaged in ongoing Downtown Auburn/New Auburn Form-Based Code formulation & production in preparation for upcoming Auburn Planning Board Workshop;
- Scheduled Auburn Industrial Park (Group Project) meeting (3/31) to coordinate and confirm Spring & early Summer construction schedule and final completion of Industrial Park for July 2015;
- Attended the Downtown Auburn Neighborhood Association monthly meeting as organized by Councilor Crowley;
- Met with Ward 4 Councilor Adam Lee to discuss proposed Downtown Auburn revitalization projects for upcoming year;
- Met with Portland-based Real Estate Development Consultants to discuss emerging real estate development trends and the professional services their firm provides;
- Met with downtown building owner to continue exploring repurposing this space;
- Met with downtown business owner to assist in financing his move to building ownership;
- Met with railroad executive to secure the keys to the intermodal facility and inventory assets;
- Contacted the affiliate of Costal Enterprises Inc. to explore eligibility of a significant potential downtown investment for New Market Tax Credit financing;
- Assisting in publicizing (produced facebook page) the new repurposed Ingersoll Arena and ground breaking ceremony;
- Received approval letter from the Maine Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD) to modifications of TIF District #14;
- Received conditional approval letter from the Maine Department of Economic & Community Development (DECD) for TIF District #19. Prepared additional documentation for the removal and/or modification of conditions.

Finance

Finance Director

- Finalized Budget Books for Council and prepared file for website. Budget is now posted on the website.

The Facilities/Purchasing Manager has been working on various projects (listed below):

- Ingersoll construction in progress
- Work with Staff team on Ingersoll start up process/ Marketing Materials
- Annual MMA Insurance renewal
- MMA Site Visits at 3 locations
- Investigating Festival Plaza repairs
- Consult with CLT for Nat Gas Conversion
- Mechanical controls work and upgrades at Public Works underway
- Waiting on quotes for gasoline tank conversion

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- Public Works Lighting Project complete, on to the punchlist
- Continuation of discussions of Workers Comp Bid with School, hiring a 3rd party(unbiased) consultant is likely
- Striping/ Crosswalk bids received
- Wayfinding sign, addendum to be issued
- Contract and performance meetings with Siemens
- Worked on Health Promotions RFP for Deb

Fire

- Crews responded to a Train verses Tractor trailer accident with injuries and wires down. The train was also derailed from the tracks. This incident could have been worse as several rail cars had hazardous materials on board, but these were not damaged. The driver of the truck was transported by AFD to treatment. Hotel Road was closed for about 24 hours.
- Crews responded to a chimney fire which extended into the attic of the house. A quick response resulted in damage limited to the chimney and a section of the attic space and roofing structure.
- FPO O'Connell performed final C of O for Kiddos on Center Street and an inspection of St. Joseph's Day Care.
- FPO O'Connell attended meetings at both the Maine Building Officials and Inspectors Association and the Maine Sprinkler Coalition this past week.
- Crews attended training on the use of our high-rise packs and on Multi-Story fire operations.
- Crews completed training on BLS & OSHA annual training.
- For the week of March 19th to March 25th, we responded to 87 calls for service. These include, but are not limited to: 6 fire alarm call, 1 structure fire call, 60 Emergency Medical calls, 8 Motor Vehicle Accidents, 6 with injuries, 8 service calls and 3 Hazardous Condition calls and 1 call for Mutual Aid to Lewiston. We provided 1 mutual aid assistance calls and received 2 mutual aid assists during this period.

IT

- Created a new map-based application to track the sales of promotional banners at the Ingersoll Turf Arena. Using a map of the facility walls, the application allows the user to click on a banner location and record all contract information for that space, and to link a copy of the contract to the listing. A related monitoring application provides tracking and tickler information. Among the features are the ability to create sales, summarize sales by timeframe, search for sales by sponsor name and obtain a report of all contracts expiring in 30, 60, or any specific number of days. Each of these reports provides a link back to the location on the wall map.
- Participated in a meeting with Planning and state and regional agricultural experts to discuss Auburn's agricultural study. We will be researching a mapping analysis done by Bowdoin College, to evaluate the applicability to Auburn.
- The informational displays in the lobbies are moving into their second phase, incorporating suggestions and ideas provided by staff and Council. We expect that this will be a constantly evolving process, with frequent revisions.
- As a result of an informal technology meeting with staff from Lewiston and an outside vendor, we've discovered some better ways to operate. The next two items reflect changes made:

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- API Technology aided staff in configuring the recently-purchased third virtual host. This will allow us to distribute our virtual servers across three hosts, making us more resilient. Essentially, we're spreading our virtual "eggs" across several virtual "baskets", removing a single point of failure that could have greatly limited our function in the event of a hardware failure.
- We also think that we have found a way to better utilize our existing storage infrastructure. This could put off for several years the City's need to purchase another costly Storage Attached Network (SAN). We believe that we can leverage our current SANs to increase available storage without compromising our redundancy.
- Staff helped CDBG configure an iPad that will be used for field collection of lead inspection data. We don't formally support Apple products, but found that the learning curve here wasn't too steep and this fit into our mission of supporting staff. The selection of the iPad over a Windows-based platform was driven by a Federal project grant.

Planning

- Received delegated review authority from MDEP approval for the creation of a parcel around the former TGI Fridays building on Turner Street. This allowed for a minor amendment to the Site Location of Development Permit on a timeline that met the developer's needs.
- DATC Plans, funding and utility information are being updated for consideration by the Council at the April 6th CC Meeting.
- We will be updating the Pole Permit application to inform CMP of local ordinance requirements. The PUC is still dragging their feet on providing rules and fee schedules for municipally owned street lights, delaying Auburn's CIP plans.
- Kiddo's, an indoor play center, will be opening soon at 945 Center Street. A staff walk through revealed a very nice facility that we should be proud to have in Auburn.
- Staff is preparing potential housing code changes to better address property issues in our housing stock and to modernize the ordinance. Part of that will include a discussion on enforcement philosophy, costs and confirmation from the Council on what they want or support for our community.
- Permits have been busy. To put it in perspective compared to previous years we issued permits for estimated construction costs totaling \$20.5 Million in 2011, \$13.7 Million in 2012, \$26.6 Million in 2013, \$19.4 Million in 2014 and so far in FY 15 we were at 18.3 Million at the end of February. A mathematical prediction would be \$ 27.5 Million predicted for the FY 15 total as of June 30th, however, we are through our normal slowest months and April, May and June are historically some of our busiest months so we are hopeful that we may still set a 5 year record for construction value and investment in our community this year.
- Barker Mill Dam Relicensing – Staff attended the stakeholder meeting and expressed the need for recreational improvements opportunity for water based recreation around the facility. The meeting was well attended with some State and Federal Agencies and Whitewater nonprofits expressing similar desires.
- Continued work on drafting the New Auburn Greenway and Riverway RFP.
- Staff held a meeting with Maine Department of Agriculture and Maine Farmland Trust to strategize on the Ag Study Plan. We will have a proposed plan for the Council to consider in the coming month or so and would like to get approval to seek input from the agricultural,

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forestry and natural resource community prior to finalizing a plan. We are still waiting to see if grant funding will be available and are garnering state and non-profit interest in the project so we can have agricultural experts participate in the discussion.

- We received an updated plan for the Christian Hill Safety project on Airport Property. They wish to continue to produce gravel and asphalt at the site and would like to get approval to complete the safety project and may come back in the future to remove additional material. Part of the earth removal effort is a grandfathered excavation pit and part of it is only authorized as a safety project. The safety project includes the removal of the portion of Christian Hill that extends above a 50:1 plane from the end of the runway and represents a potential hazard to aircraft taking off or landing at the airport.

Police

- The department handled 909 calls for service this week. Officers conducted 209 motor vehicle stops and 45 field interviews. Officers investigated 73 offenses of which, 12 of which were felonies, generating 20 arrests, 22 criminal summonses and 3 juvenile arrests. Officers responded to 26 motor vehicle crashes.
- Detective Jason Moore is investigating a fraud complaint where a resident was bilked out of thousands of dollars after falling prey to a scam where someone purported to be from the IRS claiming the victim owed back taxes. Through some aggressive investigation, Detective Moore was able to recover approximately half of the victim's money so far. The Department of Treasury will be assuming control of the investigation.
- Det. Westleigh has been very busy with new sex offender registrants. The new policies regarding registering new sex offenders take Det. Westleigh approximately four hours to complete. This week alone he had three new registrants.
- SRO Poulin prepared over 140 meals with his cooking through science class and delivered them to all teachers during the teacher's workshop day. This was a fundraiser for the Franklin School food pantry.

Public Services

- This week we are preparing for our spring sweeping program. There will be some changes, we will start in the down town business district and then move off to the main arterials then into neighborhoods. We will be following our plow route program throughout the sweeping season.
- There will be an interruption in the sweeping program due to reallocation of personnel for the spring cleanup program. Once complete we will then continue sweeping. We are currently working on scheduling dates of when the sweepers will be in specific areas and neighborhoods.
- 2015 Reconstruction Project- test borings being drilled on Davis Ave
- 2015 MPI Project- AWSO video inspecting the sanitary sewer lines
- 2015 Reclamation Project- contracts signed with Gendron & Gendron
- Stormwater Compliance- preparing for May 6th audit
- Fill, Utility Poles, Drive Openings, excavation permits are beginning to be requested by all throughout the City.
- Crews have been around the city filling both frost heaves and pot holes.
- Parks maintenance cleared snow from walkways and litter patrol in the Downtown/Riverwalk area
- Removal of Christmas Lights

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Recreation

- Registrations opened for April Vacation Soccer Camp, ages 3-15. This program will focus on skill development in a fun environment featuring a unique blend of technique, player challenges, and game play. The program is designed to bring out the best in every player.
- Auburn Recreation is pleased to offer another all-new program choice: Line Dancing! This class will be instructed by Rina, who has over ten years of experience in this upbeat and fun form of dance. This introductory course will teach participants the Arizona Freeze, Cowboy Boogie, Boot Scootin' Boogie, Cowboy Charleston, and other dances.
- Registrations continued for Spring Running, ages 7 -14. Spring Running is a 5 week program designed to teach the basic techniques of running. Instruction includes stretching, exercises, running techniques, running games, and cool-down techniques.
- Registrations continued for a brand-new program offering, Parent & Me Craft Time, ages 4-7. Instructor Jasmine will lead participants in this exciting new arts and crafts program. Each week will include a different project from building dream catchers, to birdhouses. This is a great opportunity to unlock your inner artist!
- Registrations continued for another brand-new program: RAD Self Defense Course For Women. In partnership with the Auburn Police Department, This basic physical defense course will teach women how to protect themselves from aggressors in compromising situations. If you have ever been interested in learning this type of skill and increasing your overall confidence level, this is the class for you! RAD is for every woman – no matter what size, no matter what age, no matter what skill level. The RAD System: You Can Do This.
- Registrations continued for Summer Day Camp, grades Pre K – 8. Each day, the Summer Day Camp offers campers structured activities, games, and arts & crafts. One day each week, campers will go on a beach trip, where they will enjoy organized activities and swimming. Additionally, campers will have an excursion day/special event each week. This season, camp will take place 5 days a week (Monday-Friday), and will begin June 29th and conclude on August 14th for a total of 7 weeks.
- Registrations continued for Tee Ball, ages 5-7. In this program, players will be introduced to the basic concepts of baseball such as hitting, base running, fielding, throwing and catching. Teams of ten to twelve players will be formed where everyone plays in the field, and everyone is in the batting order. Batters hit the ball off a “t” stand to get on base and there are no walks or strikeouts. Players will test their skills in Saturday games beginning in early May (weather permitting).
- Registrations continued for Youth Lacrosse, grades 3-8. Lacrosse has become one of the fastest growing sports in the nation, and teams can be found at the professional, collegiate, high school, and recreation levels all around the country. Players will be introduced to skills, drills, techniques, and rules of the game, in addition to a regular practice schedule and full game schedule beginning in late April.
- Recess Warriors continued. Recess Warriors is a five week program that will consist of a new activity each week and will allow children to take part in a variety of games. Activities will range from a classic game such as soccer, to a playground favorite like capture the flag. A total of 15 children registered for this program.
- Adult Dodgeball regular season continued. 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. A total of 6 teams are registered in the league this season. Approximately 60 players participate in this league.

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- Adult Women's basketball championship game took place this week. Blue Goose emerged victorious over Center St Dental in the championship contest. A total of 6 teams are registered in the league this season. Approximately 72 players participate in this league.
- Pickleball continued into week 25 of the program. 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 352 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.
- Auburn Recreation is pleased to announce the annual Spring Celebration event! On Saturday, April 4th from 10am through 12pm at the Hasty Community Center, children and families are invited to take part in this celebration of Spring! As children collect eggs during games, activities, & challenges, they will be able to redeem the eggs for candy and prizes! Special thanks to our partner: The Boys & Girls Club – Auburn/Lewiston Clubhouse, and our sponsors: Gammon's Garden Center, Kiwanis International, and Pat's Pizza.
- Staff attended a Council Workshop on Monday evening.
- Staff held a lacrosse coaches meeting on Monday evening.
- Staff held a softball league captains meeting on Tuesday evening.
- Planning for upcoming youth and adult programs continued.