

City of Auburn, Maine

Office of the City Manager



TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Clinton Deschene, City Manager
RE: Weekly Report
DATE: November 8, 2013

Assessing

- We finished the quarterly review project this week. Brian worked on the August deed/transfer information and updated the Patriot CAMA system. Both Karen and Brian have started processing the 801 BETR – Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement applications for business personal property.

Auburn Public Library

- The Library's annual audit is complete and will be presented to the Board of Trustees on Weds., Nov. 20th.
- The Library is updating its safety procedures, which include scheduling a fire drill with the AFD.
- The Library is working to comply with the new Federal hazardous materials standards. Thank you Ray Lussier, the City's Safety & NIMS Coordinator, for your assistance.
- The Library is working with other City departments and local organizations to play this year's Winterfest.
- The Facebook 101 program continues through the end of the month. The basic class is repeated each Friday at 10 a.m.
- Several new book displays with appropriate seasonal themes have been set up. These are very successful in promoting our outstanding book collection.
- A thank you to all who participated in our annual book sale. Approximately \$1,000 was raised in just three hours. Please check out our on-going book and gift sale on our main floor.
- 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.

Engineering and Public Works

- Prep For Voting
- Repair Pettengill Park Dam
- EL Greenhouse Project: The Green House Pad is being installed now the water line in and is being buried presently. The LRTC electrical group is in the process of starting their part of the project. Staff will add Caution tape 6 inches about the electrical in the trench before it is buried. Staff is about ¾ done digging the pad, filter fabric and gravel will be added to grade.

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Then 4 inches of 1.5 inch gravel to finish. The water line has been put in the middle of the pad (AWS D) took care of the trench, and is back filling as needed.

- Councilor Walker has requested that we explore the option of installing a wood guardrail at Pulsipher Field instead of the metal guardrail that was originally scheduled. Public Services requested quotes for a wood guardrail from our vendor. Follow up will be forwarded once the quotes return. Need to keep in mind; Public Services/Public Works Divisions guardrail funding is very limited. All considerations will be looked into.
- Installing Christmas lights
- Basin cleaning around the City /Paint Basin Lines
- Maintenance/routine on city equipment (vehicles) – to functional and stable condition for upcoming winter season
- Grade Gravel Roads ongoing
- Ditching and culvert work being done
- Maintaining Ball fields ongoing
- Paving/hot patching work
- Recycling operations ongoing
- Banner preparation and installation
- Hand Paving/loam & seed on South Main Street
- Work continues on Helm Bridge
- Paving islands on Center Street

Finance

- The Tax Office has been busy with vehicle registrations and dog licensing.
- The 2013-14 Bond issue went out to bid on Wednesday, November 6th. The City received 7 bids on the bonds. The bid was awarded to Robert W Baird Inc. The City received enough premium on the bonds to pay for the cost of issuance and to actually reduce the amount being borrowed by \$175,000, so the total debt service principle will be \$5,625,000 instead of \$5,800,000.
- Each year during the bond process the City goes through a review with both Moody's Investment Services and Standard and Poor's. These are both rating agencies and the ratings that the City received for the FY13-14 Bond Issuance was an Aa3 from Moody's and a AA- from Standard and Poor's. Our ratings stayed the same as last year.

Surplus Equipment Auction

Overall the auction was a success. The City did well with the equipment that was auctioned off. Some pieces went fairly high while others went lower averaging appropriately.

The City of Auburn proceeds: \$65,674.25
Less: Commissions: -\$7,758.60
Net proceeds to the City \$57,915.65

The Airport: \$5,590.50
Commissions: \$698.10
\$4,892.40

All items were sold.

Fire

- The Auburn Fire Department participated in the Gulf Island Dam failure exercise along with representatives from other various local, state and federal agencies at Auburn City Hall. This table top exercise provided good information and generated very productive discussion on additional work to be done in fine tuning our emergency management planning and operations.
- Congratulations to Firefighters Joe Gabri and Justin carver for successfully completing their probationary firefighter period with the AFD!
- Prevention: For the week of October 31 to November 6, there were 9 life safety inspections conducted on businesses and apartment buildings. Six of these were not in compliance.
- Emergency Responses: For the week of October 31 to November 6, we responded to 63 calls for service. These include, but are not limited to 6 fires with 3 being structure fires, 42 emergency medical calls, and 2 hazardous condition calls. There were no mutual aid calls during this period.

Human Resources

- Ray Lussier coordinated a exercise for Lewiston Auburn which was part of a State-wide multi-incident exercise. Several departments including Police, Fire and Public works participated in the exercise. Ray will be working on an critique of the exercise.
- The Human Resources Staff assisted Joshua MacDonald, Arena General Manager with the recruitment for Administrative Assistant for the Norway Savings Bank Ice Arena. Ads have been posted for part-time Ice Arena Attendants and Olympia Drivers.
- Human Resources Staff assisted the City Clerk with processing absentee ballots on Tuesday.

ICT

- ICT assisted the Police Department in the updating of its Watchguard video system. This system downloads video from the Police cruisers as they enter the courtyard and stores it on a server secured in the Patrol area.
- ICT placed expedited orders for the networking equipment needed to bring the new Ice Arena onto the City's Wide-Area-Network. We expect that the network and phones could be up by the 15th.
- The City backs up its data nightly to a server located at the Library. To match our expanding storage needs, we upgraded the capacity of the back-up target with six two-terabyte drives.
- Attended the Gulf Island Dam Failure Tabletop Exercise and provided GIS maps and data for the exercise. Participated in discussion of infrastructure disruption and recovery. Discussed federally available GIS data layers, applications, and assistance for emergency response with representatives from the Army Corps of Engineers and the EPA. Auburn has the GIS data for the newly developed Inundation model, created by the Army Corps and will distribute it to other local agencies.
- Assisted City Clerk with set-up and training for the use of an Election Database for use in Tuesday's election, and provided data entry and technical support on Tuesday evening. Use of the database streamlined the tabulation process and generation of reports for media and public distribution.
- ICT Department completed online Criminal Justice Security Awareness training. This training provides IT staff with an awareness of the roles and responsibilities associated with

accessing and maintaining criminal justice databases. This training was required to meet the FBI's upcoming audit of the Police Department.

- As approved in the FY14 budget, ICT has begun the process of adding a new position to support the City's growing need of increased citizen outreach via the City's website, various social media outlets, and other communication strategies.
- As a reminder, the City Clerk and the Tax Office will be closed on Thursday December 12 for a major upgrade to our financial software.

Planning

- The Planning Board has one project to review at the November 12th meeting. The Lewiston Auburn Water Pollution Control Authority would like to amend their site plan approval to keep the facility operation efficiently. They will also discuss the technical aspects of Form Based Codes with Economic Development Specialist Alan Manoian. To date we received one zoning amendment petition for the December meeting that will ask the Planning Board and Council to consider amending the zoning ordinance to allow a property owner with split residential and agricultural land to transfer their right to build a home in the residential zone into the agricultural portion of the parcel.
- 9 Gamage Avenue is still standing. We are working with the City attorney again to pressure the Owner, Sun Trust Mortgage, one more time before initiating further legal action. We have been pushing for the owner to demolish the structure instead of the City moving forward with demolition because the demo will likely cost the taxpayers of Auburn more than the property will be worth in the end. If this effort does not work we will be asking the Council if they want to give them more time or fund the demolition.
- The New Auburn Transportation and Land Use Steering Committee met Thursday October 10th. There is another meeting at 6pm on November 21st that will allow the committee to take a closer look at some challenges to redevelopment and site layout options to maximize building area.
- The City Council acted quickly when an opportunity arose to allow negotiations for the purchase of a flood prone property at 88 Newbury Street. The parcel will be a great asset for public river access and will help implement a major goal of the Comprehensive and New Auburn Master Plans. The Council will be asked to confirm the proposed funding source on November 18th and the final sale price of \$38,900 for the ¾ acre parcel. The need for this and other riverfront parcels was the subject of a substantial public discussion throughout the Comprehensive Planning process and I want to thank the Council for seizing this opportunity when it was before them. We will be proposing funding again this year have funds ready to take advantage of Comprehensive Plan implementation opportunities like this and grant funding matches as they arise. If that is approved, we will still ask the council to review individual opportunities and prioritize the use of a limited resource.
- Permits were down slightly from the average of the last 5 Octobers but the strong start to the fiscal year (FY) still places us above average for the year. At 1/3 of the way through the FY we have issued 320 permits and collected \$57,463 in permit fees. We have been discussing many potential smaller projects, two larger projects (10,000-15,000 square foot structures) and two very large projects (20,000-60,000 square foot structures) with potential developers that seem likely to happen in the current FY that could really boost the investment numbers for the year.

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- Code Cases have been busy and we are back to full staff with Zachary Lenhart completing his fall assignment to the Assessor's Office.
- The Council authorized funding for way finding signage to help people find and navigate our downtown in this year's CIP. We were unsuccessful in obtaining grant funding so we are discussing joint RFP/purchase opportunities with Lewiston on November 7th.
- Flood plain and flood insurance inquiries have been a substantial portion of our calls for service this month. The new flood maps were made effective by FEMA on July 8, 2013 and mortgage companies have been reevaluating risk and the requirement for flood insurance. Although we held several public meetings and completed two mailings to affected property owners while the maps were being drafted, some property owners have been surprised to learn that their mortgage holder requires flood insurance.
- The two remaining Electrical Division staff is responsible for maintaining the City's electrical infrastructure including street lights, traffic lights, many electrical projects and repairs in City buildings, the city wide fire alarm system, emergency calls and electrical inspections associated with electrical permits. Since the elimination of the 3rd electrical division position, staff has been struggling to keep up and many projects have a long wait time before they can be addressed. This time of year is especially challenging as they are spending time on installing holiday lighting and electrical connections. Please plan extra time for electrical requests between now and mid December.
- Katelyn Doustout has been pitching in to support the switchboard and election duties this week. Katelyn has a full plate and we thank her for making time to support other departments and important city functions at times of need.
- Sanitation services have been especially demanding recently and Cristy Bourget has been busy with complaints, fire follow-ups and some unusual research requests in Auburn and Lisbon. Where issues have been identified, Cristy has been able to work with owners to immediately eliminate any food safety hazards and then bring their operations back into compliance with local, State and Federal food safety requirements best practices. Having a local inspector with the knowledge and experience that Cristy has makes a substantial difference in local food safety and provides prompt service and information to local businesses.
- Doug Greene, City Planner has been working on the draft Comprehensive Plan amendments to prioritize downtown passenger rail over all other options. The plan is to request a place on the Council agenda for some time in December to see if we have captured the goals of the Council. Once we know that we have capture the Council goals, we will proceed with the amendment process by scheduling the Planning Board review and public hearing and then come back to the Council for a final approval.

Police

- The department handled 520 calls for service this week. Officers conducted 100 motor vehicle stops and 12 field interviews. Officers investigated 97 offenses of which, 17 of which were felonies, generating 27 arrests and 28 criminal summonses. Officers responded to 37 motor vehicle crashes.
- Detectives are working with Androscoggin County Sheriff's Department and the Maine State Police on a joint burglary investigation where four homes in South Auburn and several in Durham have occurred in the last week.

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- The Department participated in the Gulf Island Dam Breach exercise that simulated a dam failure. Areas of improvement in response plans were identified and the department is working with Safety Coordinator Ray Lussier on improving the City's response plan.
- New cop cards have been designed and officers are having their photo taken this week.
- The department is investigating a drive-by shooting that took place on Newbury St. 12 rounds were fired into the apartment building. No one was injured and one of the building's residents was arrested for Aggravated Drug Trafficking. Crack Cocaine, Marijuana and nearly \$3,500 in suspected drug proceeds were seized.
- Support Services was very busy on Election Day monitoring all of the polling places.

Recreation

- On Monday, prior to the start of the youth basketball season, staff held a coaches meeting to discuss coaching manuals, rules and handbook, player evaluations and tentative practice and game schedules.
- The 5-6 grade football banquet was held on Tuesday. Players, parents and coaches celebrated a great season with an awards presentation and pizza!
- Staff attended a Winter Festival planning meeting on Wednesday.
- Staff held a basketball referee meeting on Wednesday to cover topics such as: rules and handbook, tentative game time slots, contact lists and discussion of last season.
- The 7-8 grade youth football program celebrated with an end of the year banquet on Thursday. Parents, players and coaches enjoyed an awards presentation and spaghetti dinner to wrap up the season.
- Planning for winter programming continued throughout the week.
- Registrations continued for youth basketball and adult basketball.
- Heating system work continued with repairs of steam traps and conversion of heating systems to natural gas.