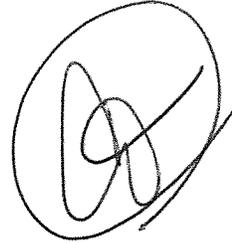


City of Auburn, Maine

Office of the City Manager



TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Clinton Deschene, City Manager
RE: Weekly Report
DATE: August 30, 2013

Assessing

- It gives me great pleasure to announce Brian Sloan's recent achievement in becoming a Certified Maine Assessor (CMA). Congratulations!
- The commitment process is finished. Below is a summary of the commitment information.

| Fiscal Year 2013/2014 | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Commitment Date | August 21, 2013 |
| Tax (Mil) Rate | .02043 |
| State Certified Ratio | 100% |
| Abatement Deadline | February 21, 2014 |
| <u>Tax Bill due Dates</u> | |
| Real Estate | September 25, 2013 March 17, 2014 |
| Personal Property | September 25, 2013 |
| 7% Interest applied to late payments | |

- Brian processed Business Equipment Reimbursement applications and reviewed deeds.
- All staff worked on completing the Municipal Valuation Return.

Auburn Public Library

- The Library will be closed Mon., Sept. 2nd, for Labor Day. We will resume our winter hours on Tues., Sept. 3rd. The Library will be open: Mon: 9-8, Tue: 9-6, Wed: 9-6, Thu: 9-8, Fri: 9-6, Sat: 9-5
- With the growing popularity of graphic novels, the Library is offering a graphic novel book club. The first meeting will be Thurs., Sept. 5th, from 6:30 – 7:30 PM. Please call the Library for more information at 333-6640 x 4.
- Registration for health insurance programs for individuals and businesses under the Affordable Care Act opens October 1st. On Thurs., Sept. 5th, at 6:30 PM the Library will host a facilitated discussion entitled "*The Affordable Care Act 101: Understanding the New Health*

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Care Law". This program will begin to help people understand their options, to locate reliable information, and make informed decisions about their health coverage.

- The Library offers support and encouragement for local writers through its "Writers' Well Café" which met on Mon., Aug. 26th. The next meeting is scheduled for Thurs., Sept. 12th, at 6 PM.
- The Great Falls Yoga Festival, which benefits the Library and the YWCA, will be held on Sat., Sept. 28th. The Festival is a community event celebrating and highlighting the talents of local, state and regional yoga teachers, healers, and artists. Additional information and registration can be found at <http://www.greatfallsyogafestival.org/Home.html>
- Mamie Anthoine Ney, Library Director, has been accepted into the Chamber of Commerce's 2013 leadership program.

City Clerk

- The Appointment Committee met on Thursday, August 29th to review applications and nominate individuals to fill some of the vacancies on various Boards and Committees. Those names will be presented to Council on 9/16.
- August 30, 2013 is the deadline to certify nomination petitions and have names and addresses available to the public. That information has already been posted and is on the Clerk's bulletin board and on our website.
- Aside from the normal day to day business, I've been working on election preparation and dealing with a lot of candidate/election related questions and situations (running for multiple seats, offices incompatible, write in candidacy, and campaign finance). I am also in the process of working with our new vendor, ES&S on preparing the Municipal ballots for the November election.
- We've been very busy with garage sale permits. We've also started notifying folks who are advertising garage sales in the newspaper but have not picked up a permit for one.

CDBG

- Yvette Bouttenot met with a Somali individual who is interested in the Homebuyer Program. This person lives in public housing and wants to own a home. Sharia-compliant financing is preventing him from purchasing a home.
- SOLD. 69 Bradman was sold for \$75,000. The buyer is a single mom is very grateful for the assistance she received from the City. After the closing in tears she said "I can't believe it, I don't have to live in an apartment again. This is my forever home".
- Hal Barter has been working on resolving a flooring problem with one of our customers. When the flooring buckled, Hal contacted the supplier and forced the issue. This resulted in a representative of the manufacturer being flown in to work on this problem. After some analysis, the manufacturer agreed to cover the cost of labor and materials for a new installation. Property owners who participate in our Rehab Program are fortunate to have Hal advocating for them.
- Two Security Deposit Loans were approved in August for \$1,318.
- Hal and Yvette viewed 7 properties for the new HOME project. The properties all require extensive rehabilitation to make them safe and decent. Reine joined the search to take a second look at two of the properties, one in the New Auburn Target Area and the other on Bradman Street. An offer was made to purchase the New Auburn property, but that offer was countered with a substantially higher price. What has become apparent is the lack of

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available housing on the market in the \$80,000 and under price range, and the poor quality of what is available.

- Auburn Housing Development Corporation and the City's Community Development Department signed a Memorandum of Understanding describing the responsibilities of each agency in the agreement to purchase and renovate a building. The responsibility of AHDC is to take the title and participate in the sale, and all other tasks will be the responsibility of the Community Development Department.
- The Security Deposit Loan Committee met to talk about a new \$50,000 grant. The grant was sought by Auburn Housing Authority for the fire victims. Even though these funds are no longer needed, the grantor has agreed to allow the committee to utilize the funds to meet the security deposit needs of the homeless/near homeless. The committee is working on revisions to the guidelines for spending these funds.
- Hal and Reine inspected a tax-acquired property at 73 Paul Street. This property had been reserved for a potential Youthbuild redevelopment project. In the past few years, the property has deteriorated to a point where it should be demolished.

Engineering/PW

- Manley Road received base course paving. Curb work will now begin.
- Turner Street received surface paving. Driveway surface and touch up loam and seed is ongoing.
- Rose Terrace, East Dartmouth, West Dartmouth and West Bates all received surface pavement. Drive way surfacing is ongoing.
- Main, Mill, Broad, High, and Academy Streets all had striping work completed. Additional bike symbols and marking remain to be completed.
- The material in question was removed from South Main Street. Additional meetings with Federal Highway and MDOT are ongoing.
- The Helm Bridge Replacement Project preconstruction meeting was held. The contractor is planning to start clearing and installing construction signs the week of September 9th. A temporary bridge is being proposed so that there will be no closure. The City, MDOT and the contractor are still working on the details of this plan.
- E.L. Park project progressing.
- Parks Division continuing with ball/playing field lining for upcoming sports seasons.
- Mowing/Weeding around the City
- Paving and patching operations ongoing
- Arborist operations ongoing
- Recycling operations ongoing
- Basin cleaning around the City
- Ditching/culvert work around the City
- Wellness Class for crew members
- Orientation for new employees

Finance

- The Finance Director finalized the work papers for the auditor's and worked on the year end CAFR in preparation for the auditors arrival on Tuesday, September 3, 2013.
- The Tax Office has been busy this week with vehicle registrations at the counter and helping the City Clerk's office with vital statistic requests due to them being short staffed.

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- The Facilities/Purchasing manager attended the safety meeting. He had several bid openings this week including a Sidewalk Tractor and the Arena Beverage bid. He met with Biosafe Environmental at Public Works to do an asbestos inspection.
- The Tax Collector worked with MUNIS and the property tax information from the Assessing Department was converted to MUNIS and the FY14 tax bills were sent to the printer. They will be mailed out on Friday, August 30, 2013.

Fire

- Arrangements have been finalized for the 9-11 ceremony. The program will be held at Central Fire Station beginning at 8:30 am and concluding at 9:00 am. The community is invited.
- The FD participated as a part of the multi agency preparedness and response for the environmental protests along the rail line that runs through Auburn on 8-28-13.
- Prevention: For the week of August 22 to August 28, there were 8 life-safety inspections of schools conducted by the fire companies. Out of those inspections, 7 schools were found not to be in compliance with the fire code.
- Emergency Responses: For the week of August 22 to August 28, we responded to 77 calls for service. These include, but are not limited to 59 emergency medical calls that include 4 motor vehicle accidents with injuries and 3 motor vehicle accidents without injuries, 4 false alarms, and 3 hazardous conditions. There were no mutual aid calls during this period.

Health and Social Services

- General Assistance expenditure for August, 2013 totaled \$12,313 with \$10,518 for rent and \$1,000 for medication, the rest was on electric bills. In this billing we paid for 41 unduplicated households.

Human Resources

- The City of Auburn hosted a presentation by Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust on the Federal Affordable Health Care Act. The staff from the Health Trust outlined the employers' responsibilities under the new regulations that will be phased in over the next few years. Representatives from about 40 municipal, county and other public agencies, including Auburn's Human Resources staff, attended the workshop.
- Negotiations sessions were held with all four of the bargaining groups that currently have expired contracts.
- Deb Grimmig participated on the interview panel for the Recreation Specialist position along with Ravi Sharma and Jeremy Gatcomb. This position has been vacant since early August.
- September is National Preparedness Month. Ray Lussier distributed information to City employees and provided information for the City's website about emergency preparedness.
- Ray Lussier worked with Public Services Department on job hazard analysis and confined space issues.
- Ray Lussier continues to work on a couple of on-going projects including the Airport Intermodal Terminal Exercise and a designated center for citizens during periods of extreme heat waves or periods of extreme cold.

ICT

- Due to a problem with Oxford Networks, Public Works experienced phone and email outages Tuesday.
- Preliminary engineering has started on the fiber optic run to the evidence storage area. This will increase speed and better network connectivity in the location.
- ICT recently added a new feature on our website which allows the City to pose a question to our residents. After much success with our debut question, we have posed a new one.
- Working with the contractor to design the phone and network data infrastructure for the new ice arena.
- Updating internal policy and procedural information for Administrative departments.

Ice Arena

- CONSTRUCTION UPDATE:
 - Mezzanine Framing and Drywall is being completed in Rink 1 and 2
 - Preferred Mechanical has placed warm floor and insulated for cold floor
 - Installation of cold floor piping (rink 1) should begin Tuesday Sept 4th
 - Final masonry should be completed this week (front stairwells and walls)
 - Interior Walls, electrical, mechanical and plumbing work continue
 - Shop drawings for boards and glass have been completed and released for delivery
 - Keys and Lock meeting to determine appropriate access points and sets of keys for the facility have taken place for final approval.
- Continued to establish relationships within the community and attend client meetings focused on sponsorship/advertising and partnerships. Several contracts are pending, awaiting execution, and several proposals are out for review.
- To date:
 - \$84,500 in annual sponsorships has been secured.
 - \$16,500 in contracts pending, \$25,000 in proposals under review.
- Naming Rights Sponsor has continued to be a priority; conversations continue to be held with regards to finding the right partner. Conversations are being held and questions answered as we await the receipt of the Letters of Interest.
- Beverage services RFP has been opened, Coca Cola and PepsiCo have provided bids for review. Arena Management and Purchasing Department are reviewing proposals for comparison and award.
- Lease Agreement for ProShop space has been finalized and will be executed shortly. Design and buildout for space have been determined as part of negotiations. Hebert Construction has the design layout.
- Discussions are being held to finalize Kitchen designs, menus and branding partners for the delivery and service of concessions.
- Initial scheduling has been completed through March, staffing plans and operational procedures are being developed based upon ice schedule. Contracts for Ice Rentals are being prepared for signature.
- The Transitional year budget is being reworked and adjusted based upon staffing plans, ice rentals and sponsorship agreements. Staff is analyzing current versus projected budgets to create an accurate forecast for the facility along with costs for maintaining Ingersoll Arena during the winter (heat and electricity).

Planning

- We have offered the Planner Position and hope to be able to introduce a new asset to our team soon. We will be able to step up our planning efforts soon with this position filled.
- The Planning Board will discuss downtown redevelopment, zoning, urban form and opportunities for an improved urban lifestyle at their September 10th meeting. The discussion will be kicked off with a presentation by Alan Manoian, Economic Development Specialist. The public is invited to attend and we hope to continue to build momentum and excitement for downtown redevelopment and urban living. We are also hoping that City Councilors will attend the discussion.
- Applebee's had a small fire this week that is believed to be caused by a power outage associated with Wednesday night's thunderstorms. They had to dispose of some food and have some smoke damage cleanup work but they are doing a thorough job and should be back at 100% by dinner tonight. Cristy Bourget was called in at 9:20 pm to inspect the kitchen after the fire. If we were relying on State inspectors then this Auburn restaurant would likely have been inspected today and would have lost at least a full day of operating time before opening again.
- New Auburn Transportation and Land Use Plan. New Auburn has lost some businesses over time but also still has some strong businesses of citywide and regional importance and a great sense of community. The New Auburn Master Plan adopted in 2011 identifies goals set by the citizens of New Auburn that served on the New Auburn Master Plan Committee and those that participated in the many public meetings and input sessions. We believe transportation changes over decades have hurt the downtown village environment of New Auburn and contributed to the challenges of building economic opportunity. We are currently engaged in a public process to figure out how to fix the transportation system and create increased investment opportunity. **The next public input session will be on September 5th at Rolly's Diner at 6pm.** Please attend and help the citizen group decide on the best options. We will also identify ways to change zoning requirements and accomplish the New Auburn Master Plan and committee goals in creating the place that they want New Auburn to be. In fact, Alan Manoian was in New Auburn Wednesday night doing a historic tour with a great group of residents and trying to encourage public participation.

We think the New Auburn Master Plan and the current efforts can create an environment that invites the investment and we are well on our way to doing that through the public process in a way that New Auburn residents want. Please Participate.

- 9 Gamage Avenue update: We have finally (once again) reached a real person at Sun Trust Mortgage. The person that was our contact is no longer employed there and it looks like the ball was dropped in the transition on this project. They will overnight a check for municipal costs associated with this nuisance building and give us a demolition schedule soon. It looks like we are back to where we were 3 weeks ago on this property. The City can demolish the building under the condemnation order but staff is pushing for Sun Trust to complete the demo as it will cost more than the property will be worth and the taxpayers would pick up the tab if the City demolished it.
- Code complaints are busy and permits are steady. We will have monthly numbers coming soon. We have been dealing with a few after-the-fact permits that were quite time consuming over the past week.
- Fencing is being installed at West Pitch Park. We hope this is the beginning of a new partnership with Brookfield Power. Our initial meetings with the new owners of the dam

have indicated they value safety as a top priority and have demonstrated that they aim to be real community partners where they own other facilities. We look forward to continuing to work with Brookfield Staff.

Police

- Patrol officers have been conducting selective enforcement details in schools zones, preparing the motoring public for the new school year.
- Officers arrested three environmental protestors on the railroad tracks near Court St. The protestors were arrested for criminal trespass after they refused to leave the tracks.
- Support Services have been conducting traffic calming details on Broad St. The speed trailer was placed on Broad St from 08/19/13 to 08/26/13. There were a total of 8,223 vehicles that passed the speed trailer during this time frame.
 - 2,187 vehicles were traveling under the posted speed limit.
 - 6,036 vehicles were traveling over the posted speed limit.
 - The average speed was 28.43 mph.
 - The Support Service officer also ran two short traffic details on Broad St. and stopped eight vehicles, issuing two citations for drivers who were traveling 15 + mph over the posted 25 limit.
- Detectives assisted MDEA with a controlled covert “buy” of crack cocaine from a very well known target. This target has been assisting out of state drug traffickers for years and is directly responsible for introducing out of state drug traffickers to the area as a place to traffic in illegal drugs.
- Detectives responded to Republic Jewelry regarding a sale that appeared suspicious. Subsequently, detectives were able to determine the suspects were from the Kennebec County area and had recently committed a burglary which had not yet been reported to Kennebec County Sheriff's Office. Kennebec Detectives responded to Republic Jewelry and will be investigating the case.

Recreation

- Interviews for the vacant Recreation Specialist position are taking place this week.
- The Adult Men's softball league playoffs continued throughout the week.
- The 7-8 grade football program will participate in a pre-season scrimmage against Oak Hill this coming Saturday.
- Youth football game schedules have been finalized and have been approved for field use. Games will begin for the 3-6th program this weekend.
- Youth football equipment fittings and adjustments continued throughout the week. The program picked up several more participants bringing the current total to 143 players, which is 23 more players than last season.
- This week, registrations continued for Youth Pee Wee Soccer. In this program, players are introduced to the basic techniques of soccer in a fun and positive learning environment. Emphasis on learning is achieved through fun games and small sided play. Also addressed are skills such as: communication and sportsmanship. 37 total participants are enrolled at this time.
- Registrations for Youth Flag Football program continued this week. This program is intended to provide an introduction to the game of football. Participants learn the basics of offense, defense, the line of scrimmage and other key elements of the game. A total of 19 participants are enrolled at this time.

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- Staff attended the kickoff meeting to discuss planning for the Twin Cities Holiday Celebration.
- Staff met with Lucile Merin to discuss placement of a “Little Free Library” within Raymond Park.
- The Hasty Gym basketball floor is scheduled to be resurfaced on Wednesday with final application of coating on Friday. The basketball floor will be unusable for approximately 2-1/2 weeks to allow for the final finish coat to cure.