

City of Auburn, Maine

Office of the City Manager



TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Clinton Deschene, City Manager
RE: Weekly Report
DATE: September 20, 2013

Assessing

- The department worked on deed transfers, abatements, property inspections and reviews related tax payer inquiries. This is a busy time for our department since the tax bills are coming due. Customer service is our main priority.
- The department proofed and finalized the annual Municipal Valuation Report. This document will be mailed to the State of Maine Revenue Service Department.
- The 2013/2014 Municipal Valuation lists were prepared to be sent off to the printer for book binding.

Auburn Public Library

- The Annual Meeting for the Library's Corporators will be Thurs., Sept. 26th, from 5 to 7 PM at the Library.
- Computer training and assistance continues to be popular. In addition to the partnership with BestBuy for "Thursdays with Techie," volunteer Maureen Goff conducts weekly help sessions on Wednesdays in our computer lab. Thank you to all who make these programs successful.
- Networking and social media programs for small business owners are up and running. The first session was held on Thursday, the 19th. This is part of the small business program here at the Library conducted in partnership with SCORE.
- On Monday, Sept. 23rd, from 3 to 4 PM the Library will conduct hold an introductory session on using the new Media Lab.
- A foreign policy discussion group, "Great Decisions," will start on Tues., Sept. 24th, at 2 PM. The hour-long sessions will feature topics such as the future of the Euro, Egypt, China in Africa and more.
- Registration is still open for the Great Falls Yoga Festival, being held on Sat., Sept. 28th. This is a new fundraiser for the Library and the YWCA. Registration is at www.greatfallsyogafestival.org.
- Suzanne Sullivan, Asst. Dir./Head of Collection Services, attended a Maine Infonet Minerva meeting. Minerva is the system that connects the Library to more than 80 other libraries around the State to facilitate a broader access to interlibrary loan.

Weekly Report

September 20, 2013

- 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

- The ballot proofs were approved and are in the process of being printed.
- We have been working on recruiting Election Workers, in particular Wardens and Ward Clerks. We are down 4 out of 5 Wardens and 2 possibly 3 out of 5 Ward Clerks.

CDBG

- The City received 6 bids for the demolition of 5 deteriorated properties. The low bidder is St. Laurent & Son Inc. of Lewiston. The bid range was \$36,250 to \$91,000. A pre-construction conference has been scheduled for next week.
- Reine has requested that attorney John Conway give an opinion of the City's title on two tax acquired properties located at 10 Lucille Street and 73 Paul Street. These buildings are also being considered for demolition.
- Both Yvette and Reine participated in a HUD sponsored webinar. This on-line training introduced the new planning and mapping tools that we will be required to use when writing a new Consolidated Plan in 2015.
- Reine attended the second meeting for the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative. Discussions included which agency should take the lead in organizing this collaboration, how to maintain support and engagement, and we reviewed a survey to begin mapping the assets of the Lewiston/Auburn area.

Engineering and Public Works

- Helm Bridge – The contractor has completed clearing the site and has placed the temporary bridge in position
- S. Main – The road has been fine graded in order to be paved on Friday, the 20th.
- Manley Road – The curbing installation as well as the gravel for the new sidewalk has been completed.
- Turner Street – The contractor continues to surface driveways and touch up loam.
- East Bates, East Dartmouth - The contractor continues to surface driveways and touch up loam.
- Public Works crews began doing “dry runs” on their plow routes this week. Operators review the plow routes, familiarize themselves with the routes, report any roadway defects and note all issues and concerns that could cause problems during plowing and snow removal operations.
- Public Works crew demolished the tool shack and vault at Oak Hill Cemetery, they removed the building debris, filled the void, re-graded the slope and stabilized the area with loam, erosion fabric and stone rip-rap.
- Staff finalized tree locations for 38 trees to be planted as part of TD Banks tree grant program. The trees will be planted in and around Edward Little Park as well as in and around Raymond Park. This event will occur on October 2, with Public Works staff assisting TD bank volunteers with the plantings.
- Mechanical and Operations staff visited the plow gear installer to inspect the build of the new plow trucks.
- Replaced/reset culverts on Jordan School Road and Miami Avenue

Finance

- The auditor's are here for the third week and the Finance Director has been working directly with them. Friday, September 20, 2013 is their last day of field work. We will continue to work on the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and hope to have it ready for Council in early November.
- The Tax Office has been busy this week with tax payments at the counter and helping the City Clerk's office with vital statistic requests due to them being short staffed. Property taxes collected this week are \$3,842,961
- The Facilities/Purchasing met with Cordjia the architectural /engineering firm that is working with the City to facilitate the conversion to natural gas at the Public Works garage, Hasty Armory and two fire stations (Engine 2 and Central Fire).

Fire

- This week Captain Keene, Lieutenant Scott, and Firefighters Tripp, Flanders, E. Saunders, Bouchard are attending orientation for the Maine Fire Services Institute Fire Officer Academy. This program offers undergraduate course work intended to enhance the skills of current fire officers and develop new knowledge in future officers. These firefighters will be exposed to topics such as human resources management, safety, professional development, and labor relations. At the conclusion of the program students will be awarded nationally recognized Fire Officer I and II certification and receive six hours of college credit.
- For the week of September 12 to September 18, there were 4 business and 3 apartment building life-safety inspections conducted by the fire companies. Out of those inspections, 6 were found not to be in compliance with the fire code.
- For the week of September 12 to September 18, we responded to 60 calls for service. These include, but are not limited to 1 rubbish fires; 40 emergency medical calls that include 4 motor vehicle accidents with injury, 1 motor vehicle/pedestrian accident; and 1 hazardous condition. There was no mutual aid calls during this period.

Health and Social Services

- Tammy Thatcher spent 24 hours this week helping out in the Clerk's office, manning the phones to help cover vacations in that office.
- We had one client secure a job this week as a result of our collaboration with the Career Center and her doing workfare.
- Our office is starting to get request for fuel assistance, due to the cold nights we have been experiencing.

Human Resources

- Union negotiations are on-going. The City met with three of the four unions that are currently expired.
- The staff provided new employee orientation to two new employees.
- We are preparing for the first mailing to all City employees regarding the new federal health care Program.
- September is open enrollment month for AFLAC. There are two new products that complement the City's new health insurance option and the service representative is reaching out to all employees to explain this new voluntary benefit.

ICT

- Installed fiber circuit to the Evidence Room to increase speed and improve network connectivity for PD operations.
- Continuing to work with Cardinal software to update TicketTrak.
- Planning our MUNIS upgrade from Release 9.2 to Release 10.3. Test phase is planned for November and with a go-live in December. This will involve closing the tax office for one day while this upgrade is complete. Much more information to follow on this project.
- The vendors mistakenly sent us incorrect Operating System specs for our PCs. We are working to resolve this discrepancy.
- ICT did a walk-through of the ice arena with a technology vendor to plan the network infrastructure for the location.
- Several employees have received a well-crafted phishing scam email. This email appears to be a legitimate message from Wells Fargo but it is not.
- Began field test of new GIS field-data collection using tablet pc and mobile technology.
- Met with Parks to outline workplan for mapping of city-maintained properties and rights-of-way.
- Now that standards have been agreed upon, began migrating Auburn's GIS basemap data to the new joint Auburn-Lewiston data structure.

Ice Arena

- CONSTRUCTION UPDATE:
 - Exterior Mezzanine Framing and Drywall is completed in Rink 1 and 2
 - Progress In Rink 1 is waiting for concrete cure.
 - Installation of cold floor piping has been finalized
 - Masonry Walls are complete
 - Wall painting continues
 - Interior Walls, electrical, mechanical and plumbing work continue
 - Rough plumbing is being finalized, awaiting fixture installation
- 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:
 - \$108,500 in annual sponsorships has been secured.
 - \$15,000 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. Negotiations with potential Naming Rights Partner continue. Development for Contractual agreements are underway.
- Conversations have begun for those interested in concessions operation, the development of an RFP for concessions and lounge services are being developed.
- RFP for Gaming and Vending services for the facility have been developed and released.
- Lease Agreement for ProShop space is still being finalized. Details of lease terms are being negotiated. Final review and execution is expected next week.
- Cabling, Telcomm, and data layouts are being run for technological needs of the facility.
- Marketing plans continue to adjust awaiting naming rights partner, website development has begun based upon content and programming, awaiting design rollout with Naming Rights sponsorship. Website, Marketing Opportunities and fundraising opportunities continue.

Planning

- Flood Maps-The new FEMA maps went into effect on July 8, 2013 and are affecting property owners. Mortgage companies contract with out of state flood determination companies to determine if a structure is in or out of a mapped 100-year or 1% Annual Chance Flood Zone. They seem to err on the side of caution and have been making some incorrect determinations requiring flood insurance for some that are not within a mapped flood area. Even if you are not in a mapped flood area you should decide for yourself if you want flood insurance, but if people have questions about whether they really are in a mapped flood area, we can help clarify that determination. Staff has successfully helped a number of homeowners change their flood determinations and avoid or reduce their flood insurance premiums in the past month. If property owners receive a notice that flood insurance is required where it was not previously they should act fast as they only have 30-45 days to appeal the determination before it becomes final and insurance is applied at their expense.
- We have a few more new or expanding businesses in town. Harbor Freight is finishing up work and getting ready for opening. Mac's Grill is planning an expansion. Legends Sports Bar and Grill is now open after major renovations at the former Rack em' Up building.
- The Planning Board discussed downtown redevelopment, zoning, urban form and opportunities for an improved urban lifestyle at their September 10th meeting. The Board will review two projects and discuss the technical aspects of downtown and form based codes at the October 8th meeting at 6pm in the City Council Chambers. The projects include the Lake Auburn Community Center proposal and a minor subdivision amendment at Simpsons Beach Road.
- Code cases have been busy and permitting is steady. Staff will be requesting that the Council consider changing some trash and debris related ordinances to help with enforcement in the near future. We are catching up on permits and should back to normal review times in the next week or so. We will be holding an interdepartmental meeting with Fire, Police, Code, Clerks and General Assistance to review no-heat case protocols and update shelter and assistance summaries for people affected by this problem. The meeting will be held on Tuesday September 24th and will leave us prepared for the increased calls as the weather cools.
- Last week I noted that we would be replacing a few leased street lights with City-owned lights to verify a process that works for the City and CMP. That process has hit a snag and we are working with CMP to help them understand our local ordinance that allows the City to do this in exchange for allowing the pole to be placed within the street R-O-W. Now that funding for the larger street light replacement has been approved we will be working to update exact costs, options and process with CMP. When options and costs are finalized we will bring those back to the Council with a Staff recommendation for a final decision. We have been watching a proposed bill that may affect how this works and we have been communication with Senator John Cleveland who not only represents our region, but is also the Chair of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee.
- A contempt of court hearing for the illegal Farrell Junkyard at 145 Eastman Lane is scheduled for Friday September 20, 2013. I will provide an update next week. It is very possible that the City will need to consider cleaning up the property and placing a lien in the amount of the costs. We will continue to try to achieve compliance and minimize municipal costs on this.

Weekly Report

September 20, 2013

- Cristy Bourget attended a 2 day Staff Meeting with the Department of Health & Human Services, Health Inspection Program. Cristy attends these quarterly staff meetings for educational purposes required towards her certification of a Standardized Health Inspector for the State of Maine. This certification ensures that Cristy is able to continue to inspect restaurants, takeouts and lodging for the State of Maine and the City of Auburn Inspection Programs. Topics and training included: Effective Communication and Professional Conduct for Health Inspectors, Inspection of Ethnic Establishments regarding Face & Conflict Resolutions, PHF Cocktails: Coming To A Bar Near You (raw egg) and meat based craft and artisanal cocktails), Foodborne Illness Investigations and Media Outlets & Public Messaging.
- The joint Land use study is on hold and waiting for the Arm Corp of Engineers appraisal of the ballfields. We have been unable to get a deadline and cannot extend the plan indefinitely without increasing consultant costs. Staff will be looking to set a deadline of December 1st for the appraisal. After which the planning effort would resume, with or without the appraisal and we may need to hold off on a recommendation on any future land swap.

Police

- The department handled 469 calls for service this week. Officers conducted 117 motor vehicle stops, 20 field interviews, 19 adult arrests and 6 juvenile arrests. Officers investigated 74 offenses of which, 13 were felonies, generating 22 criminal summonses. Officers responded to 26 motor vehicle crashes.
- We recently completed our promotion process and made the following promotions:
- Sergeant Laurie Woodhead has been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant. Lieutenant Woodhead joined the Auburn Police Department in August of 1989. She has served as a Patrol Officer, School Resource Officer, Corporal and Patrol Sergeant. Lieutenant Woodhead has the distinct honor of being the first female officer to rise thru the ranks to the Lieutenant's position.
 - Officer Chris Hatfield has been promoted to the rank of Sergeant. Sergeant Hatfield joined the department in August of 1995. Sergeant Hatfield has served as a Patrol Officer, Special Agent with the Central Maine Violent Crimes Task Force and as a Field Training Officer. Sergeant Hatfield will be assigned to Patrol Team C upon completion of Roger Williams University's First Line Supervisor Command School.
 - Officer Eric Bell has been promoted to the rank of Corporal. Corporal Bell joined the department in October 2004. He has served as a Patrol Officer, School Resource Officer and as a Field Training Officer. Corporal Bell will be assigned to Patrol Team A.
 - Officer Marshall McCamish has been promoted to the rank of Corporal. Corporal McCamish joined the department in June 2007. He has served as a Patrol Officer, Community Resource Officer and as a School Resource Officer. Corporal McCamish will be assigned to Patrol Team B.
- APD assisted Homeland Security Investigations with the execution of a search warrant in regards to a child pornography case
- This week, officers are participating in the annual firearms qualifications and training sessions being held and the Androscoggin Fish & Game

Recreation

- The Adult Men's softball league upper division playoffs were completed on Thursday. The championship game was scheduled to be completed last Thursday; however, inclement weather forced a postponement to this week. This is the final game of a successful 2013 adult softball season.
- Registrations continued for the figure skating instruction program. In this program, participants are introduced to basic skills such as forward and backward skating, turns, edging and balance. As the skaters improve, more advanced elements of skating will be introduced.
- The 7-8 grade football program will play their third regular season game against Oxford Hills & Gardiner on Saturday.
- The 5-6 grade football programs will play in the fourth week of their season against Brunswick on Saturday. Auburn White will face Auburn grey on Sunday.
- The 3-4 grade football programs will play in the fourth week of their season against Brunswick on Saturday.
- Staff attended a Holiday Festival meeting in Lewiston on Tuesday.
- Staff attended the first Winter Festival planning meeting on Wednesday.