

City of Auburn

To: Mayor LaBonté and the Auburn City Council
From: Clinton Deschene, City Manager
Subject: August Monthly Reporting - *Public Works & Engineering, Parks & Recreation, Economic Development, Library, Assessing, and City Clerk*
Date: September 10, 2012

Public Works and Engineering

- We processed 818 Work Orders and closed out 710 work orders with a balance of 108 work orders still open (and new) for the Month of August. There was a higher than usual volume of opened/created vs. closed because we processed 438 work orders in the Fleet Department that were hand-written and not electronically added to the system over the last 8 months. Hand written work orders are only permitted when no means to generate electronic work orders are available. Hand written W.O.'s will be processed electronically the next day. So 380 new work orders processed, 272 closed out and 108 opened but not processed.
- Month of August was the last summer month of 10 hr days for the crew. Longer days allowed for more work to be done on certain projects yet created challenges for scheduling.
- Roadside Mowing operations ongoing throughout the month. Done by plow routes for better management of operations. Plow routes mowed- 35, 19, 24, 10, 28, Central fire station, 20, Ash dump mowing, Kittyhawk,
- Cleaning of Basins for the continued adherence to the SWPPS program. This operation is also done by plow routes for easy tracking/planning. Routes done this month were 14, 20, 11, 6, 4, Several jobs for hydro-excavating holes, trenches for culvert/pipe crews to aid in their projects. Flushing lines on Riverside drive,
- Recycling Operations ongoing throughout the month. 49.34 tons of material were collected in the month of August. Last year's August totals were 42.17 tons so we collected approx. 7 more tons of recycling this month vs. last year.
- Tree Trimming Operations systematically managing the City Forest by trimming/cutting. Plow routes are utilized to schedule/manage cutting. Areas trimmed/cut include: North Auburn Road, Matindale, Plow run #4, 152 Nottingham Rd, Main st wall, Broad St., Great Falls, Johnson Rd, summer st, Main Arterials, cut bamboo along riverwalk area, Trapp Rd (in preparation for contracted Mill/fill project),
- Paving and Patching Crew in full swing during summer months. Some areas worked in include but limited to: Pownal Rd box cut repair where over 120 tons of material were placed to repair a two separate hazardous sections of roadway. Paving/patching on Atwood, Rodman, Jordan School rd, Turner St patch, dunlap St, Mill st, Danville Corner, Cook St, Highland Ave, Western view, garden circle, school areas, North Riverroad, Heath, Greenwood, Fern,

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- Roadside Ditching and Shoulder Work included the following areas: Rosewood Rd, Pownal Rd, Drainage on Nottingham Rd, Jordan School Rd, Hobart Rd, Fickett Rd, Nickerson Ave, East Hardscrabble, Manley Rd, merrrow rd, sopers mills rd, Penley corner rd, Moosebrook Rd, Sopers Mills, Harmon's corner, drainage at ELHS, Kittyhawk, Pownal Rd,
- Culvert Replacements, Catch Basin Repairs and sinkhole repairs: Some of the areas that had culverts /basin repairs were Rodman rd, Hersy hill Rd, Mill street, Penley Corner Rd, lane Rd, , Sinkholes on Turner Street, Harmons corner Rd, Old Danville, Dunlap St, Cameron Ln, Drainage work on Nottingham Rd, moosebrook rd, Hackett Rd, Sopers Mills, Sinkhole Beacon st, Curb reset Dunlap, Northriver rd,
- Grading of Gravel Roads continued into July due to heavy/wet June:
- The Sign Crew has been creating/installing special sign requests, repairing and fixing damaged sings as well as systematically replacing all the out of compliance street signs throughout the City. Specialty signs for P & R department, PD, PAL center, event signs, generated pole numbers for electrical dept, made signs for Western ave area, Moulton Park, Second St, south Witham rd, replaced several downed stop signs, yield signs, street signs, Great Falls Plaza signage and placement/retrieval of special requests/needs for signs, Mary Carroll area, Additional Signage for School Dept. requests,
- Summertime Projects: Window replacement completion for office windows to make a more energy efficient setup. Welding shop prepping winter plows for season, Fleet Mechanics processing work orders for repairs, performing state inspections, completing PM services,
- Tree crew also installed several banners as requested. Did some needed sweeping of the Main Street area, lower Auburn area, . Several crews weeded islands around the City, Crosswalks and arrows, stop bars painted per contracted work,
- Month of August had one employee reach their 5 year anniversary at Public Works- Angela Dow reached her 5 yr milestone mark!!
- CDBG Sidewalk Project: Project is complete except for tree planting.
- 2012 Paving Project: Turner Street to is expected to begin approx. mid September.
- 2011 Neighborhood Reconstruction Project (Winter, Summer, and Dennison): Work continues on curbing and sidewalks. A large amount of sidewalks are being paved the week of September 10. The box cut of Dennison Street and binder pavement is expected to be complete the week of September 17th.
- 2012 Neighborhood Project (Cleaves and Old Farm Hill): Installation of drainage structures is complete. Box cut is complete on Cleaves Street. Working on the box cut of Old Farm Hill. Binder is expected to be completed the week of September 24th.
- 2013 Paving Contract (Hotel, Trapp, Manley and Twin Roads): Apparent low bidder is Pike Industries. They are hoping to complete the binder on Trapp Road this year.

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- 2013 Roadway Reconstruction Project is currently out to bid. Bids will be open on September 20th. The project includes E. Dartmouth, Dewey Avenue, Rose Terrace, W. Bates and W. Dartmouth streets.
- 2012 Crack Seal Program: The contract has been signed with the low bidder and work is expected to begin the week of September 24th.
- The 4 private development projects under construction (Panera Bread, Central Maine Credit Union, Main St. Housing, and Tambrands) are all proceeding with no significant issues.
- Park Avenue Road and Pathway construction is complete.
- Hotel/Minot Avenue Intersection Improvement Project - Drainage work is complete on the entire project. Binder is expected to be placed the week of September 10, weather dependent.
- The City expects to use approximately 20% of the grant for Great Falls Plaza prior to the grant expiration on September 19.
- South Main Reconstruction – A meeting was held with the MDOT Right of Way Office and staff to determine the appropriate Waiver Valuation Process by which any needed rights will be acquired. Appraisals will begin in September.
- Lehouillier Drive – A meeting was held between the residents/property owners in order to facilitate a resolution to a dispute regarding the encroachment of a retaining wall into a right of way on land that had been tax acquired by the City. An agreement was reached where two of the property owners would exchange small slivers of property with the City to allow a driveway to be constructed without having to remove the retaining wall. At the expense of one of the property owners, boundary surveys are being prepared with the legal descriptions for the transfer of properties.

Parks and Recreation

- August provided another month of fantastic weather with warm days and ideal conditions for outdoor programming. Summer program offerings continued and maintenance tasks such as sweeping, raking, weeding, litter patrol, graffiti removal, mowing and field lining continued throughout the month. Summer day camp, track and field came to a close and adult softball continued.
- Youth football kicked off with our annual football camp offered on August 4th. A total of 40 participants grades 1-8. The football camp is designed to prepare players for participation in fall football through instruction in proper fundamentals, skills and techniques. The camp is instructed by Auburn Recreation Coaches, Edward Little Coaches and is overseen by Head Coach, Dave Sterling. A total of 145 children are registered for the youth football program over a span of grades 1-8.

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- This month, the Parks department focused maintenance efforts on the August 17th – 19th Balloon Festival, as well as, field maintenance. In addition to these tasks, routine week-to-week maintenance occurred on City parks, medians, esplanades, flower beds, common areas, the Municipal beach and athletic fields. Tasks performed included: mowing, raking, weeding, trimming, litter removal, hardscape repair and field lining & dragging. Additionally, new boat docks were installed at the North River Road boat launch. The previous docks were damaged by flooding in earlier in the season, and were replaced on August 17th. Ernest DeLuca of NextEra Energy helped to facilitate the replacement, so that members of the community would once again have access to this asset.

Economic Development

- Worked with a local telecommunications company looking to establish a new corporate headquarters, and with DECD on their application for Pine Tree Zone benefits.
- Completed a sale of tax-acquired property on Minot Avenue to Westfield, Inc.
- Continued to work with legal counsel and others to finalize a draft of the lease for the proposed Ice Arena on Turner Street.
- Made a presentation on the city to the developers of the proposed hotel in Kittyhawk Business Park.
- Staff and the city manager met with a landowner about a charitable donation of 3 acres of land off Vickery Road to the city.
- Worked with Sebago Technics, Inc., Jones Associates and LAEGC on issues regarding permits for the Auburn Industrial Park land off of Lewiston Junction Road.
- Participated in a meeting of the Androscoggin County Building Committee on plans regarding the future of the County Building.
- Attended meetings of the AVCOG Finance and Executive Committees, including a full AVCOG budget review.
- Attended the ribbon-cutting for a new Auburn business, Musician's Hub on Center Street.
- Participated in a meeting of LA Arts to discuss future programming.
- Worked with the LAEGC TIF Policy Committee to review and make modifications to the existing Lewiston-Auburn Joint TIF Policy.
- Attended Foreign Trade Zone seminar sponsored by LAEGC featuring FTZ consultant and expert, Roy Knapp.
- Met with a local business owner who expressed interest in establishing a flight school at the Auburn-Lewiston Municipal Airport.

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- Reviewed appraised values and met with appraiser on 9 Broad Street and surrounding properties, which the city hopes to acquire for the New Auburn Riverfront Park development.
- Met with new Auburn business owner, Keith Genest of KP's Place on Center Street, regarding opportunities for marketing and exposure, and the business community in Auburn.

Library

- The Library will hold its annual Meeting of the Corporators on Saturday, September 29, from noon to 2 p.m. This meeting includes annual reports from the Board President, Director, Development Director and Treasurer as well as election of new members to the Library Board of Trustees. The 2013-2016 goals determined during the August Board Strategic Planning sessions will also be presented.
- A building-wide event celebrating reading and writing will be held Friday, September 21. In addition to programs for all ages it will feature the Library's last used book sale. We are discontinuing our large book sales because of diminishing demand which is at least partly attributable to the closing of many second hand bookstores. Rather than holding book sales we will contract with Better World Books to sell our donated and withdrawn items online. They handle all shipping and will return to us 15% of the sale price.
- New and Continuing Program Collaborations (Adult) –
 - AVCOG will be conducting a nine week series of programs for small business starting in January under the umbrella "New Year, New Career."
 - AVCOG Small Business Development Counselor, Rose Creps, offers regular counseling sessions.
 - Maine Job Corp has confirmed that they will continue to offer monthly programs for teens and young adults during the coming year.
 - Job Skills classes from the Career Center will also continue during the coming year.
 - SCORE is offering small business counseling Monday through Thursday.
 - Androscoggin Historical Society will be offering three upcoming programs.
 - Social Security Administration will continue its series on electronic resources with a new program in September.
 - Central Maine Medical Center will present information on various health-related topics at Tuesday "Tune-Up's."
 - St. Mary's Pavilion will provide Alzheimers education on Thursdays in October.
 - Adult Services Manager, Marty Gagnon, is visiting Schooner Estates twice a month to provide classes on electronic resources.
 - Auburn Adult Education is offering two two-part programs this fall on *Androscoggin Women* and *What Does It Mean to Be Irish?*

Assessing

- This year property land valuations were reduced in the R1, R2 and R3 neighborhoods throughout the city. These reductions in valuation impacted an estimated 6,115 properties. In addition, three of the condominium developments received reductions in their base lot values. This reduction impacted an estimated 95 properties. These adjustments were made as a result of declining market value as evidenced through sales ratio studies.
- The Municipal Valuation Return report was completed for the Maine Revenue Services – Property Tax Division. This report is due within 30 days from the date of commitment date of August 7, 2012. The City's certified ratio is \$100% and the mil rate has been set at \$19.59 per thousand dollars of assessed value. The Abatement deadline is February 7, 2013.
- The tax bills were sent to taxpayers on August 21, 2012. The assessing office fielded 53 personal property telephone calls and 72 real estate calls in addition to numerous counter inquiries regarding the tax bills. There were several concerns that people were not receiving their homestead exemption. We provided explanations that the homestead exemptions were posted under Other Exemptions on the tax bills.
- Since the tax bills were issued we processed seven real estate abatements and six personal property abatements in the month of August.
- All of the assessing staff attended the Freedom of Access Act – (“Right to Know Law”) public service training in Brunswick on August 21, 2012. This training was provided by the Maine Municipal Association. All of the staff obtained their training certification certificates. The state of Maine requires that all municipal officers, elected officers, clerks, treasurers and assessors take this training.

City Clerk

- Alison Pepin began her duties as License Specialist/Deputy Clerk/Deputy Registrar on August 20th. We've have taken back some of the Clerk duties that the Tax Clerks have been working on for the past several months which include vital records, marriage licenses, garage sale permits, and Taxi Cab/Driver licenses.
- I attended Records Management training on 8/29/2012 in Portland.
- We issued 26 business licenses during the month of August.
- As of September 1st, we received 70 requests for absentee ballots. This number is up from the 2008 Presidential Election where we had only 33 requests during the same time period.