

# City of Auburn

To: Mayor LaBonté and the Auburn City Council  
From: Clinton Deschene, City Manager  
Subject: December Monthly Reporting - *Public Works & Engineering, Parks & Recreation, Library, Assessing, and City Clerk*  
Date: January 15, 2013

## Public Works and Engineering

- **Productivity-** APW processed 621 Work Orders and closed out 453 work orders with a balance of 159 work orders still open (and new) for the Month of December. Of the 621 Work Orders 225 were processed by our Fleet Services Team closing out 141 leaving 84 on-going repairs/pending repairs (many of which are scheduled PM appointments).
- **Update-** The Month of December saw the Public Works Winter Operational period kick into full gear. (Officially from November 15 to April 15 the crew and staff are on call 24/7 for Winter Operations). We now have the ‘fluffy white stuff’ on the ground to remind us all that Winter is here! The PW crews have responded to 10 recordable Winter Events. To date the plow crews have utilized 2,157 tons of salt, 12,000 gallons of liquid calcium and 900 cubic yards of sand to battle the 10 Winter Events. Early on in the season we had many ice/sleet events that required literally tons of materials to battle.
- **Holidays-** The crews enjoyed the Holidays as much as possible, many of the workers had to work on the holidays to take care of ice/snow, for that we say “thank you”.
- **Facilities-** PW coordinated with Finance Department to finalize a contractor for siding replacement. Siding colors have been selected and siding ordered. The project is anticipated to begin in January/February time period. Yes, at first this may sound crazy to replace siding during the winter but this is how the professionals do it. They remove 3 panels of siding and replace them moving along the building’s sides. This way they never leave the building open to the elements. This process gives the PW Facility the ability to start re-cooping come costs by saving on heating with the new insulated siding panels.
- **Winter Operations-**
  - Now that we have measurable amounts of snow on the ground the crews have begun to perform ‘snow picking’ operations. This is where the PW workers go out with heavy equipment and remove snow-banks, clear out basin tops and push back snow from the roadways. These operations are done for different reasons. Clearing basins allows melting snow a place to go so roadways do not freeze from the melted water during the nighttime hours. Pushing back snow banks along the roadways allows room for more snow to be plowed off the roads during the next storm. ‘Picking’ snow around the City provides clear line of sight paths for turning traffic, keeps sidewalks free from piles of snow and makes room for business district parking.
  - These most recent storms allowed for PW management to evaluate some new changes to operations. So far, things are performing as expected. A third shift crew

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- was implemented this year and this crew with an assigned Supervisor has been critical in getting the response to storms out sooner. This crew responds immediately to winter events and makes necessary preparations for the rest of the crews when they are called in. Some the winter operations done by the Parks crews have been modified so that both PW and Parks are working together to provide better response and service to parking lots, sidewalks and City owned properties. So far, this too has been a positive change.
- **Tree Trimming Operations-** these operations were limited this month while the crew hangs Holiday Decorations around the City. Some nuisance, hazard and ROW issues were addressed during the month. The tree crew also chipped many Christmas trees that were dropped off around the City.
  - **Paving and Patching Crew** – this crew goes out periodically during the Winter and patches as many potholes as possible. We have had some issues with the HotBox unit so the crews have been using cold patch. The HotBox unit actually heats up and cooks pavement material so it is a soft asphalt (just like in the summer time). This material is better to use when patching holes since it bonds to the other roadway surface when it cools down.
  - **The Sign Crew**
    - The sign crew has been creating/installing special sign requests, repairing and fixing damaged signs as well as systematically replacing all the out of compliance street signs throughout the City.
  - **Trainings-** Supervisor's worked with the crews on proper plow attachment procedures, plow repair procedures and chain installation/repair. Crews were also trained in the proper operation of the ground speed control units. These units/systems monitor all the material usage that the trucks use. All of these functions are critical to proper and safe winter operations.
  - **BOL Compliance-** PW sent one employee to become certified in Lead Paint recognition and handling. This will benefit the City and comply with BOL requirements.
  - **Recycling Operations-** during the month of December we collected 50.55 tons of recycled material. This is a decrease for the month over last year's December numbers by 2.07 tons. At first glance this could be attributed to the fact that Christmas was on a weekend last year therefore allowing residents to get their materials out immediately following the Holiday. This year the Holiday was on a Tuesday, resulting in a missed pickup as well as a break in routine for residents.
  - Staff continues to work with the Lewiston/Auburn Bike-Ped Committee on the development of a Complete Streets Policy for adoption by both Cities.
  - Staff is also working with ATRC's Bike-Ped Advisory Committee on a 5 year update to long range facilities plan Bridging the Gaps.
  - Dig safe location requests have slowed down now that winter is here. The work has been centered on notifying utility companies when their trenches are in need of repair.
  - Rivershore Housing: Concrete work continues as does underground utility work.
  - Estimates and plans are being prepared for the work at Central Park.

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- 2011 Neighborhood Project(Winter, Summer, Dennison)- Project to be completed next spring after the Auburn Water District has completed their work.
- The Court Street Slip Lane project was bid with St. Laurent and Son coming in as the low bidder.
- 2013 Neighborhood Project- E. Dartmouth surface paving will occur next spring.
- 2012 Paving Project- The portion of Turner from Joline Dr to CMCC has been winterized and surface pavement will occur next spring. Remainder of the project to be completed in spring 2013.
- 2013 Paving Project- Trapp and Twin Roads have been winterized. Surface pavement scheduled for next spring. Manley Rd and Hotel Rd also scheduled for next spring.

### Parks & Recreation

- Planning for the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Winter Festival continued throughout the month. The work of securing donations, activity partners, music entertainment, ice sculpture concepts and schedule planning all took place with the Winter Festival Committee. The event will run from January 25<sup>th</sup> through February 3<sup>rd</sup> this year with a variety of activities being offered for people of all ages to enjoy. The aim of the festival is to encourage people to get outside and enjoy the winter season. It's a chance to try an activity you've never tried before, or one you haven't done in a long time.
- The 2013 public service application was submitted to the CDBG department. The parks and recreation department has submitted a request for \$25,000 in funding for financial aid assistance to low income families. Should the application be approved, these funds will assist approximately 125 children from approximately 75 families to participate in recreation programming.
- Budget preparation continued throughout the month on both the CIP and operating budgets.
- RFP's for an athletic fields needs assessment were sent to qualified vendors. In conjunction with the planning phase of a new High School, the City will be undertaking a recreation needs assessment. This assessment will seek to outline what recreation facilities are available city-wide, what activities and scheduling are taking place, and assess the needs/demand of the community.
- The parks department performed maintenance during multiple winter storm shifts which consisted of plowing, sanding, snowblowing and sidewalk maintenance. We have collaborated together with public works to ensure that sidewalks, winter relief lots and the immediate area around Auburn Hall receives the needed attention during winter storm events. Along with winter maintenance, the parks department began the process of updating annual BOL training. Preventative maintenance on seasonal equipment also took place during the month of December.

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- Work on the Twin Rink facility continued throughout the month. Meetings focused on the design and layout of the new arena took place with the general contractor, the architectural firm, the City's consultant and City staff.

### Library

- The Library has completed its FY14 Annual Plan which will be presented to the Library Board of Trustees at their next meeting, January 16. Objectives, strategies and measures were created to address the APL Goals created by the Board over the summer. The objectives also address goals identified by the Council. Following Board approval, copies of the plan will be available to the City Manager, Assistant City Manager and Councilors.
- Hal Barter completed a weatherization inspection of the Library building and identified a number of areas where insulation and other weather-proofing could produce energy savings. Rick Duchesneau will address what he can. More significant projects will be included in future CIP requests.
- Officer McCamish of the APD met with Library Staff this week to help them identify situations in which it's appropriate to call police. He was very effective in helping staff feel both empowered and supported. Thank you APD!
- Channel 6 came to the Library on Tuesday to film the new Media Lab. Instruction in the Lab software continues with this month featuring iPhoto, Photography and iMovie. A brochure promoting the teen media fair to be held in the spring is being distributed in schools and other teen venues.
- The Library is looking forward to once again being a viewing site for the 2013 L/A Film Festival on April 5 and April 6<sup>th</sup>
- Working with the Lewiston Public Library, we have applied for the American Library Association News Know-how grant – a 2-week intensive summer program for teens to learn how to fact-check the news.
- We are also working with the Lewiston library in organizing this spring Teen Opportunities Fair and have secured attendance by Hannaford, Auburn Rec, and Community Credit Union.
- Small businesses are the focus of an eight part series of programs being held on Thursday nights from 6-7:30 beginning January 10. Local experts will speak on a wide range of topics critical to small businesses start-ups including financial statements, cash flow forecasting and marketing.
- At the fiscal year half-point the number of visitors to the library continues to grow with the daily average now at 766 – an increase of 6% over this time last year. However, although most measures of use show increases (program attendance, website visits, etc.) there is a slight drop in the number of items checked-out. Although the decline is less than 1% it, naturally concerns us – and we have many theories about why. However, among materials showing an increase were those for the youngest children.

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The latter is very good news since exposure to reading in the early years is so predictive of later success.

**Assessing**

- Business Equipment Reimbursement – The staff completed all of the 2011 BETR applications for business personal property reimbursement this month. These forms have to be returned to the State by December 31, 2012.
- Tax Abatement Appeal – I prepared the Assessing Department’s appeal report for the tax appeal hearing with the Board of Assessment Review scheduled for January 9, 2013. This is an appeal of a four unit multi-family property located at 82 Hampshire Street.
- Abatements 2012 – To date we have processed a total of 48 abatements. The abatement deadline is February 7, 2013. Below is a year comparison chart on abatements processed.

<b>ABATEMENTS</b>						
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>RESIDENTIAL</b>	<b>COMMERCIAL</b>	<b>PERSONAL PROPERTY</b>	<b>ABATEMENTS TOTAL</b>	<b>VALUE</b>	<b>TAXES</b>
2008	38	27	39	104	\$6,897,888	\$126,990
2009	85	29	21	135	\$11,763,000	\$215,415
2010	73	26	13	112	\$9,682,800	\$186,878
2011	97	13	24	134	\$6,135,100	\$118,960
2012	24	9	15	48	\$3,009,700	\$58,960

- Deed Transfers - The number of deed transfers has remained somewhat stable over the last three years. The deeds from December 1, 2012 to April 1, 2013 still need to be loaded. There appears to be more qualified sales this year than in past years. Real estate conditions may be improving.

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<b>DEED TRANSFERS</b>					
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>2012 YTD</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>NUMBER OF TRANSFERS</b>	409	585	584	763	696
<b>QUALIFIED SALES</b>	163	126	133	169	228
<b>% OF USEABLE SALES</b>	40%	22%	23%	22%	33%

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### City Clerk

- The Same Sex Marriage Law went into effect on Saturday, December 29, 2012. To date, we have had only one same sex couples apply for a marriage license.
- All Taxi Cab and Taxi Driver licenses expired December 31<sup>st</sup>. Notices were mailed out to each of the Cab Companies advising them of this and renewal applications were included in the mailing.
- All dog licenses expired December 31<sup>st</sup>. Tax Collector, Nancy Bosse mailed out notices to the dog owners letting them know that the licenses did expire December 31<sup>st</sup> and after January 31<sup>st</sup>, there would be a late fee added to the regular licensing fee. The month of January is considered the grace period by the State.