

City of Auburn

To: Mayor LaBonté and the Auburn City Council
From: Clinton Deschene, City Manager
Subject: December Monthly Reporting – *Fire, Police, Finance, CDBG, Health & Social Services, Planning, Permitting & Code, ICT, and Human Resources*
Date: February 6, 2013

Fire

Prevention

- In November, there were twenty Life Safety Inspections conducted by the fire companies in thirteen businesses and seven apartment buildings. Out of those inspections, eight businesses and four apartment buildings were found not to be in compliance with the fire code.

Training

- This month crews conducted training on farm related injuries. This topic covers what must be done should a farm worker become injured by or entangled in a piece of agricultural machinery. While farming may not be as prevalent as it once was in Auburn, there continues to be working farms that have hazards associated with them. Additionally, the specialized equipment that we possess is likely to be called upon should a mutual aid community encounter this type of scenario.
- Also this month, the Senior Managers participated in additional National Incident Management System (NIMS) training. This session was geared toward properly managing and accounting for resources used during an incident. In the future there will be additional trainings held on NIMS related subjects. The education received during these trainings make us better prepared for a disaster and stronger as a community should one occur.

Public Relations

- This month saw the annual arrival of Santa on Engine 2 during the Truck Load of Christmas. Every year the firefighters solicit donations and wrap presents for needy children. In addition to receiving presents, children are extremely excited to see Santa arriving on a fire truck rather than a sleigh. This activity has generated much positive feedback for both the department and city.
- We also conducted two tours of Central Fire Station this month for groups of children.

Emergency Responses

- In the month of December, the fire department responded to 320 requests for emergency service. These requests include, but are not limited to, 7 fires in buildings,

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196 emergency medical calls, eighteen false alarms, and forty-one motor vehicle accidents. The city received mutual aid twice and provided mutual aid one time.

Police

Operations

- Officers responded to 1,900 calls for service in December.
- Officers made 59 physical arrests.
- Officers issued 77 traffic citations and 267 warning for various traffic offenses.
- Officers responded to 172 traffic accidents.
- Officer Mitchell Morse graduated from the Maine Criminal Justice Academy. Officer Morse will be assigned to a field training officer for the next eleven weeks.
- After review of the revised ordinance passed in 2011. It was determined the police department could enforce the prohibition of panhandling within our community. We have received great feedback from the community on this notable change.
- Fireworks update: since July 5, 2012, the department has responded to 78 fireworks complaints. Of those complaints, eleven citations were issued for violating city ordinance. Officers spent 11 hours of on-scene time for these complaints. The majority of the calls are unfounded or individuals do not have possession of the fireworks when the officers arrive. Of those eleven citations, five were dismissed by the courts and six were fined for a total of \$1,150. The police department is prosecuting these cases, case preparation and court time is not included in the hours spent on these complaints.

Training

- Nine officers attended a two-day training sponsored by Project Lifesaver International. "Project Lifesaver International provides in-depth training for law enforcement and other public safety agencies on the use of specialized electronic search and rescue equipment, technology and procedures, as well as teaching rescuers how to communicate with people afflicted with cognitive conditions, all of which are essential to the successful rescue of missing persons who wander or otherwise become lost. They certify search and rescue personnel and provide ongoing management to participating agencies." As a result of a successful grant the police department now has specialized equipment and training to search for participants in our program.
- End of the year mandated training was completed by all officers to comply with the Maine Criminal Justice Academy.
- SROs' Carll, Cousins, & McCamish attended Civil Rights Officer training. This was a one-day class that was held at the Maine Criminal Justice Academy.
- On 12/07/12 Sgt. Boulet attended Intoxilyzer 8000 training at the Cape Elizabeth Fire Department. This training was provided by the Maine Criminal Justice Academy and DHHS Lab. The Intoxilyzer 8000 will be replacing the Intoxilyzer 5000 as of 2013.

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Community Outreach

- Vacant buildings remain to be a challenge for the police department. We have had numerous copper thefts and a recent arson from vacant buildings. Staff is working with local realtors, CDBG and Code Enforcement personnel to ensure vacant buildings are identified and secured. We urge citizens to report any suspicious activity from known vacant buildings. We have been successful in catching thieves when a tip comes in from a citizen.
- The police department launched a survey for our citizens to provide the agency with valuable information on how best to service the citizen of Auburn. We have had tremendous response and encourage everyone to participate.
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/APDcommunitysurvey>
- Central Maine Medical Center reached out to the police department and asked if there were any parents struggling to provide their children with love around the Christmas holiday. SRO Poulin, ironically enough, had been trying to figure out a way of providing a specific family (w/ 3 children) a quality Christmas year. CMMC, in partnership with the police department, provided a local family with an enormous amount of gifts (clothes and toys). According to SRO Poulin, the anonymous family was amazed by the outpouring of support. We want to thank the CMMC's emergency room staff for helping us facilitate this outreach.

Finance

- The Finance Director worked on the 5 year Capital Improvement Program and budget worksheets and sent them out to all departments for completion.
- The foreclosure date on 2010 property taxes was December 17, 2012. The tax collector is in the process of completing a list of properties that are now tax acquired. She has been making sure that every contact has been made to try to get these taxes paid.
- The Tax Collector sent notices to dog owners reminding them that the deadline is December 31st to register their dogs. By State law they have until January 31st to register without a \$25 late fee.

CDBG

- Community Development staff met with the CEI Housing Inc. and the realtor for the townhouses at 261 Academy Street. The meeting helped to clarify roles and responsibilities for processing offers for purchase of the townhouses. The developer will host an open house to showcase one or two of the units.
- The Community Development Department received 14 requests for public service dollars in the amount of \$121,535, and 3 requests for capital improvement projects for \$99,756.
- Only one consultant responded to Auburn's Request for Proposals to conduct an analysis of impediments to fair housing choice. This is a joint project funded by Auburn and Lewiston. The proposal was substantially higher than the budgeted amount. The Auburn and Lewiston housing authorities both agreed to make a contribution toward the

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project. Still underfunded, Community Development staff met with the consultant to develop a new scope of work for the project. To reduce the contract cost, the Community Development Departments will gather some of the data.

- Yvette Bouttenot worked with the Auburn Adult Education Department in an effort to promote the Homebuyer Program. A class will be held in February as part of the adult education program.
- Jennifer Dow, Administrative Assistant, has been training with the Finance Department to operate the City's financial application. Jen will now be generating purchase orders and running reports for Community Development staff.
- Two security deposit loans were approved and closed. This program helps to prevent homelessness.
- Four heating assistance loans were approved and closed.
- Hal Barter was asked by the Finance Department to oversee the construction of improvements at the South Main Street fire station. Hal provided specifications for mold remediation, floor replacement and bathroom renovations. Hal conducted the bidding, and will supervise the construction. He also facilitated a camera investigation of sewer and drain lines to identify potential blockages.
- Hal Barter assisted the Auburn Public Library to identify appropriate tools for the Tool Lending Library. Hal also conducted an energy assessment of the original library building and found there were several areas that were un-insulated—the attic, dormers in the history room, and half of the Executive Director's office. Hal advised the Library staff to air seal all windows and doors, and insulate the portion of the basement area where there was easy access.
- Hal Barter is providing training to the Lewiston Community Development Department to enable them to administer their Homeowner Rehab Program. This training is being conducted for one of Lewiston's rehab projects. The assistance involves learning the mechanics of conducting a home inspection, writing an inspection report and technical specifications, conducting the bidding, and managing the construction. Once this training is complete, Lewiston will be ready to manage their projects.
- The Community Development Loan Committee met twice in December. They approved 5 applications, four of which were emergency repairs for \$33,900. The other was for the sale of 60 Summer Street, a Neighborhood Stabilization property.
- The City's offer to purchase two properties with Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds was accepted by the seller. The closings for 26 Cook Street and 69 Bradman Street should occur in late January.

Health and Social Services

- Christmas in the Health & Social Service office was exciting this year. Truck Load of Christmas (TLC), (Fire dept) serviced 12 families with 26 children. A private donor adopted one family with 2 children. Our Public Works department picked up 2 families with 6 children. The Community Service team picked up 5 adults and 2 families with 3

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children from GA and 14 seniors from SEARCH. All effort was made to make sure the families were not on someone else's Christmas list, as we worked closely with the Salvation Army, to avoid duplications.

- General Assistance paid in welfare assistance a total of \$14,622.52 in December 2012 compared to \$9,260 in the same month in 2011.
- We took in 109 applications compared to 103 in December, 2011.
- TANF households assisted were 1 with \$745. TANF timed out, 6 households, for a total of \$1,785.
- Workfare was assigned to 15 applicants, and completed by 12 individuals for a total of 308.5 hours, and a value of \$2,468. The majority of the workfare was completed at the Parks department.
- Community Cords; Five hundred gallons of oil was issued for heat, out of this fund, in December. It provided 5 households with 100 gallons of oil each, consisting of 6 adults and 9 children. Cords funds are used when a household is in need of fuel and they do not fit the General Assistance guidelines.

Planning, Permitting and Code

- During the month of November the Department processed 26 building, electrical, sign and plumbing permits. The permits resulted in the collection of \$3,200.00 in fees for work with an estimated construction cost of \$237,000.00. The number of permits was that lowest that it has been since keeping detailed monthly records in July of 2008, however, December or January are usually the slowest months of the year for permit activity. We have been following up on inspections from permits issued in previous months, catching up on past complaints and issues identified by staff including a number of residential units created without permits.
- As of January 2nd we are about 50% through FY 13. Our expenses are at 45% but billing is usually a couple of weeks behind so some expenses have yet not been accounted for during that period. Revenues are at approximately 84% with most of that from building permit revenues which were at 103% of the projected annual total.
- During the past month the Planning Department and JLUS Policy Committee made additional progress on the joint land use study (JLUS) in collaboration with the Maine Army National Guard for the area surrounding that entity's Auburn training facility. The Policy committee met on January 9, 2013 and will meet again at 4 PM at the Auburn City Council Chambers on February 13, 2012. We have created a web and facebook page to help keep people informed and facilitate public input. The committee is seeking input on park usage through a survey that can be accessed at the Joint Land Use Study website at: <http://www.auburnmaine.gov/Pages/Government/Auburn-Maine-Joint-Land-Use-Study>

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- We have been conducting interviews for the City Planner position and hope to select the final candidate soon. We have some excellent applicants and look forward to filling the position and taking on more planning and comprehensive plan implementation projects soon.
- During the last four weeks we tracked 16 new property specific Code Requests resulting in 9 new enforcement actions. The total number of code cases was down this month, however, a number of them were no heat complaints. No heat complaints are very time consuming because they can involve moving residents out of unsafe buildings, frozen pipes and uninhabitable buildings. Buildings in foreclosure also complicate resolving complaints and this month we had to secure one building at the City's expense and have water and electricity disconnected at another. Cristy Bourget conducted 14 sanitation inspections including lodging, mobile vendors, restaurant and takeout facilities, 1 of which was complaint driven.
- During annual property inspections, the Assessing Department identified 26 buildings, additions, decks and/or additional residential units constructed without permits in 2012, or before. We are sorting through those and prioritized the new dwelling units for the first round of review. There are 14 identified units that appear to have been created without permits. The Council should be aware that we will be contacting property owners to determine if a violation exists and to correct the issues. These are often very difficult cases because owners have expended funds to create the units and are relying on the income, even if they are illegal. There are three possible outcomes for each case: 1) The unit(s) is allowable under current zoning and we can permit the work after-the-fact if the unit is code compliant; 2) The unit(s) is allowable under current zoning and can be permitted after-the-fact and brought up to code; or 3) The unit is not allowable under current zoning and/or cannot be brought up to code (EX. Basement units without egress) and will need to be eliminated. To date, we have corrected one, are working with a property owner on another and have researched the other 12 and will be following up with owners soon. After-the-fact permits will be charged double the permit fee as required by ordinance.

ICT

- Attended the Northeast ArcGIS User Conference, along with staff from Lewiston and AVCOG. We had the opportunity to attend more than a dozen seminars and technical sessions, including:
 - GIS for Local Government -- a new, specialized collection of resources provided, without cost, on the ESRI website
 - Using GIS in municipalities for public participation
 - GIS for emergency preparedness
 - GIS for land records management
- Attended Lucity training with a focus on understanding and enabling the GIS link to our Lucity work order and pavement management systems. Prior to the training, mapping work orders involved exporting data out of the Lucity system and then importing it into GIS. After the training we were able to create several test maps using the direct

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connection to Lucity. This will provide a more efficient way to visualize work orders and we will be working with Public Works to further explore this connection.

- Updated GIS layers: Schools, Parks.
- Finalized plans for participation in state program for acquisition of Orthophotography in the spring of 2013.
- Created working map-book document for Lucity street inventory, which will occur in the spring of 2013.
- IP Phone – The Fire Department was added to the VoIP telephone network in December, allowing for 4-digit direct dialing of extensions from Auburn Hall. This also provides the Fire Department with the features used by other staff. Adding the Department to the voice/data network allowed the City to drop several monthly fees for lines that are no longer needed.
- Firewall Replacement – A twelve-year-old firewall appliance was replaced, which should result in increased security and reliability of our network infrastructure. Over time, the department has been replacing the oldest pieces of network equipment.
- Security Audit – As a result of attending a Security Conference, staff engaged an outside vendor to perform a security audit of the City's resources. Several weaknesses were identified, and we'll be addressing those very soon. Some, like the Firewall Appliance above, had already emerged as "single point of failure" concerns and dealt with previously.

Human Resources

- The majority of staff time was spent on the annual open enrollment for the health insurance and the vision plans offered by Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust. It is the one time for employees to pick up coverage or to add dependents. All changes had to be processed by the end of the month to be effective by January 1, 2013.
- The City is able to offer a new dental program through Maine Municipal Employees Health Trust. Previously, the City could not meet the minimum employee participation rates. Effective January 1st, however, the minimum participation rates were eliminated. There is a 60 day window for employees to join the plan and the HR staff held a number of employee meetings to explain the plan provisions and to enroll participants. This plan is available to employees and their families and it paid 100% by the employee.
- Chris Mumau, HR Assistant coordinated the Charitable Giving Campaign for Auburn Hall and coordinated with Office Managers in the off-site facilities to wrap up the campaign. She also worked with the Finance Department to implement the changes in payroll deduction changes.
- Ray Lussier, Safety Coordinator conducted a safety inspection along with Derek Boulanger, Facilities Manager, Charles DeAngelis, City Electrician, and David O'Connell, Fire Prevention Officer. Following the inspection, they developed a safety inspection checklist that will be used for future safety inspections.

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- Ray Lussier also completed the annual review and updates, if needed, of all the safety programs as required by the Maine Bureau Labor Standards.
- Recruitments continue for the Planner position and Economic Development Specialist position.
- Contract negotiations are on-going for the Lewiston/Auburn 9-1-1 Telecommunicators and M.S.E.A. (Maine State Employees Association) for the General Government Employees. The contracts for M.A.P. (Maine Association of Police) Patrol/Detectives/Corporals Unit and the Command Unit including Police Sergeants and Lieutenants have been concluded.