



**TO: Mayor and City Council**  
**FROM: Howard Kroll, City Manager**  
**RE: Weekly Report**  
**DATE: Week Ending January 1, 2016**

### **Assessing**

- As of April 1, 2015 the Assessing Department had 651 veteran's and veteran's widows exemptions granted. Staff has been working on removing the applications that are no longer valid. In the past this was done by periodically going through the files to remove all exemption paperwork that is no longer valid due to change in ownership of the property or the veteran or widow being deceased. As of January 1, 2016 we will remove individual applications of persons no longer qualified as we are made aware of a change. This will keep the files up to date and eliminate the time it takes to periodically go through all the files at once. We will also go through the 4931 Homestead Exemptions on file in the same manner so those files will always be kept up to date.
- Staff continues to plan the public forum to educate business owners, accountants, controllers, etc on filing the Form 706, the BETE exemption and the BETR reimbursement. We will offer one morning and one afternoon session in February at Auburn Hall. Information will be provided on the forms and programs and staff will answer questions from the taxpayers. Postcard invitations will be sent to all businesses in the city in early February.
- We have received the October deeds from the registry and are updating the CAMA system with the new ownership information.
- December 31<sup>st</sup> is the deadline for businesses to file for the 2015 BETR reimbursement from the State. All paperwork submitted to this department for the reimbursement has been processed.
- The sales ratio study paperwork has been completed. According to the study there were 379 sales transactions from June 30, 2014 to July 1, 2015. Of these 213 were found to be usable sales for the study. The other 166 transactions were non usable due to them being bank sales, foreclosure sales, sales that included an element of distress, etc. In comparison, the 2014 sales ratio study consisted of

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365 total sales with 162 usable sales and 203 sales deemed non usable. The completed study is sent to Maine Revenue Services to be used in determining the ratios for the City of Auburn in the State Valuation report.

- Staff continues to review appraisals submitted by taxpayers and do onsite inspections for completed permit work or as requested by the taxpayer.

### **City Clerk**

- We Issued the following:
  - 11 birth certificate
  - 139 death certificates
  - 5 marriage certificates
  - 2 marriage licenses
  - 24 disposition permits
  - 10 taxi driver permits
  - 5 taxi cab licenses
  - 5 business license
- Received 6 business license applications
- Received 3 applications to reserve banner space (for a total of 5 weeks)
- Worked on minutes of the 12/21/2015 meeting
- Prepared, posted, and distributed the 01/04/2016 Council Workshop packet
- Received 249 petitions (An Act to Establish the Fund to Advance Public Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education, an Act to Amend the Laws Governing Welfare, an Act to Require Background Checks for Gun Sales). Staff verified approximately 350 signatures
- Worked on approximately 50 new voter registrations, and voter registration changes and sending Voter Registration Acknowledgement cards
- A new postage meter was installed on December 30<sup>th</sup>
- Ran a mailing for the Police Department (approximately 300 letters)
- Completed State Vital share report for November
- Worked on FY17 City Clerk Budget

### **Community Development**

- Processed an emergency loan application through the Community Development Loan Committee for a leaking oil tank. The application was denied.
- Attended Department of Housing and Urban Development training for Integrated Disbursement Information System.
- Processed 4 Security Deposit Loan Program applications, 1 from Gorman Foundation funds in the amount of \$585, and 3 from HOME funds for \$2,173.

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- Congressional leaders released the details of the proposed omnibus budget deal. The HOME Program, previously proposed for cuts so severe it would have effectively eliminated the program, has been spared. The funding will be a slight increase from the FY2015 level. Senator Collins played a critical role in saving this program.

### **Finance**

- Received all departmental CIP requests for FY17, I am working on the 5 year CIP and all of the detail.
- Received final CAFR (Comprehensive Annual Financial Report) from the auditors. Sent updated budget worksheets to all departments to begin the process of pulling the proposed budget together for FY 17.
- The Tax Office has processed the following transactions for December through the 18th:
  - Motor Vehicle Registrations (Counter) - 959
  - Motor Vehicle Registrations (Online) - 171
  - Registered 3 ATV's and 41 Snowmobiles, Issued 85 hunting/fishing licenses and 167 dog licenses.
  - Processed and recorded 34 Lien discharges and 2 Quit Claim Deeds.
  - Prepared CIP requests for FY 17.
  - Bid opening for reclamation projects to begin in the spring and front end loader for Public Services.
  - Conducted pre bid meeting at the Center Street Fire Station for heating system replacement.

### **Fire**

- Staff attended a plans review meeting with Planning and Permitting.
- Staff performed a follow-up inspection at Lost Valley.
- Crews performed 5 Company inspections with 2 of these License inspections.
- Crews participated in the "Truck Load of Christmas" program.
- Crews participated in familiarization training at the Auburn Airport.
- Crews performed ongoing 6 month probationary testing for our three new firefighters.
- Staff performed a final C/O for Sam's relocation on Millett Drive and for Planet Fitness relocation.
- Staff did an egress inspection at the Wellness Connection location on Omni Circle.

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- Staff did a review of the Photo-Voltaic system recently installed at St. Dom's High School. Action plans and safety briefings were developed for the department regarding electrical hazards during fire responses with these systems.
- Crews performed 5 tenement inspection and 1 fire drill for a corporate client.
- For the week of December 17<sup>th</sup> to December 30<sup>th</sup>, we responded to 159 calls for service. These include, but are not limited to: 4 fire calls including 1 Second Alarm Barn and residence fire, 1 Vehicle fire, and 1 Clothes Dryer Fire; 107 Emergency Medical calls, 16 Motor Vehicle Accidents - 8 with injuries, 1 hazardous condition call, 13 service calls, 13 Fire Alarm calls and 5 Mutual aid Paramedic assist calls. We provided 1 mutual aid assist to New Gloucester and received 1 mutual aid response for our Barn Fire including a Tanker Task Force response during this period. We provided 5 Paramedic intercept during this period and transported 1 patient from Lewiston for UAS.

### **Health and Social Services**

- Prepared the state billing for December, we spent \$6,892 this month. This is a 15% drop in assistance year to date from last fiscal year.
- Christmas season was very good this year. The fire department picked up nine families (22 children). Public Safety picked up one family (4 children), Auburn Tranquil Lodge picked up three families (6 children) all were assisted with gifts and pleasant surprises. Community Service team delivered gifts and treats to fourteen shut-ins or people who without families or support systems.

### **IT**

- Staff completed integrating the new Planimetric GIS mapping data into our new data structure. We also moved the structure to the new server and set up user paths to the new data. We are beginning the process of re-directing all of our existing projects to the new data structure and creating layer files for each data set. We are also established a metadata standard and are completed the documentation process for approximately 40% of our feature classes.
- Part of implementation of GIS online will include providing data layers to Esri's ArcGIS Online Community Basemap program. The program allows municipalities to submit data which Esri then incorporates into their basemaps. There are a number of advantages of this program, including the reduction of staff time required to create basemaps for users. Staff reviewed the submission requirements for the program to determine which data layers will qualify and completed the preparation of several data layers.

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- Staff assisted several requests from the Engineering Department, Planning Department and the Manager's Office for GIS data, map layers and maps for use in departmental projects.
- GFTV staff and Auburn School Department had a meeting to discuss how we can support them in setting up their studio at Edward Little High School.
- Great Falls TV continues to work on preparing the server room for the new equipment. Components have started to arrive from Telvue.
- Staff explored contacts for programming related to substance abuse and correspondence was made with ECHO TV for additional programming for the Somali community. (Echo TV is a public Access station in the western U.S)
- Headlight Video did a walkthrough to prepare for a competitive bid for new production equipment at Auburn Hall.
- GFTV staff completed the January programming and other needed updates.
- Information was updated to the GFTV website to reflect the move to Auburn Hall. (change of address and other data)
- We received an upgrade for our editing software which will bring us up to date and allow us to edit footage in HD.
- Some new shows and video files were downloaded for television broadcasts.
- A quote was received for the cabling improvements on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, and work will commence in January.

### **Planning**

- Planning staff met with Councilor Leroy Walker and the new owners of the Saint Louis Church in New Auburn on December 16<sup>th</sup>. The Community Benefit Corporation formed by a group local people interested in saving the historic church is working to overcome financial challenges that include taxes, heating and maintenance costs as well as limited uses currently allowed. Staff is working on an Adaptive reuse ordinance to create some flexibility for reuse of locally significant historic structures in an attempt to make them economically viable. We see this as a way to help save important buildings like the St. Louis Church.
- Staff attended the ATRC Annual Meeting at AVCOG on December 21. We got some limited but good news regarding transportation, specifically freight and rail, funding for the coming years. We will monitor progress on the new transportation bill and work to position Auburn to gain from it as more information becomes available.
- On December 28<sup>th</sup>, Staff met with DEP in Augusta to discuss permitting issues at Hartt Transportation in the Kittyhawk Business Park. Hartt continues to expand at the site and it looks like they are getting bigger than local reviews allow and may have to apply directly to DEP for their next parking lot expansion.

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- Staff has been making preparations for the upcoming New Auburn Riverway and Greenway public meeting on January 7<sup>th</sup> at the Boys and Girls Club. They have also been meeting with New Auburn business owners to discuss the redevelopment. Business owner meetings have been positive and it is great move beyond preliminary planning to design and permitting of real improvements in New Auburn. Based on previous planning efforts it seems most people recognize that the New Auburn hillside overlooking the confluence of two major rivers is a unique place and that we can capitalize on that for redevelopment and the creation of new value.
- Sam's Italian Restaurant is set to open Thursday December 30<sup>th</sup> at their new location on the corner of Millet and Court Streets.
- We have two code officers on vacation this week and remaining staff is scrambling to keep up with essential functions. Everyone is pitching in and the public shouldn't notice much for disruptions.
- Home Occupation permit renewals are due this week and so far response has been slow. As of December 30<sup>th</sup> we have received only 26% of due renewals. Applicants do have until 30<sup>th</sup> to avoid any late fees so we expect more response soon.
- Municipal fire alarm system invoices are going out this week. The municipal system provides code compliant fire alarm monitoring for 68 customers. This system generates about \$28,000 per year in revenues and saves the City about \$9,000 per year in monitoring alarms for City buildings. After expenses it generates about \$27,000 in combined revenues and savings.
- The City Electrical Division is struggling right now with work related injuries. We have been down to a single staff person since the end of August and may be down to zero staff for a short time in January. We are planning now to work through this time but will be unable to tackle non-emergency building related electrical work for a while and will ask that individual departments contract that work out in January.

### **Police**

- The department handled 474 calls for service this week. Officers conducted 77 motor vehicle stops and 9 field interviews. Officers investigated 48 offenses of which, 9 of which were felonies, generating 17 arrests, 9 criminal summonses and 2 juvenile arrests. Officers responded to 34 motor vehicle crashes.
- The department has completed its selection process and has hired Travis Barnies and Jonathan Edwards as new patrol officers. They are slated to attend the January Police Academy.
- The first parking ban of the year went well with only one car being towed.

## Recreation

- Winter Festival - Measurements for the ice rink have been confirmed. We have begun ordering supplies. Ice Sculptor is locked in. Final list of events has been completed! Things are falling into place with this year's winter festival! Working now on locking in a shuttle service for the weekend. I have been chatting with NorthEast Charter to try and get some fair pricing.
- Youth Basketball - Practices and games are going well. No complaints and no injuries.
- Adult Basketball - Season is going well. No major issues at this time.
- Vacation Day Camp - The first vacation day camp starts this Monday. It will run from December 28<sup>th</sup> through the 31<sup>st</sup> from 7:30am to 5:30pm. We currently have 13 kids signed up for the program, ranging from kindergarten to 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Two staff members have been hired to run the program.
- Ski & Snowboard Clinic - We currently have 25 kids signed up for this program. Classes are offered Monday or Thursday nights, starting the first week of January and will last 6 weeks.
- MPS Indoor Soccer Camp - We currently have 19 kids signed up for this program. We need another 5 to cover costs in Ingersoll or renting the field. The rest of the profits will be split 30/70 between the Recreation Dept. and MPS. This camp begins January 10<sup>th</sup> and is a 6 week program.
- Father Daughter Dance/Family Formal - Still looking for financial funding for this event. We have a caterer and DJ lined up. We have proposed a budget of \$2,200 for this event but have not been successful so far on getting any sponsorship options to come through. The dance will be held at Northway Savings Bank Arena on February 20<sup>th</sup> and will be \$25 per parent/child duo to sign up.