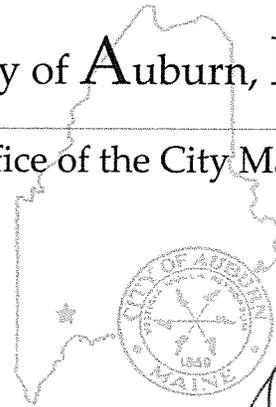


City of Auburn, Maine

Office of the City Manager



A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to Clinton Deschene, the City Manager.

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Clinton Deschene, City Manager
RE: Weekly Report
DATE: August 2, 2013

Assessing

- The Maine Revenue Service Property Tax Division's annual audit of the Assessing Department's data was conducted on July 25th. All documents and reporting were found to be in order.
- It is anticipated that the new state proposed sales ratio will be around 1.04 which is lower than the prior year of 1.05. The city's certified ratio is 100%. I worked on calculating the Tax Increment Financing Districts in order to finalize commitment.
- Brian and Karen processed the form 801 Business Tax Reimbursements for the year 2012 for our local businesses.
- Karen also worked on a Comparison Analysis Project of surrounding municipalities for the City Manager.

Auburn Public Library

- The Library continues to encourage reading over the summer with programs for children (more than 500 have registered), teens, and adults. Each Monday staff visits with and reads to children in the Rec Department's summer program.
- Each Thursday afternoon staff from Best Buy visit the Library to help anyone with questions they have about their electronic devices such as computers, smart phones, digital cameras, e-readers and more.

CDBG

- The Neighborhood Stabilization Committee met to consider the final purchase of property with Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds. The committee authorized the purchase of 143 Hampshire Street with a range of \$30,000-35,000. The property is now under contract.
- Reine Mynahan coordinated a meeting with two applicants of the Curb Appeal Program and Noel Smith, architect, to obtain design advice about their specific projects.
- Yvette Bouttenot signed up a new homebuyer into the Home Savings Program. The client expects to be ready for a purchase in six months.
- Yvette Bouttenot completed reconciliation of Community Development receivables for the past fiscal year. The annual report is prepared for the auditors.

City Clerk

- Prepping for next School Budget election
- Preparing the department: one departmental employee will be out for six weeks
- In January we sent out 3 vital records books from the 1800's to be restored. They were just delivered back to us on Monday. They are now beautifully bound in new books and in protective sleeves. We will be sending out a few more to be restored in the next month or so.
- We've been getting many calls with inquiries on Oak Hill cemetery. We have little to no organized information and have been working diligently to gather as much information as I can.
- Over the next few weeks, Auburn will be hosting the Secretary of State's Office training on the new Tabulating Machines. I've been working with their office this week to coordinate some of the details.
- We continue to receive candidate (both Council and School Committee) interest for the fall election

Engineering

- Mill, Broad, and Main Street have been milled and are being prepped for a shim followed by a full overlay.
- Turner Street, E.Dartmouth, W. Dartmouth, and W. Bates are being prepped for surface.
- Construction is ongoing on S. Main Street with a portion receiving base-course paving.
- The Helm Bridge Replacement project is out to bid and a pre-bid meeting was held on July 24.
- The contractor has until the 12 of September to re-open Hotel Road (45 days max). The Auburn School District's first day for any student is on the 28th of August. The State is pushing very hard for an early opening because the contractor is going for the max incentives. With that being said, at this time the State feels that the district should plan for the worse case (12 September).

Finance

- Preparing work papers for the FY13 audit. Auditors were here 2 weeks ago for preliminary field work and will be returning in early September for three weeks to complete Auburn's annual audit.
- With the start of FY14, many purchases and bids are occurring. Finance continues to work with all Departments on these purchases.
- The Tax Office is doing end of month reporting for State reconciliation.

Fire

- Shift training and familiarization with the new Engine-2 continues and the new apparatus is in-service and operating out of station 2.
- Two members of the FD attended the National Honor Guard Academy this past week and will be great additions to the FD Honor Guard.

- Initial planning for the annual 9-11 memorial program. 9-11 falls on a Wednesday this year. More information will be forthcoming.

Health & Social Services

- Tammy Thatcher was instrumental in getting State Disability/Retirement benefits for a 62 year old stroke victim, who also suffered from memory lost. Tammy contacted the state and learned he had been eligible for benefits since November 2012. This made the client ineligible for General Assistance but very happy with his new steady income.
- Workfare has been lower this past week because we are getting more disabled people unable to apply for assistance.

Human Resources

- Ray Lussier, Safety Coordinator attended the Local Emergency Planning Committee, the Androscoggin County based group which addresses planning issues for potential chemical emergencies. Two recent events, the fertilizer explosion in Texas and the Canadian railway disaster has heightened awareness for planning and mitigation of these potential hazards.
- Ray Lussier continues to work on the full scale exercise scheduled in September involving the Intermodal Facility. This exercise will involve Federal, State, County and Local emergency responders.
- Ray Lussier conducted emergency action training for the Coordinators at Auburn Hall. Responsibilities have been shifted with the turnover of employees and new coordinators were updated on emergency procedures.
- Chris Mumau, HR Assistant worked with Howard Kroll on a Freedom of Information Request relative to collective bargaining agreements.
- Chris Mumau assisted the City Manager's Office with the very successful employee barbecue.
- Chris Mumau worked with the Finance Department in the production of personnel related information requested by the Auditors for their annual audit.

Ice Arena

- The Naming Rights for the facility continues to be a priority. Progress is being made and staff is hopeful that we will have an agreement prior to the opening. Stay tuned for updated information.
- Staff met with the New Hampshire Youth Hockey Association and discussed opportunities for tournament development for the new facility, and team trades to tournaments in NH. Discussions were held with MEAHA (Jeff Thompson) and have secured ice rentals for Maine Select Tryouts and the USA Tier II PeeWee Regional Tournament in March.
- Met with Troy Bedard from Vectorsonics for layout and finalization of plans for audio system within Rink 1, Rink 2, mezzanine area and the lobby.
- Working on the provision of propane.

Weekly Report
August 2, 2013

- Reviewed the locker room setup in lower mezzanine. Staff worked with the plumbing contractor and masons to adjust layout of walls in room 126/141 and 131/130 for maximizing the usefulness of the space.
- Staff met with Mike Hebert to do a walk through and mapping for Tel/Comm Data for the facility. A Tel/Comm, Data, Electrical and security closet was carved out of the dry storage of the concessions and entry through the corner office/conference room at the front of the building. Renee Bogart and Paul Fraser will mark up drawings of final layout for data drops and phones when renderings are received.
- Considering proposals for CCTV and hardwired security systems for the facility. Proposals for security services are being compiled from local vendors per our purchasing policy. The contractor is forwarding an electrical layout to Mike Hebert for a cost analysis to have DeBlois run the electrical wiring for the system.
- Continued client meetings focused on sponsorship/advertising; those meetings resulted in several contracts pending that will require follow up.
- Development on a beverage services RFP continues; meetings with purchasing department have developed draft for final review, waiting on formatting and release.
- RFP's for Pro Shop Services were reviewed and contract negotiations are currently underway for meeting the needs of the facility. A meeting was held on 7-19 to discuss options and opportunities for development of the pro shop space. It was agreed upon to further the discussion over the weekend and reconvene on Tuesday 7-30

ICT

- ICT is testing and preparing to launch our "Say It" feature on our website. The City will pose a significant and timely question on our website and we hope to get some excellent suggestions/ideas from our visitors and residents.
- ICT has awarded bids for our annual PC replacement program.
- In the world of GIS:
 - We have created 'Growth Areas' map showing locations of building permits for past 7 years. This will be used by the contractor to focus on aerial photography mapping updates.
 - Parcel map updates for FY2013 have been completed.

Parks & Rec

- Recreation Specialist Joe Toner worked his final day on Tuesday July 30th. Joe had been with the city for over three years running and overseeing many of the youth programs and special events run through the Recreation Department. The position has been posted on multiple job sites and interviews look to start next week.
- On Thursday August 1st the 7th-8th grade campers took part in the annual Source to the Sea, Learn to Paddle event held by the Androscoggin Land Trust. Mayor LaBonté and Jeff Parsons, from Bethel Great Outdoors volunteered their time and donated resources to allow the 18 campers and counselors to take part in the day long canoe paddling trip. Beautiful weather and great instructors made this a fun filled day for everyone involved.

- Planning started for the annual Camp Carnival event for the participants of the Auburn Rec. Summer Camp. On Friday August 9th a day long schedule of carnival style games will take place on Upper Pettengill Field. A BBQ will take place for all campers and staff during their lunch break with some items donated by Coca-Cola and Sysco. Activities such as a dunk-tank, bounce slide and face painting will all be part of the fun.

Planning, Permitting & Code

- Coming off the highest annual permit values of the last five years for FY 13 we were hopeful that the trend would continue, and it did. For the month of July, permit investment values totaled \$10,391,618 with total permit fees collected totaling \$32,756. A substantial amount of the investment was from the Auburn Ice Arena Project but we are also seeing new housing starts. This month's permitting will set us up for a busy inspection period over the next couple of months.
- Targeted Code Enforcement: Auburn is a City of 67 square miles with approximately 6 square miles of water and 61 square miles of land. CDBG target areas total approximately 1 square mile in area. In that square mile, 50-80% of residents are at or below low mod income levels. Despite being 1/67th of the City's area, 64% of code enforcement cases were within CDBG target areas in 2012 and 40% of our known vacant or abandoned structures are too. Code and CDBG will be partnering on a joint effort to join inspection and compliance efforts with financial resources more closely than they have been in the past. The plan was written this week and more information is available in the City Council Packet for August 5th.
- 9 Gamage Avenue Update. SunTrust Mortgage is soliciting bids for demolition and has verbally agreed to reimburse City costs related to the dangerous building.
- Staff met at ATRC to put materials together for the New Auburn Transportation and Land Use Plan. The committee will have some interesting topics to cover and some challenging decisions to make on what the plan will display for input at upcoming meetings. The next committee meeting is August 15th and the next public meeting will be September 5th.
- Staff met with Maine Army National Guard Leadership in Augusta and will be scheduling a site walk with the Adjutant General in the near future. It may be short notice based on his schedule, but we hope some elected officials can attend.
- The City Planner position is advertised and we are receiving some promising resumes. We hope to fill the position by mid September and get back to a more proactive planning effort. This will allow the Planning Board to do more planning work, in addition to development reviews.
- New building permit fees went into effect on August 1st as approved by the Council. Energov has been updated and the transition has been smooth.
- Changes to Engineering and Public Works staffing has reduced their ability contribute to front office coverage. This is affecting the other staff on the floor and we will be working to resolve some of the coverage challenges in the coming weeks. The week of August 12-16 will be particularly challenging and I want to thank Public Works for assisting us with coverage during that week.

Police

- Patrol Unit
 - During the past week the department handled 523 calls for service. Officers conducted 157 motor vehicle stops (127 warnings – 30 citations) and responded to 15 motor-vehicle crashes.
- Investigations Unit
 - A theft of a stolen Kubota Tractor from Jim's Auto Sales last year was recovered this month in the Town of Perry Maine, which is located in Washington County. Investigators are conducting interviews as part of the investigation and have identified a suspect that will be charged with receiving stolen property.
 - Our drug agent worked with United Parcel Service (UPS) in organizing a covert operation to catch an employee who was suspected of stealing packages of narcotics being shipped from the Veterans Administration (VA). The operation was successful in catching the suspect and resulted in a full confession.
 - Auburn PD is now hosting bi-weekly County wide intelligence sharing meeting specifically relating to property crimes in Androscoggin County. Representatives from the State Police, Sheriff's Department, Mechanics Falls, Sabattus PD and Lewiston PD have been attending.
- Recent Burglaries
 - Ice Arena Construction Site: Reported a construction trailer was entered.
 - Walnut Street: Neighbors reported seeing 4-5 young males break a fence to get away from committing a burglary. The suspects remain unidentified.
 - 721 Minot Avenue: Owners reported their business was entered overnight.
- Parking Plan
 - The department has completed meetings with area organizations within the Great Falls area. A new map of the area is being completed with an inventory of spaces privately owned, city owned and needed changes. City council will be given an update of the changes at a future workshop.
- Youth Involvement
 - The PAL Center has had a busy week with a visit to the Range Pond for swimming and activities. As part of the summer community garden project, youth went to Highmore Farm in Greene as part of the partnership with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Program. Youth learned about composting and other farming activities.
 - The Summer Running Club continues to grow! Thursday night the club had more than 100 area youth come out and participate. This program is being run by Dan Campbell and his track members from ELHS. Donations of running shoes from Lamey Wellehan and New Balance helped make this possible.
 - The Auburn Law Enforcement Cadet Program is thriving and five new members began this week. The program will be hosting a fall recruitment event. We have sent off several of our cadet alumni to military service, local and federal law enforcement and corrections employment.

Public Works

- Continued repairing collapsed basin frames, Summer St. was particularly bad. PW has found four very nasty issues, the basin crew also addressed a problem on outer Broad St.
- Repaired curbing on Fourth St. where we met the homeowner of the adjoining property and he was pleased that it was being repaired without having to call.
- Facilities, including the carpenters shop and the tool crib continue to be very productive. Walter Reynolds in the crib has been a very important part of the integration of Parks and Rec small engine maintenance program. Our carpenter has been given the task of designing a box for truck #86 for use as a secondary recycling vehicle.
- The tennis courts at Sherwood heights were removed
- Multiple safety issues were addressed at our fields and parks.
- On-going maintenance activities such as road side mowing, ball field mowing and striping, weeding of islands, tree trimming, etc. continued throughout the week.