Community & Economic Development
Council Committee
Agenda
February 16, 2016
Auburn Hall – Council Chambers

5:30 P.M.

1) Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Budget and Work Plan Review
2) Projects and Initiatives Review

City of Auburn

Boards and Committee Initiatives and Projects

Board 1: Public Safety and Community Services -

911 Board, Auburn Public Library Board, Cable TV Advisory Board, Health Committee, LA Arts, Firearms and Discharge Committee, Recreation and Special Events Advisory Board)

Departments - Fire, Police, Health & Social Services, Rec & Special Events

Projects/Initiatives

- Androscoggin County Dispatch – **(Police)** a resolve by the City Council to the Androscoggin County Commissioners was submitted March 2013 that the City of Auburn request inclusion into the commissioner's dispatch proposal or the county commissioners adopt the proposal of the Lewiston Auburn 911 Center. The city attorney has corresponded with the county attorney but no response has been made.

- Mutual Aid Agreements – **(Police)** the police department has mutual aid agreements with the following agencies – Androscoggin County Sherriff's Department, Lewiston Police Department, Lisbon Police Department, Mechanic Falls Police Department, Cumberland County Sheriff's Department, Maine Game Wardens, and Maine State Police.

- Parking Program – **(Police)** at a council workshop in August 2013, the police department proposed the council consider future workshops to discuss a city-wide parking management plan. The police department submitted in the FY17 capital plan, four "Pay and Display" units with one lot gated for Hilton functions. Further discussions are needed to determine future parking changes.

- Neighborhood Revitalization Unit – **(Police)** in October 2015, Mayor LaBonte' met with city administration to discuss the drug issue and what efforts could take place to focus on our CDBG targeted neighborhoods, from those meeting this unit was developed. Efforts are underway to create the unit consisting of members from police, fire, and code enforcement. This item will be on the January 25, 2016 workshop.

- Recreation and Special Events Committee formalizing changes - **(Rec & Special Events)** The current Recreation and Special Events Advisory Board has never been formalized in ordinance. In 2013 this committee took the place of the previous Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. The ordinance needs to be updated.

- LA Arts/Maine Arts Commission Planning Project – **(Rec & Special Events)** November 2, 2015 City Council approved $5,000 for L/A Arts to use as a match for a grant from the Maine Arts Commission. The grant is intended to create a Cultural Plan for Auburn/Lewiston with a 30 member steering committee.

- Athletic Field Assessment Phase 1 Completion and Review – **(Rec & Special Events)**
  In 2014 the City contracted with Wright-Pierce to develop a detailed inventory of ALL athletic facilities in Auburn and our surrounding communities. What is going on, who is using the facilities, fees, etc. A report was produced by Wright-Pierce in April 2014.
- Athletic Facility Assessment Phase 2 Review – **(Rec & Special Events)**
  Phase 2 was intended to be a condition assessment of the same facilities reviewed in phase 1, but phase 2 was never implemented.
- Ingersoll Arena oversight – **(Rec & Special Events)**
  Staff will provide periodic updates on the status on the Ingersoll Turf Facility.

- Fire Department Matrix Study review and implementation and prioritization of policies – **(Fire)** The Matrix Report was commissioned by Council in response to a request by the Fire Department in September of 2011. The report was completed and presented to the Council in March of 2012. This report was an operational and management review of the department against "best practices" in the industry at the time.

  This report was developed using information from 2010 as this was the last full year for which a complete data set was available.

  This report is a "snapshot in time" of the Auburn Fire Department as it was operated, configured, and staffed in 2011.

  At the core of the report are 47 recommendations made by the consultant. Of these 47 recommendations:
  - 24 require substantial financial commitment from the City INCLUDING:
    - Additional staff and/or
    - Capital purchases
  - 23 require direct and indirect costs to the City INCLUDING:
    - Staff time
    - Project development
    - Management overview

- EMS Operations/Financial Reporting – **(Fire)** Council authorized the AFD to begin full EMS transport services in October of 2014. Prior to this, the AFD responded in a first responder capacity providing initial care and treatment of patients with United Ambulance then transporting patients and billing those patients for that service. The AFD was not able to bill for those services. However, United Ambulance did pay the city of Auburn $100,000.00 annually for the right to provide emergency ambulance transport within the city.

  The AFD has stood up a full transport service with no additional personnel hired to do so. To make up for the need of personnel, a truck company and engine company were

placed out of service and a Quint purchased to serve in the dual role of those companies placed out of service. The staffing assigned to the companies placed out of service was utilized to staff not only the Quint, but two ambulances.

In the first year of service the AFD responded to 3,438 EMS calls for service. This was an increase of 1,125 EMS calls for service over the same period the year prior. Patients were billed a total of $2,203,915.23 for the cost of providing transport service of which $1,152,595.90 was collected in that first year of service.

Auburn uses a third party billing system, and all revenue and monthly reporting is directed to and handled out of the Auburn Finance Department.

- Mutual Aid Agreements – **(Fire)** The Auburn Fire Department provides and receives mutual aid to surrounding communities for both fire and EMS service. In 2015, we provided 45 non-EMS mutual responses and received 24 non-EMS mutual aid responses of the same type. We provided 58 EMS mutual aid responses and received 60 EMS mutual aid responses of the same type.

  By state law, we are obligated to provide EMS mutual aid should we have the available resources to do so. We provide fire mutual aid under a long standing practice of helping our neighboring communities as we are able given the particular incident. We benefit from the use of mutual aid in Auburn as much as those communities who request our services benefit from the response of the AFD.

Board 2: Community and Economic Development –

Auburn Business Development Corporation (ABDC), Lewiston and Auburn Economic Growth Council (LAEGC), Poland/Auburn Committee, Auburn Housing Authority, CDBG Loan Committee, CDBG Home/Community Advisory Committee, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals

Departments - Economic Development, Planning & Permitting, Community Development

Projects/Initiatives

- Comprehensive Plan Implementation – **(Planning & Permitting)** We were on a schedule of providing overview/ updates in May of each year and that ended under the previous City Manager. Many of the items listed in the Community and Economic Development category are in fact implementation Items from the Comp Plan including the New Auburn/Riverway development, Minot Ave Gateway, Form Based Code, Joint Land Use Plan/ Mt. Apatite, Great Falls Art Center, Ag Zone Review and the Housing Initiative that was deferred by the Council last year. Implementation of the Comp Plan is an ongoing task that guides daily decisions and advice provided by staff to residents, business

people and developers. Predictability is essential to attracting investment and staff relies on the Comp plan for direction. If there are things that the Council would like to change we would welcome that discussion to ensure that we are promoting the current Council's goals as laid out in the long range Comp Plan.

- New Auburn Greenway/Riverway Development (Comprehensive Plan Implementation Item) – **(Planning & Permitting)** The 2009 New Auburn Master Plan was incorporated into the 2010 Comprehensive Plan, laid out a vision for the New Auburn Business District and called for a New Auburn Village Center District Revitalization Plan to support growth and development in the area. The plan also called for expansion of the TIF District so funds from the larger downtown could be used for improvement of New Auburn and both of those were completed in 2014. The current effort is to design and permit the place called for in the earlier studies and plans and work out the details through a public process. See page 9-13 of the New Auburn Master Plan for details.

- Minot Ave/Downtown Gateway Improvement (JDA with Miracle Enterprises) (Comprehensive Plan Implementation Item) – **(Planning and Permitting)** Mechanics Savings bank started the gateway improvements along their frontage on Minot and Elm and will be reimbursed for that cost through TIF revenues from their project. Miracle Enterprises desires similar improvements along their frontage and improves access as part of the project. Staff proposed purchasing the gas station on the corner of Minot and High Streets to implement the Gateway Transition District plans but it was determined by the Council to be too costly in 2015. See Future Land Use Plan and Gateway Transition District Pages numbered 81 and 107 of the Comprehensive Plan for details.

- Norway Savings Bank Arena retail market study for mall area – **(Economic Development)** Increased economic activity was a major goal of constructing the arena. We have heard anecdotal evidence of increased sales at retailers and restaurants and higher occupancy rates at lodging facilities during major events at the arena. The previous council wanted to quantify that increase in sales. Quantifying that increase would be interesting information but will require funding a study and staff is not sure how that information would be used to create returns. One option might be to quantify the number of people and collect demographic information on the users of the facility that could be used in addition to existing demographic information to market the mall area to additional retailers.

- CDBG 5 Year Plan update and committee oversight – **(Community Development)** The 5 Year Consolidated Plan document also includes the Action Plan. The Action Plan is a document that describes the activities that will be undertaken, goals and objectives that will be pursued, and a spending plan for Community Development and HOME funds each year.

Initiatives and Projects cont.

- Community Development Budget – **(Community Development)** Establish a budget for FFY2016 Community Development and HOME Investment Partnerships Programs. Budget process controlled by funder, Department of Housing and Urban Development. Required citizen participation by Citizens Advisory Committee; 30 day comment period; public hearing.

- Auburn-Lewiston Consortium Agreement – **(Community Development)** Adoption of Mutual Cooperation Agreement to continue receiving HOME Investment Partnerships Program funds.

- Program Amendment – **(Community Development)** Revision to Consolidated Plan budget/outcomes to accommodate Neighborhood Revitalization Unite proposed by Police Department

- Program Guidelines - (**Community Development)** Revisions to Homebuyer, Homeowner Rehab, Residential and Small Business Program guidelines. Some updates are required to comply with HUD requirements. Also a new approach to Small Business and Homebuyer Programs

- LAEGC contract oversight – **(Economic Development)** Ongoing. Council order 52-06162014 authorized a 2 year MOU for LAEGC services. Work with Committee to review progress and ensure deliverables are on time.

- ABDC business park lot sales and future relationship with City of Auburn - **(Economic Development)** Review LAEGC marketing efforts to date and work with LAEGC to promote sales.

- Downtown Development program recommendation and implementation (Comprehensive Plan Implementation Item) - **(Planning & Permitting)** Previous Economic Development Staff had proposed a downtown development strategy as part of the budget that received mixed reviews from the previous council and we now have 5 out of 7 new Councilors. This report is due on the day that our new director starts. It is recommended that we revisit the previously set goals and modify the strategy.

- Form-based Code (Comprehensive Plan Implementation Item) – **(Planning & Permitting)** The Comprehensive Plan identifies the goal of encouraging new development that occurs in manner that reflects of a traditional downtown development pattern. The Form Based Code was determined to be the best way to do that and allows for reduced setbacks, more specificity on building placement and less focus on uses

within buildings. The Planning Board worked through nearly 2 years of workshops and public meetings to draft a proposal for the Council to consider. That proposal is ready for the Council as soon as we can get a spot on a workshop agenda.

- Joint Land Use Planning/Mt. Apatite (Comprehensive Plan Implementation Item) – **(Planning & Permitting)** We received a grant from the Office of Economic Adjustment to review the National Guard Use, Mt. Apatite and surrounding areas to improve how the recreational, residential and National Guard uses interact with each other. The goal was to identify existing and potential concerns or conflicts and recommend solutions and actions moving forward. We developed the 2014 Joint Land Use Study to summarize the issues and findings. One of the recommendations that was most controversial was a potential lane swap between the City and Maine Army National Guard because the ball fields are on Federal Property. The Army Corp of Engineers proposed a land swap that favored the Federal Government and the City responded with questions about assumed land values. The ACOE informed the Guard and the City that they had not budgeted to respond to questions and we could resume the discussion when the budget issue was resolved and they could provide some answers. It has been approximately a year now and they have not provided a response. Copies of the correspondence are available for additional details.

- Property Maintenance Ordinance/Dangerous Building (Comprehensive Plan Implementation Item) – **(Planning & Permitting)** The City has considered a property maintenance ordinance approximately every 10 years since the 1980's. Considerable staff time goes into drafting an ordinance each time and it has always been rejected by the Council. We have a very outdated housing code and staff has drafted updates to address the most common housing maintenance issues related to housing. As a compromise staff recommends considering those housing code updates to address current issues, which may receive less public opposition than a full maintenance code, as an important step in the right direction. If desired by the Council we could then reopen a property maintenance code discussion with some needed updates already in place.

- TIF Budgets and Work plans – **(Economic Development)** Staff review of current status and projected revenues and then work with Committee to determine work plans and future programs.

- Great Falls Art Center – **(Planning & Permitting)** Over the past few years staff has discussed the redevelopment potential of this site with CLT and developers. CLT cannot effectively maintain and improve the historic structure that they occupy due to funding constraints. A tax credit redevelopment is seen as the best opportunity to establish a center for the arts at this location that includes other commercial space and residential units to fund the rehabilitation and construction of additional structures. This will also increase taxable value on a currently exempt site and provide an arts anchor in Auburn. We are currently reopening conversations with CLT to regain site control.

- Recreational Planned Use Development - **(Planning & Permitting)** The Comprehensive plan identifies commercial recreation facilities as an opportunity for Auburn to capitalize on, but also allowing housing or other related uses to generate revenue and preserve the existing recreational assets if they are not highly profitable. We received a citizen petition in 2012 from the owner of a golf course to make changes to the zoning that would allow housing, hotels or other uses in concert with recreational uses. While the draft was vetted by staff and the Planning Board through a lengthy public process, the Council chose not to approve it.

- Agricultural Zone review (Comprehensive Plan Implementation Item) – **(Planning & Permitting)** Auburn has some of the most restrictive Ag zoning (as it relates to housing) in the country and the zone covers approximately 40% of the land in our City. This has been an essential growth control to minimize costs of servicing the hinterlands of Auburn and preserving land for higher value industrial uses, open space and recreation. According to recent agricultural news, Maine has seen the largest growth in small farms of any state in the country but we are not seeing that in Auburn. The Comp Plan calls for reviewing our Agricultural Standards to see if we can promote additional agriculture in Auburn while still controlling increased service costs. The Council asked staff to work on this discussion in lieu of acting on an individual change to the zoning and then asked us to obtain a grant to fund the project. We were unsuccessful in obtaining the large grant but have started the baseline mapping and inventory to move the discussion forward if it is still a priority for the new Council. See page 108-109 of the Comp Plan for additional details.

- Housing zone change that was deferred by last City Council – **(Planning & Permitting)** We received a petition from 25 registered voters to allow flexibility in home locations on parcels that are split between residential and agricultural zoning districts. See page 109, last paragraph- 110 of the Comp Plan for details. The change was debated, modified and recommended for approval by the Planning Board, however, the Council deferred action until we could complete a larger discussion about the Agricultural Zone noted above.

- City Marketing Plan – **(Economic Development)** There have been numerous regional marketing efforts that brand and market "LA" or Androscoggin County. While these are useful, Auburn may have a unique "product" to offer within the regional market. The committee should consider this possibility and review options.

- Downtown Transportation Center construction and bus operations plan – **(Planning & Permitting)** The Planning and Development Office is assisting Lewiston Auburn Transit Committee and ATRC in the construction plan development and review, and providing utilities to the site (Great Falls Plaza) and taking the lead role in coordinating utility installation to the greater Great Falls Plaza area. Providing water, sewer and electric to the Great Fall Plaza area will allow the future development of the Great Falls area to

proceed. The DATC has been located to allow for the planned new streets and development sites in Great Falls Plaza including a potential city owned parking garage.

- Downtown Passenger rail policies and state study – **(Planning & Permitting)** The City appropriated $50,000 towards a passenger rail study after the legislature mandated that the City do so. We need to get an update on the report from MDOT and review progress with the committee. Eventually this will likely result in some recommendations to the entire Council.

- Complete Street implementation/Bike-Ped ordinances – **(Planning & Permitting)** Study was put on hold last summer; recently got the consultant team back on track with coordination of staff from Auburn, Lewiston, ATRC, Maine DOT, and FHWA. Three tasks of study are: 1) Recommendations for select arterial streets, 2) Best Practices Manual/Design Guide, and 3) Recommendations for connections across Main St, Lewiston, for Riverside Greenway to Simard-Payne Park. Anticipating a public workshop late Spring, with completion in June 2016.

- Lower Barker FERC Relicensing – **(Planning & Permitting)** The Lower Barker Dam is operated by Kruger Energy Inc. and generates hydroelectric power on the Little Androscoggin River. Its Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license is up for renewal in 2019 and the process to review the renewal has already started. The City is a stakeholder, mainly advocating for recreational improvements in the project area. To date, staff time has been the only cost incurred by the City in this process.

Board 3: Transportation and the Environment -

Auburn and Lewiston Airport, Androscoggin Transportation Resource Center, Lewiston and Auburn Bike-Pedestrian Committee, Lewiston and Auburn Transit Committee, Lewiston and Auburn Railroad Corporation, Lewiston and Auburn Community Forest Board, Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission (LAWPC), Lewiston and Auburn Water Pollution Control Authority (LAWPCA), MidMaine Waste Action Corp., Auburn Sewerage District, Auburn Water District, Conservation Commission

Departments – Public Services (Works and Parks)

Projects/Initiatives

- Community Forest Management Planning as follow-up to moratorium – **(Public Services)** Conservation Commission is currently working with the forest board on an ordinance update. An updated ordinance is expected in early spring.

- Solid Waste and Recycling Contract – **(Public Services)** Time sensitive. Current contract expires at the end of June. The City needs to decide on direction with regards to same program we have now, change curbside program or automated program

- Future of MMWAC – **(Public Services)** Current Director is retiring. What are the City's options if MMWAC were to close? Where will municipal solid waste go and what are the cost implications.

- Route 4 Engineering from East Auburn to Lake Shore Drive – **(Public Services)** Maine DOT is preparing a presentation outlining several options with regards to traffic patterns. These will be presented at a public meeting in the spring.

Board 4: Finance and Administration -

Androscoggin County Budget Committee, Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments (AVCOG), Lewiston and Auburn Joint Council Committee, Appointment Committee, Audit and Procurement Committee, Board of Assessment Review, Ethics Committee, Registration Appeals Board

Departments – City Clerk, City Manager, Finance, Assessing, Human Resources, Information Technology, Legal Services, Mayor & Council

Projects/Initiatives

- Commuter Service to Portland (bus planning and city policy) – **(City Manager)**
  The City of Lewiston and Auburn are currently working with Metro/Greater Portland Transit to review three options for regular commuter service between Auburn and Portland. We are still waiting for the final results on that investigation from Metro/Greater Portland Transit.

- LATC Route Study – **(City Manager)**
  The Lewiston/Auburn Transit Committee (LATC) is currently under contract with a firm out of New York to review the effectiveness of the Auburn-Lewiston bus system.

- Intermodal/Port of Auburn lease negotiation – **(City Manager)**
  The Lewiston/Auburn Economic Growth Council has taken the lead on these negotiations. With the recent hire of our new Economic and Community Development Director we will bring that responsibility back indefinitely.

- Draft of the CIP and Budget – **(Finance)** The CIP and budget are governed by the City Charter, Article 8. This section lays out the timeline and what is to be included in these documents.

- Canal Legal Matter – **(City Manager)** The Cities of Lewiston and Auburn were competing for the location of the Monty Hydro facility when it was being planned in the early 1980's. The end result was that CMP, not Auburn or Lewiston, built and owned the hydro facility. The Cities agreed to share tax revenues, water rights and revenues and expenses associated with the small hydro facilities in the canals. Lewiston is working to obtain ownership of the canals from Brookfield and has considered trading away shared water rights without Auburns consent. Auburn believes trading those rights is shortsighted and may limit future recreational or power generating opportunities for the cities.

- City merger charter commission - **(City Manager)**
  In June 2014 the Lewiston-Auburn Charter Commission was formed and since that time the citizens elected to the commission have been working through the details of a potential Lewiston-Auburn merger. In January 2016 a draft charter was released and interviews with staff and elected officials from both Lewiston and Auburn began in February 2016.

- City Audit - **(Finance)** The audit is governed by the City Charter, Article 8, Section 11.

- City-owned property strategy - **(Finance)** These are properties that become City assets due to nonpayment of property taxes. The City currently has an internal policy that lays out the steps that are taken after the property becomes tax acquired.

- Non-property tax revenues - **(Finance)** These are revenues collected by the City that are not property taxes. For example, fines, licenses, excise tax, state revenues, etc.