

City of Auburn

To: Mayor LaBonté and the Auburn City Council
From: Clinton Deschene, City Manager
Subject: November Monthly Reporting – *Fire, Police, Finance, CDBG, Health & Social Services, Planning, Permitting & Code, ICT, and Human Resources*
Date: January 4, 2013

Fire

Prevention

- In November, there were fourteen Life Safety Inspections conducted by the fire companies in eleven businesses and three apartment buildings. Out of those inspections, ten businesses and all three apartment buildings were found not to be in compliance with the fire code.

Training

- This month crews toured the Dead River bulk propane storage facility on Lewiston Junction Road. While there, firefighters learned the layout of the facility, how product transfers occur, and where to locate suppression and shutoff systems. This training is vital for the firefighters to make critical, time compressed decisions about how to manage an accident at the plant.
- Building off from a theme, firefighters also conducted live propane burns. This training simulated the fire conditions that may be encountered when propane escaping from a home use tank, barbecue grill, or other vessel ignites. This type of firefighting utilizes special tactics and techniques not used in other forms of fire suppression. We wish to recognize *Blanchard Cash Fuel of Turner* for donating the propane used in the drills.
- Training was also conducted on coldwater rescue, company topics, and advanced incident management training for senior leadership.

Public Relations

- Fire Prevention Officer O'Connell had the opportunity to deliver a presentation to a group of senior citizens this month. Topics included fire risks for the elderly, general home safety, and a question answer period. We also welcomed two children's groups for a tour of Central Station.
- The department has seen a better than expected response to the responder autism awareness forms. These forms record vital information about residents with autism and are stored in a database in the communication center. By having specific information available prior to arrival, responders are able to provide better care that is tailored to the special needs of the consumer.

Emergency Responses

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- In the month of November, the fire department responded to 271 requests for emergency service. These requests include, but are not limited to, four fires in a building, 163 emergency medical calls, twenty-six false alarms, and twenty motor vehicle accidents. The city did not receive or provide mutual aid.

Police

Operations

- The Department responded to 1889 calls for service in November.
- Officers made 97 physical arrests, issued 96 criminal summonses and processed 348 offense reports, of which 38 were felonies.
- Officers issued 64 traffic citations and 294 warning for various traffic offenses.
- Officers responded to 106 traffic crashes in November, of which 89 required accident reports.
- Officers responded to Shaw's Plaza on Center St for a male who had committed an a theft at Wal-Mart with a firearm. The male was threatening to commit suicide and was armed with firearm that turned out to be an air soft gun. The male kept officers at bay for approximately four hours, requiring the assistance of the Maine State Police Tactical Team. Officers were required to evacuate the Auburn Mall and Shaw's Plaza. Public Works implemented a traffic management plan that closed Center ST. for approximately three hours. A Unified Command structure ensured a seamless incident where all agencies worked well together. The suspect was taken into custody without incident and was charged with Theft, Criminal Threatening and Creating a Police Standoff.

Training

- All officers attended a four hour Emergency Vehicle Operations course at Oxford Plains Speedway during the mandatory team training day.
- Officer Chaine, Officer McCamish and Detective Westleigh attended a one-day COBRA Team training exercise. The training was held at the Pionite facility located here in Auburn, Maine.
- Officer Kelly and Officer Richardson attended a one-day training class on Search and Seizure. The class was held in South Portland, Maine.
- Lt.s' Watkins and Harrington attended a one-day class on Incident Management Accountability Software training. The class was at Auburn Hall and was coordinated by Safety Officer Ray Lussier.
- Offs' Lemos and Parker attended a two-hour block of instruction on Drug Identification / Current Drug Trends.
- Sgt. Boulet completed 5 Intoxilyser training classes during the month. A total of 21 officers completed their recertification training.
- Crime Analyst Harmon attended Crime Analysis and Mapping training at the ESRI Boston Office.

Community Outreach

- November saw the release of the department's new app for mobile phones: "My PD." A great way to connect with Auburn Police from anywhere, My PD offers users the chance to file a police report, commend an officer, submit a tip, request a report, connect with our officers and staff, receive 'push' notifications, and much more.
- Employees at FISC Solutions held a stuffed animal drive in November. The drive was very successful, and the stuffed animals that they collected will be given out by officers when they respond to calls for service involving children.
- APD Support Services staff met with the large retail store managers in the Auburn Mall district in anticipation of "Black Friday." As part of our ongoing crime prevention efforts, information was gathered and security plans were reviewed. We are proud of our close collaboration with our retail 'neighbors' and our coordinated, proactive approach to targeted crime prevention.

Finance

- The Finance Director completed the FY12 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and prepared to print and get ready for distribution.
- The tax collector sent out notices of foreclosure on the remaining delinquent FY 11 property taxes.
- We welcomed our new Facilities Manager/Purchasing Agent Derek Boulanger. He will work with Bob Belz for 3 weeks and then be on his own.
- The Finance Directors has been working with the Audit Committee to prepare a Joint Purchasing and Procurement Policy to be adopted by the School Committee and the City Council in January.
- The Finance Director has begun working on the budget and capital improvement documents for the FY14 Budget.

CDBG

- Community Development staff attended several trainings in November. Yvette Bouttenot attended the National Community Development Association training on Advanced Community Development Block Grant. This training covered program decisions and selection of projects that align with a community's Consolidated Plan and Community Development requirements. Jennifer Dow attended an administrative assistant's conference in Lewiston that will help her strengthen her people skills, manage multiple priorities, get more done in less time, and become indispensable.
- Reine Mynahan attended HOME Underwriting Requirements and CHDO Capacity Issues which focused on implementation changes in the 2012 HOME Appropriation Law. Reine also attended the Housing Policy Conference sponsored by the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition. The topics covered were the state of affordable housing in Maine and a post election analysis. This conference's focus was primarily on the rental market. A drop in housing values combined with low interest rates have increased the affordability index for home buyers. However, the affordability index for renters has decreased. An affordability index of 1 is generally unaffordable. In Androscoggin

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County, the rental affordability index is .86 and Maine is .89. A renter who is earning minimum wage must work 71 hours per week to afford a 2-bedroom rent in this area. A 2-bedroom rent wage for affordability is \$13.29 per hour. These statistics demonstrated why landlords are struggling to collect their rents and have inadequate cash flow to reinvest in their properties.

- Two applicants were qualified to purchase properties under the City's control. The properties are 42 Millbrook Lane, the last property under the Lease/Buy Program, and 60 Summer Street, a property purchased by the City with Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds.
- The Community Development Department released its Request for Applications for public services. A public notice was advertised on November 15 announcing applications were due December 19th. Applications will be scored by the City Manager, Director of Social Services and Community Development Director with recommendations made to the Citizen's Advisory Committee.
- Yvette Bouttenot attended a meeting the EITC (earned income tax committee) which begins the planning to offer free tax preparation to low income people in Auburn and Lewiston.
- Reine Mynahan accompanied the appraiser to inspect two properties. The appraiser will determine fair market value for the properties at 6 Second Street and 15 Broad Street. These properties, part of the New Auburn River Trail redevelopment, were previously appraised, but the values of the previous appraisals were disappointing to the owners.
- Community Development staff worked with a Somali family who had purchased a property under a land sale contract and could not obtain financing for a failed heating system. Due to restrictions on paying interest, this population requires Shariah compliant lending practices. We worked with our attorney to provide a loan with acceptable terms. However, the owners refused to sign our loan documents. Our participation concluded by helping the owner make payment arrangements with the contractor. We will continue to seek financing arrangements that is Shariah compliant so that the Somali population does not place themselves in a risky position when purchasing a home.
- Five security deposit loans were approved and closed. This program helps to prevent homelessness.
- Ten heating assistance loans were approved and closed.
- With assistance of the Engineering Department, solicitations were made for bids to construct drainage improvements at 43 Second Street, the home of the Boys & Girls Club. Each year the building has experienced water problems. A drainage ditch was installed at the back wall of the building with a system that discharges water over a retaining wall where there is a stormwater field inlet.

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Health and Social Services

- The H & SS department paid in welfare assistance a total of \$13,776 in October 2012 compared to \$8,646 in the same month in 2011.
- We took in 129 applications compared to 96 in November, 2011.
- We assisted 7 household which have timed out from TANF (exceeded their 60 months) for a total of \$2,314.
- Workfare was completed by 13 people for a total of 243.5 hours, and a value of \$1,948. The majority of the workfare was completed at the Parks department.
- Nine hundred gallons of oil was issued for heat out of the Community Cords fund in November, this went to 9 households, many of them with small children or elderly. In addition GA purchased 100 gallons of oil for one household. Community Cords fund is used when a household is in need of fuel and they do not fit the General Assistance guidelines.
- In November we received \$4,750 in reimbursement from a client once he received his disability from the SS office.

Planning and Permitting

- During the month of November the Department processed 48 building, electrical, sign and plumbing permits. The permits resulted in the collection of \$11,492.00 in fees for work with an estimated construction cost of \$1,303,110.00. The number of permits was down from last month but revenues were steady because of a few substantial renovation projects. We are seeing the seasonal reduction in construction permitting and should see the slowest winter month in either December or January before the permitting starts picking up for the spring. As of December 2nd we were 42% of the way through the fiscal year and have seen about 38% of our anticipated construction value reported on permits. We are hopeful that some large projects on the horizon will improve this in the spring.
- As of December 2nd we are about 42% through FY 13. Our expenses are at 37% 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 73% with most of that from building permit revenues which were at 100% of the projected annual total.
- During the month of November, the Planning Department made additional progress with respect to a years-long effort aimed at conducting a 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 December 5, 2012 and will meet again at 4 PM at the Auburn Public Library on January 9, 2012. Future Policy meetings will be held at Auburn Hall whenever possible. We have created a web and facebook page to help keep people informed and facilitate public input. The Joint Land Use Study website can be accessed at: <http://www.auburnmaine.gov/Pages/Government/Auburn-Maine-Joint-Land-Use-Study>

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- We have filled the vacant Code Compliance Officer, Planning and Assessing Assistant position. Zachary Lenhart started with the City on December 17th. Zack was born in southern California, but moved to Maine at young age because it is where both his parents and family were from. He grew up in Auburn, attended the public school system until high school, and graduated from St. Dom's RHS in 1999.
- After high school Zack worked a couple of years with his father as a carpenter building custom homes and doing remodels before going back to school. He attended Central Maine Community College for two years in the Architectural and Civil Engineering Technology program before transferring to the University of Maine in Orono where he obtained his bachelor's degree in Construction Management.
- Zack was an employee of Pineland Lumber as a salesperson/drafter for almost two years before the company was bought out by Hammond Lumber. At Hammond, he worked in the drafting department drawing custom residential homes and providing sales support until accepting the position with the City of Auburn. Zack's building background and experience with local builders will be an asset to the Department.
- During the last four weeks we tracked 26 new property specific Code Requests resulting in 16 new enforcement actions. A total of 30 request cases were closed this month and 8 of those were from the new cases opened this month. Cristy Bourget conducted 14 sanitation inspections including lodging, mobile vendors, restaurant and takeout facilities, 2 of which were complaint driven.
- Sharing Health Inspection Services with Lisbon – To date, we have received half of the \$10,000/year contract amount from Lisbon as a revenue for the City of Auburn. In the first six months the City incurred approximately \$1000 in wages and other expenses related to providing this service. I appreciate the Council's willingness to try this and it has been worthwhile for both communities.

ICT

- Perform server and client upgrades
- Conduct training on Pavement Management module
- Integrate GIS to map locations of work orders by category, employee, or status
- Refine and update Dashboard module for Public Works supervisors
- Paul attended the Digital Government Summit in Augusta. It was a great opportunity to network with IT departments from other municipalities and the State. Technology vendors were on hand to demonstrate their products, and the breakout session were well-tailored to our needs.
- Several new staff were added, requiring new accounts to be set up and configured.

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- The Finance office arranged for several new copier/printers to be demonstrated at Auburn Hall. As the copiers were slotted in and out, ICT staff installed and removed print drivers from staff's computers.
- ICT staff assisted in the General Election.
- Began work with Lewiston in revising enerGov maintenance contract and deliverables.

Human Resources

- Chris Mumau, HR Assistant attended Maine Association of Payroll Professionals meeting along with Gina Klemanski, Accounting Assistant. One of the more important agenda items was the employer's preparation for the Federal Healthcare Act that will require tracking of fringe benefits, including the cost of healthcare. Other agenda items included garnishments, reporting for W-2's, time and attendance, and overtime regulations.
- Chris Mumau and I assisted with the November elections. Chris registered voters in Ward 1 and I helped count absentee ballots at Auburn Hall.
- Ray Lussier, Safety and NIMS Coordinator, attended a workshop at Auburn Hall on regulations relative to lead abatement. As a result of the age and building construction materials, many of the City-owned buildings are covered by these strict regulations. Ray attended the meeting in order to be aware of hazards and personal protection equipment and processes required when any renovations are done at these facilities.
- The Facilities Manager position has been filled. Recruitments continue for the Planner position and Economic Development Specialist position.
- I attended a Human Resources meeting at which David Barrett of MMA provided an update of the Federal Healthcare Reform Act regulations. The regulations will be phased in over the next five years. The first major change is reporting on W-2's for the cost of health insurance premiums. In 2014, employers will need to offer health insurance options for employees working 30 hours per week or more. The City will be required to carefully track hours of seasonal employees and contract employees to determine if they exceed the threshold at which health insurance will be offered. There will be a budgetary considerations for employees who are not currently entitled to health insurance.
- Contract negotiations are on-going with the following unions – M.A.P. (Maine Association of Police) for the Patrol/Detective/Corporal Unit, M.A.P. for the Lewiston/Auburn 9-1-1 Telecommunicators, M.A.P. for the Police Command Unit and M.S.E.A. (Maine State Employees Association) for the General Government Employees.