



# THE CITY OF AUGUSTA

WILLIAM R. BRIDGEO  
CITY MANAGER

TO: Mayor and City Council  
FROM: City Manager Bill Bridgeo  
RE: Administrative Report  
DATE: March 23, 2015

## Meetings:

A Planning Board Meeting will take place in Council Chambers at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>. An agenda is enclosed in council packets.

On Thursday, March 26<sup>th</sup> there will be an OREO Committee Meeting at 5:00 p.m. in Conference Room D and a Joint Conference Committee Meeting beginning at 5:30 p.m. in Conference Room A.

There will be a City Council Informational Meeting on Thursday, March 26<sup>th</sup> beginning at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers. This agenda is enclosed in council packets.

## Other Items:

By way of some explanation, the first item on the informational meeting agenda, Hatch Hill per-capita fees involves a staff recommendation to reduce from \$15.00 per capita to \$12.00 per capita the annual fee that outside communities pay to Augusta to allow rubbish and recyclables generated in their communities to be brought to Hatch Hill for disposal. State law requires all Maine communities to have a designated licensed solid waste disposal facility. Those that do not have their own must contract otherwise. We have seven communities (Manchester, Hallowell, Farmingdale, Gardiner, Randolph, Chelsea and Whitefield) that now annually contract with us generating \$307,650. If all the communities elected the five year option it would mean a reduction of \$65,850 – which I doubt will happen. Last year Pittston opted to leave us for the West Bath landfill operated by Casella Waste Systems. To encourage retention and revenue stability, I am suggesting that for those communities willing to sign a five-year agreement we offer a discounted rate. What we may potentially lose in per-capita fee income we will likely make up in tipping fee revenues. The last time that Council adjusted the per-capita rates was nine years ago when they were increase from \$10.50 to \$15.00.

The second item on the agenda is a discussion of our policies regarding admission to Bicentennial Nature Park. Resident Cheryl Clukey, who has been an active champion of the park, has asked to meet with Council to propose opening the park to non-residents in an effort to raise more revenue to support the park's continued operation. For the past couple of years, the Rotary Club has raised funds to help support the park. This year, Rotary has advised us that they can no longer do so.

This morning, I presented testimony on the City's behalf in opposition to LD 514, the CMP excise tax bill. With MMA's Legislative Police Committee voting 79-1 (thank you Councilor Munson) to support the bill it has become clear that our efforts to preserve the status quo would not be successful. Thus, with the concurrence of our legislators, particularly Senator Katz (who also offered testimony in opposition but suggested a gradual implementation in the alternative), I asked the Taxation Committee to consider a phased in implementation that would not begin until (hopefully) 2018 and then only for new vehicles. In conversation with the bill's sponsor after the hearing, I sensed a willingness to support this compromise. I should also **Turn page over →**

thank Kate Dufour of MMA for testifying in support of a compromise. The bill now goes to committee work session and we will have to monitor it closely. A copy of my testimony is enclosed.

Also today, Councilor Munson represented the City in a legislative hearing on a proposal in the Governor's budget that would change how county jails are funded and place a large added burden onto the property – in Augusta's case an estimated \$360,000. Kudos go out to Councilor Munson for his diligence this legislative session.

The action at the Legislature is accelerating but it is still too early to predict how many issues will have an adverse effect on our finances. As I finish formulating my proposed FY '15-'16 budget for delivery to you early next week, I'm forced to speculate on a number of items that could make a significant difference in the budget.

C: Department and Bureau Directors  
Augusta Legislative Delegation