



THE CITY OF AUGUSTA

WILLIAM R. BRIDGEO
CITY MANAGER

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: City Manager Bill Bridgeo
RE: Administrative Report
DATE: January 12, 2015

Meetings:

On Tuesday, January 13th, the Planning Board will meet in the Council Chambers beginning at 7:00 p.m. The agenda is enclosed in council packets.

On Thursday, January 15th there will be a City Council Business Meeting in Council Chambers beginning at 7:00 p.m. An agenda is enclosed in council packets. A pre-meeting will take place in Conference Room A at 6:30 p.m.

A Senior Staff Meeting will take place on Friday, January 16, 2015 beginning at 9:15am at the Police Department.

City of Augusta Administrative offices will be closed for business on Monday, January 19th for the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.

Other Items:

As I said last Thursday evening, the library building advisory committee (and a number of senior staff members as well as Architect Stew Roberts) spent all day last Wednesday interviewing four firms selected from a field of ten who submitted proposals for construction management services for the Lithgow Library construction project. Any one of the four firms, in my opinion, would be capable of carrying out the project in a first class fashion and it was not an easy decision for the group to come to. In the end, however, JF Scott of Winthrop was selected. A copy of the firm's proposal is enclosed for your review. Owner John Scott will be at Thursday's Council meeting should you like to discuss any elements of the project with him. As Mayor Rollins related last week, the committee focused significant emphasis on the firm's approach to involving local subcontractors and to ensuring that workers on the job are ensured of protections like workers' compensation and employee benefits and not inappropriately classified as (sub) subcontractors. John Scott has a superb reputation throughout Maine in the construction industry (including primary oversight of the construction of the new Maine General Hospital). I have full confidence in his ability to deliver on our library project. (As an aside, the owner of one of the three firms that was not selected sent in a very gracious letter after our decision was announced and I am including it in this package for your information.)

Enclosed with this package you will find a memorandum from City Clerk/Treasurer Barbara Wardwell outlining the basic legal requirements for scheduling a special Council/School Board election this spring.

This week, the City was able to lock in a fixed price for the purchase of diesel fuel and gasoline beginning July 1st and extending through the next two fiscal years at current low market prices (\$2.215/gal for gasoline and \$2.319/gal for diesel). The savings for next year's budget will be on the order of \$125,000. Given all of the

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uncertainty associated with our future finances, especially non-property tax revenue sources, this is a most welcome development.

Last October, representatives of the workplace safety division of the Maine Department of Labor spent a month conducting an in-depth inspection of every department/bureau and facility under the control of City government (except schools). Last week, we received the formal report of findings and proposed penalties. At first blush, it paints a far more negative picture than is actually the case. It calls for \$7,000 in the aggregate for fines for violations of state workplace regulations (seven instances at \$1,000 each) and lists an additional 143 citations that come with no penalty but that must be corrected within a certain timespan. Many if not most of these have already been addressed (e.g. an extension cord with no third prong; a document in an employee's file evidencing that he/she has received certain training or been fit-tested for a protective mask; etc.). As to the seven items involving fines, the State provides for a process to meet with them and negotiate the penalties. In discussion with other communities, most have been able to substantially reduce or eliminate them by demonstrating a cooperative attitude and we expect to be able to do so as well (In 2014, Sanford, Lewiston, Saco and Yarmouth all experienced similar processes and were initially levied comparable or greater penalties. In each case there were substantial if not complete downward adjustments made by the DoL after the communities worked through the statutory appeals process.)

We purchase our workers' compensation through the Maine Municipal Association's risk pool. Their staff routinely advises us that we are a leader in workplace safety – an employer that they showcase to other communities for our best practices. Our attention to workplace safety has earned us an experience rating modification of .83 – about as good as can be achieved and which regularly yields us premium rebates in the thousands of dollars. A bit frustrating is the fact that the inspector from the DoL had many complimentary things to say about our operations and facilities from a safety perspective but there is no provision for favorable observations within the report format.

Nonetheless, we take seriously the findings and recommendations of the inspection (the first for the City in my seventeen years here) and will be addressing each and every one of them. A copy of the full report titled, Department of Labor Standards Report, may be found at:

http://www.augustamaine.gov/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC=%7b79E97434-72A1-4D2E-98D4-FCA524F9D219%7d

There is an item on the Council agenda for disposition by auction of 94 Winthrop Street. I recommend that continued to be tabled until Mayor Rollins has had the opportunity to fill vacancies on the OREO committee and it can review the idea of disposing of that property in an alternate fashion.

C: Department and Bureau Directors
Augusta Legislative Delegation