



THE CITY OF AUGUSTA

WILLIAM R. BRIDGEO
CITY MANAGER

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Bill Bridgeo
RE: Administrative Report
DATE: October 24, 2016

Meetings:

There will be a City Council Informational Meeting on Thursday, October 27, 2016 beginning at 6:30 p.m. Agendas are enclosed in Council Packets.

Other Items:

Please note the memorandum to me from City Clerk Roberta Fogg regarding the erroneous issuance of some duplicate absentee ballots when we first started distributing them two weeks ago. As Roberta explains, there is no possibility that this will result in anyone voting twice. There are just too many fail safe mechanisms built into the system to allow that to occur. It is important, however, that you and the public be aware of this because the transparency and integrity of our election process are its most important attributes (especially in a year when so many people are intent on casting doubt upon the process).

Also in today's package you will find Ralph St. Pierre's first quarter financial report. As Ralph indicates, there are no adverse developments to report and we are on track to meet budget expectations.

This Thursday's informational meeting may aptly be titled "Matt Nazar Night" as virtually all of what is slated for discussion fall under the purview of his department. That includes a discussion of possible changes to the City's blasting ordinance that would have the effect of reducing the intensity of blasts in quarrying operations. Several members of Council have spoken to me to request that this item be placed on the agenda.

I am pleased to announce that the commander of our Police Department's Patrol Division, Lieutenant Kevin Lully, has been selected to attend the prestigious national FBI executive leadership academy the first of next year. Kevin (a native of Caribou I should note) will be the third Augusta law enforcement executive to be admitted to this elite twelve-week residential program at Quantico, Virginia, following in the footsteps of Chief Gregoire and Deputy Chief Mills. I doubt that there are many (if any) departments in Maine that can boast of three current members of their department having been selected for the Academy.

Copy: Department and Bureau Directors
Augusta Legislative Delegation



THE CITY OF AUGUSTA

To: William R. Bridgeo, City Manager
From: Roberta L. Fogg, City Clerk
Date: 10-24-16
Re: Duplicate Ballots

On October 18th the Clerk's office received notice from 3 separate voters indicating that they had received their requested ballots twice. This caused me to investigate how this happened and the results of that investigation are described below. It is important to note up front that there are fail safe mechanisms in our election system that do not allow anyone to vote twice, even if they are mistakenly issued a duplicate ballot.

At the conclusion of our internal review it appears that between 32 and 46 duplicate ballots were issued city wide. As of today, seventeen of those ballots have been identified, with 16 returned to our office.

I believe the following will explain how the duplicate ballots were issued.

The City of Augusta took final delivery of our ballots on Tuesday, October 11th (a bit late, due to the last minute Judge of Probate special election for Kennebec County). We began issuing ballots on that day.

Because we started receiving absentee ballot requests back in July, we had maintained a list within the Central Voter Registration (CVR) system (elections software), that we could now (October 11th) begin mailing out. Because some voters were very eager to get their ballots and vote, in addition to their earlier requests to us, they either called and again asked for a ballot or came into city hall and requested one in person. Because of the safe guards in our (city and state) system it is not possible for any voter to cast two ballots. The explanation as to how these safe guards work is complicated and described below, but it is most important to stress that the process is not in any way compromised.

I want to assure you and the public that there are numerous checks and balances in the election process. Those checks and balances ensure that no voter casts more than one ballot in the City of Augusta.

The following is a chronological review of the events that lead to this administrative issue.

The requests our office received prior to October 7th were entered it to CVR system as they were received. This CVR system is maintained by the Secretary of State's office. We batch printed labels for mailing the absentee ballots requested prior to the date we received the ballots. Our first mailing labels were for July to September 30th, and then October 1st to October 10th, for a

total of 718 absentee ballot envelopes labels. These labels were then put on the envelopes, the envelopes divided into wards and state representative districts to allow staff to insert the appropriate ballots. Once these ballots were inserted, each envelope was scanned to insert the mailing date into the CVR system.

We then ran a third batch label report for the period of October 11th to October 13th, for a total of 317 absentee ballot envelopes. The same process of labeling the envelopes was followed, as well as sorting the ballots by ward and state representative district, to allow staff to insert ballots into the envelopes. The only change was in the method of scanning the bar codes into CVR, this was done using a paper report, not the actual envelope. In the mean time ballots were mailed out to voters as quickly as possible.

On October 11th the office began receiving calls and in person visits from voters who had requested their ballots by application (electronic, telephone or written application), prior to October 7th.

It was at this time that some of the duplicate ballots were issued to voters who had previously requested the ballot and would have received them by mail. A few of the duplicate ballots may have been issued when labels were reprinted, because a portion of the label was cut off.

As soon as there appeared to be an issue we stopped all outgoing absentee ballot mailings and conducted an additional review of those ballots. This allowed staff to stop any additional duplicate ballots from being issued.

On October 19th an inventory of all ballots was conducted, including a report from CVR of all ballots issued. This is how I was able to determine the scope of the issues. Our office also received notice that at least 2 voters received an additional paper ballot in their envelope.

Again, I want to assure you and the public that there are numerous checks and balances in the absentee ballot process. Ballots returned are input into the CVR system after they have been reviewed by several staff members. The ballot is matched up to a written request, based on the method of request. Ballots are then double checked by other staff to match them to a report generated by CVR indicating the specifics of how the ballot was issued, how it was returned and if it was accepted. Only one ballot per voter is accepted for casting in the November 8th election. Any duplicate ballots received will be noted and rejected within the CVR and will be noted on the outside of the absentee envelope and retained with the other ballots. All of these ballots and reports are kept in a locked vault and will be taken to the city's central processing polling place the day before the election. At that time the ballot envelopes and reports are available for public inspection. After the public inspection the accepted ballots are cast in a public process.

In the future when absentee mailing labels are printed they will also be scanned into the CVR system and given an issuance date immediately. This will ensure that the CVR system indicates a date of the ballot being issued and will notify staff of that issuance which will reduce the chances of duplicate ballots being issued in error. Additional protections include all staff

receiving additional elections training and detailed instructions specific to the conduct of absentee balloting in our office.

Memo

To: William Bridgeo, City Manager
From: Ralph St. Pierre, Assistant City Manager *RSP*
Date: October 24, 2016
Re: First Quarter FY 2017 Financial Report

General Fund expenditures totaled \$5.4 million and encumbrances totaled \$2.4 million for a total of \$7.8 million or 28% of the total FY 2017 budget of \$28.2 million.

Legislative & Executive was 28.7% expended. Unclassified was 46% expended due to encumbering of funds for the annual financial audit.

Finance & Administration was 25.1 % expended.

Development Services was 20.8% expended. Economic Development was 21% expended, the city's contribution to the Downtown Manger position is made in January. Historic Preservation 6%, Code Enforcement 20%, the part-time code enforcement officer was hired in late September. Facilities was 19% expended due to traffic signal maintenance, heating fuels, and lease payments occurring later in the year.

Community Services was 26.6% expended. Recreation was 42.5% spend due to the payment of life guards during the summer. Bicentennial Nature Park was 50% expended. BNP is operated from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

Public Safety was 25.2% expended.

Public Works was 21.5% expended. Highway Maintenance was 20% expended due to personnel being charged off to capital projects in the summer. Snow Removal was 21% expended due to the encumbering of funds for sand and salt.

Utilities were 79.9% expended due to the encumbering of fire hydrants and stormwater fees.

Insurance and Retiree Benefits was 48% as a result of encumbering Property & Casualty insurance costs.

County taxes are due the end of October.

General Fund revenues totaled \$11 million or 39.4% of FY 2017 estimates. Overall revenues appear to be tracking as estimated. Tax exemption reimbursements are remitted once per year. Tree Growth in November, Veterans exemptions in August, Homestead 75% in September (remainder in June) and Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement in December. Penalties & Interest are usually collected in January and June due to timing of liens maturing and new lien notices being mailed. State Revenue Sharing is 24.3% collected. However, July's revenue was significantly lower then last year's due to timing differences.

Excise Tax was 27.5% collected. For the first quarter excise tax is trending \$47,000 positive variance. The September 2016 General Assistance billing was delayed into late October. Urban Rural Initiative Program (local road assistance) is remitted in December from the State.

Investment income is showing a loss due to marking our government securities to market. The market value of the securities decline as interest rates rise. The decline in market value was greater than the interest earned on the securities. Building and zoning permit fees are trending positive due to the continue growth in the local economy. Cable franchise fees are received in February. EMS calls reflect only two months of billing. We are working with our third party billing vender on the September billings. GAUD service fees are billed in October. Procurement card rebates are remitted in June.

Civic Center revenues totaled \$423,266 with expenditures of \$398,057 for a positive variance of \$25,209. However, we were late in posting the first quarter depreciation expense of approximately \$52,000, changing the variance to a negative of \$27,000. This is good news for the Civic Center as typically the first quarter is very slow. For the last two years the first quarter losses totaled \$64,000 for FY 2016 and \$179,000 for FY 2015.

Hatch Hill Landfill had revenues of \$768,830 and expenditure (adjusted for deprecation expense) of \$626,970 for a positive variance of \$142,040. Solid waste disposal fees are up 5% over last year and recycling fees are up 44 % over last year.

Central Garage had revenues of \$355,430 and expenditures of \$315,722 plus depreciation expense of \$111,879 for a total of \$427,601, a negative variance of \$111,879. Central Garage revenues are stronger in the second and third quarter due to snow plowing operations. Airport operations are within budget. Revenues totaled \$137,500 or 25% collected. Expenditures totaled \$134,107 or 24% expended.