



# THE CITY OF AUGUSTA

WILLIAM R. BRIDGEO  
CITY MANAGER

TO: Mayor and City Council  
FROM: City Manager Bill Bridgeo  
RE: Administrative Report  
DATE: November 24, 2014

## Meetings:

Thursday, November 27<sup>th</sup> is Thanksgiving Day; all City of Augusta administrative offices will be closed for the holiday.

There will be no meeting of the Augusta City Council this week. The next meeting will be Thursday, December 4<sup>th</sup>.

## Other Items:

As I indicated at last week's Council meeting, last week saw great progress in moving the Lithgow Library building project forward. With Council's sign-off on construction management-at-risk, I engaged Woodward and Curran to prepare our construction manager RFP. Once it is finalized, we (the library building advisory committee and staff) will invite four leading Maine C/M firms to submit proposals for consideration. We will then schedule a day of interviews to select the C/M. Woodward and Curran will assist in that as part of their engagement. The C/M will then get to work with our architect, Stew Roberts, to finalize building plans and specifications and we will negotiate the guaranteed maximum cost for the project. I hope to have the C/M on board in early January. We are still aiming for a spring groundbreaking.

Also last week, Ralph St. Pierre and I were able to come to terms with Dirigo Capital Advisors (formerly Mattson Development) for 20,000 sq. ft. of lease space in the former Maine General Hospital building (now called the Ballard Center) for temporary library quarters. Staff has spent months canvassing the City and looked at a number of alternative locations. In the end, this space was the only available property that met our needs at a price we could afford. The convenient location and easy ground floor access make it a most desirable location. Dirigo has offered us a very generous deal. Rent will be \$10.50 per sq.ft. including all utilities. They are renting comparable space in the building to other tenants for \$16.00 a foot. They are considering the difference to be a donation to the project. Anticipating that moving costs there and back to the new library will be reasonable, we can now be assured that the \$600,000 budgeted last spring from bond refinancing savings for relocation and temporary space will be more than adequate. I will have an order on the next Council agenda to authorize this lease agreement.

The best news associated with the library project (and probably the all-round best news of the week) came when the advisory committee met on Wednesday afternoon with the architect and reviewed his revised project budget (a copy of which is enclosed with this report). Anticipating efficiencies associated with construction management and getting into more detail in his design work, Mr. Roberts has dropped his estimated total project cost to \$10.77 million. With \$8.575 million available in City funds and \$2 million in Friends funding in hand (and another \$500,000 in pledges committed) it is virtually assured that we will have sufficient funds on hand come spring when I must execute a construction contract. Until Wednesday, there was a gap of about \$1

million between funds available and projected total project cost and that could've been a game-stopper. It now appears that we are on course to bring this much anticipated project to fruition.

Speaking of building projects, last week I instructed Fire Chief Audette to reach out to the Bangor architectural firm that we selected last year to do the preliminary design and cost estimating for the North Augusta Fire Station, Ames & Associates, LLC, to give us a proposal for final design and related architectural/engineering work for that project. They were the architects on the Bangor sub-station that our proposed facility was modeled after. Since the Bangor plans and specifications are public information, I expect us to save money and time by using Ames & Associates for our project. As with the library, I expect to break ground on this project next spring. There will need to be a fresh set of State and City land use approvals for the Quimby Lot subdivision as it has been over ten years since it was last approved and there has been no development on the property since then.

Last week, we also finished construction of the new 12,600 sq.ft. storage building at the John Charest DPW facility. That project went smoothly coming in under budget and on time. Police, Fire, DPW and Parks are relocating their equipment there just in time for winter. Contractor Blaine Casey was great to work with on that job.

As the newspaper recently indicated, the redevelopment of the Flatiron Building is progressing in an impressive fashion. As of Friday, it is 60% complete. Touring the building last Friday with Cyndy Taylor and her construction management team from Ledgewood Construction was a terrific tutelage opportunity as we gear up for the library project (in fact, Cyndy has since offered her staff expertise to assist us in our library C/M selection process.) The project is at the point where it is easy to appreciate how very nice the 48 apartments (as well as common building amenities like a yoga room!) in that building are going to be. Applications are being taken now so if you know of a qualifying senior urge her or him (or them) to apply at Kennebec Plaza.

I learned last week that the same developer who has begun construction of the new Homewood Suites hotel off Western Avenue has successfully negotiated a purchase and sale agreement for the former MDOT fleet maintenance facility at the intersection of Capitol and Sewell Streets. No specific plans have yet been submitted to the City but that is, of course, a most prominent location and large enough to accommodate a substantial development. It is also within the boundaries of the Capitol Planning District so will require that body's approval for its plans as well.

It appears at this writing that the year-long odyssey of former councilor Dan Emery and his partner Miles Chung successfully concludes back in Augusta this week. Dan and Miles' friends and supporters are planning a rousing welcome home reception complete with Police and Fire escort and a party at Charlemagne's this Thursday evening. These guys pulled off an amazing feat over the course of a year – calling attention in all forty-eight contiguous states to the plight of those most in need and the tragedy of hunger in America. Their accolades are surely well earned.

C: Department and Bureau Directors  
Augusta Legislative Delegation