



THE CITY OF AUGUSTA

WILLIAM R. BRIDGEO
CITY MANAGER

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: City Manager Bill Bridgeo
RE: Administrative Report
DATE: February 17, 2015

Meetings:

The Historic District Ordinance Committee will meet in Council Chambers on Tuesday, February 17th at 6:00 p.m.

There will be a meeting of the Joint Conference Committee on Thursday, February 19th at 5:30 p.m. in Conference Room A.

Also on Thursday there will be a City Council Business Meeting in Council Chambers beginning at 7:00 p.m. An agenda for this meeting is included in council packets. A pre-meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. in Conference Room A.

A Senior Staff Meeting will take place February 20, 2015 beginning at 9:15 a.m. at the Police Department.

Other Items:

It's great to have a Monday holiday but invariably that leads to a busy Tuesday! Mayor Rollins and I have already met this morning to discuss how and when the City will be represented at important legislative hearings this week on elements of the proposed state budget that directly impact us and cities in general. Councilor Munson, as your representative to MMA's Legislative Policy Committee, is in the loop and conscientiously staying abreast of the issues and joining in on the proceedings at the State House. I expect mayor Rollins will be sharing his testimony before Appropriations with you. We are of course most concerned about the elements of the budget that have the potential for the most adverse impact against us. They include the elimination of revenue sharing, the shifting of jail costs to the county tax (and thus to us), proposals impacting excise tax and highway funding, and general assistance cost shifts. I met with Senator Katz Friday morning and we discussed a number of these issues. With his important seat on Appropriations, he will be an important link for us into the process. Ralph St. Pierre will weigh in to the Taxation Committee on proposed changes to the Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement (BETR) program (that would shift it all to the related BETE program and cost us significantly in the process). Ralph served on a legislative task force and actually authored a thoughtful dissenting opinion on this so he's well versed in the policy and fiscal implications here (which, no surprise, have the effect of reducing municipal revenues and saving the state money in the process).

Although we managed to dodge the heavy snow predicted to accompany last weekend's bad weather, the winds caused drifting that kept our crews out for most of the weekend. It is a struggle this year, to be sure.

Please Turn Over →

At last week's Council meeting, Councilor Blodgett had some questions for our new Parks, Cemeteries and Trees Bureau Director, Charlie McCann. So that you may all be assured that the bureau is being well led and has the resources to do the job, Leif Dahlin advises that the Parks Bureau has four Licensed Arborists and that Charlie was hired for his management skills and other broad-based qualifications. Being a licensed Arborist was not one of the hiring criteria. Due to the budget challenges over the past few years, the City no longer has a full time arborist. As need arises we are able to have a qualified and licensed staff person address the tree need and significant projects are contracted out (also to a licensed arborist). Additionally, according to Leif, the pesticide license is a key need for several reasons. Important is being able to work with Mr. Pucciarelli in the school system with respect to IPM (Integrated Pest Management) as well as having a good understanding of pesticide management overall. Our goal, as is the School Department's, is to use as little pesticide as possible and that is what we do. Best Management Practices, relative to fertilization and proper turf care, help to mitigate the need for the use of pesticides.

The GAUD Board has invited Council to a dinner meeting to be held on Monday March 16th at the Civic Center. This meeting will begin at 4:30 p.m. Please mark your calendars.

C: Department and Bureau Directors
Augusta Legislative Delegation