



THE CITY OF AUGUSTA

WILLIAM R. BRIDGEO
CITY MANAGER

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Bill Bridgeo
RE: Administrative Report
DATE: March 21, 2016

Meetings:

On Monday, March 21, 2016 Council members are invited at 6 p.m. to meet with the Greater Augusta Utility District Board of Trustees at the Civic Center in the Somerset Room.

The Strategic Communications Committee will meet on Tuesday, March 22nd beginning at 6:30 p.m. in Conference Room C.

On Thursday, March 24th there will be an Informational Meeting of Council beginning at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers.

Other Items:

I am most happy to report that last week the rating agency Standard and Poors issued its latest credit rating for the City of Augusta. We had requested the rating for the upcoming general obligation bond issuance associated with the financing of the new North Augusta fire station, the \$1 million pumper/ladder firetruck and the street reconstruction projects to be undertaken this year (all of these projects, you will recall, being funded through tax increment financing proceeds). After detailed review of the City's finances and management practices, S&P reaffirmed our AA rating with a "positive outlook". This is excellent news and a reflection of the City's first rate fiscal condition. In their summary, S&P cited the following factors in issuing their rating:

- *Strong management conditions, with "good" financial management practices under their Financial Management Assessment (FMA) methodology.*
- *Very strong budgetary flexibility with fiscal 2015 audited available reserves in excess of 20% of expenditures.*
- *Very strong liquidity, providing very strong cash to cover debt service and expenditures.*
- *Strong budgetary performance and consistently balanced operations; and*
- *Strong debt and contingent liability profile, bolstered by low debt-to-market value ratios and aggressive amortization.*
- *Strong institutional framework (due to the presence of the State of Maine, MaineGeneral Health, the university of Maine and County Government)*
- *Increased market values (rising 6% in the last three years)*

Thanks go to Assistant City Manager Ralph St. Pierre for his good work in overseeing this process.

You will recall discussion earlier this year about the presence of old sign structures on Western Avenue. I had spoken with Matt Nazar about it and what follows is his recent note to me about that matter:

After a Council meeting in January where there were a number of concerns about remaining sign structures on Western Ave, I asked Rob to contact all of the owners and order their removal or re-use, if they could be legally re-used. We are still following each of the violations – there are about 6-7 of them – and are working with owners to deal with them. The very tall posts on the former Valero site, now Kenoco, will be coming down next week. The abandoned post in front of the Chamber building will be re-used by the Chamber within a month or so, as well. So we are making progress. We will continue move this effort forward.

Councilors have expressed interest as to how the preparation process is going for the transition to fifty-two week trash collection is going. Here is Lesley Jones' latest update on that:

As you know rubbish is going to weekly collection in May. The recycling truck is holding up and we only have to get through April collection of curbside recycling with the existing truck and it looks like we will make it!

We have postcard mailers that will be sent to all residential property owners of 4 units or less. These are currently being printed and will be mailed the first week of April. We will have extra ones that we will distribute to some City department with counters that get a lot of foot traffic. Additionally, there is information on the City's web site, Public Works Facebook page and on the CTV-7 message wheel (if it is not posted there yet it will be shortly). We also will be running ads in the KJ on Friday, March 25, Saturday, April 2 and Saturday, April 30. It is challenging to get everyone on the same page as some people thought that we went to weekly rubbish right after the council meeting approving the change and others can't remember or don't know when it was going to change, so when to send out information has been a bit tricky. Hopefully, we will reach everyone one way or the other. The educational campaign has been professionally prepared so our information is consistent in theme. In May we will be leaving information in the recycling containers of people who still think we are doing curbside recycling. In general the people we have been talking to have been happy to learn that they will be getting weekly rubbish pick-up and the single stream containers continue to be very busy!

Consistent with this year's Council goal to address childhood hunger, Community Services Director Leif Dahlin took the initiative to work with his staff (Recreation Director Bruce Chase and Childcare Director Karen Hatch), Councilor Grant's working group, and with Sarah Miller of the Augusta Food Bank and Darren Joyce of the Boys and Girls Club to establish the Summer 2016 Youth Food Pantry. Utilizing the resources of these organizations and \$5,500 in program funding available through our Childcare program, a food pantry will be established at the Buker Community Center to provide a nutrition program for school aged children in lieu of the present School Year Back Pack food program. Kudos to the group for their creativity and efforts to address this gap in service for those children in our community in need of this important service.

I want to acknowledge today the retirement of one of our dedicated DPW employees. Ruth Tondreau has worked for the City for twenty-three years, most of that as the scale operator at Hatch Hill landfill. We will miss Ruth and wish her good health and happiness in her well deserved retirement.

C: Department and Bureau Directors
Augusta Legislative Delegation



CITY OF AUGUSTA, MAINE

DEPARTMENT COMMUNITY SERVICES

LEIFERIK DAHLIN

To: Bill Bridgeo, City Manager
Re: City Council Goal "D" – "SUPPORT THOSE IN NEED"
From: Leif Dahlin, Community Services
Date: March 18, 2016

ESTABLISH A "KIDS PANTRY"

As discussed and predicated upon City Council Goal "D" – "Support Those In Need", Recreation Director Bruce Chase and I met with; Augusta School Department staff, Darren Joyce the Director of the Boys and Girls Club and Sarah Miller the Director of the Augusta Food Bank. The purpose of the meeting was to explore and identify ways to ensure youth in Augusta do not go hungry when summer vacation begins and the school year "Back Pack" food program concludes. The school year back pack program provides many youth with food on Fridays to take home to eat over the weekend that otherwise would have little or NO food.

As a pilot program, staff is recommending we begin the "Kids Pantry" program this June when summer vacation begins. This program would be in lieu of and compliments the school year back pack program. Below are the conceptual details of the proposed pilot program that will provide essential and healthy food to benefit many of our youth this summer.

Goal: To provide an enhanced summer nutrition program by establishing a "Kids Pantry" for our youth that compliments the School Year "Back Pack" food program to ensure no youth in Augusta go hungry.

I say "enhanced" as the Kids Pantry will be in addition to the pre-existing summer nutrition lunch program.

Partners: The Working Group to Address Childhood Hunger and Homelessness
City of Augusta Staff
-Community Services Department
-Childcare Bureau
-Recreation Bureau
-Development Services Dept.
-Facilities Bureau
Augusta Food Bank
Augusta Boys & Girls Club
Augusta School Department staff as needed in an advisory capacity

Kids Pantry Conceptual Details:

1. The Buker Community Center will be the venue to distribute food.
2. The food will be provided by the Augusta Food Bank.

3. The Boys & Girls Club staff will manage and distribute the food.
The Boys & Girls Club is certified thru the Good Shepherd Food Bank as a distribution site.
4. City staff will set up the pantry and make it ready for use
5. Funding to be provided thru the Augusta Childcare Bureau's budget. The proposed budget to bring the program on-line is \$5,550.00.
6. The partners will periodically meet to review how the program is going.

The program has come together quite nicely with each partner stepping up and more then willing to do their part. Worthy to note is the good work Karen Hatch, Director of the Childcare Bureau has done that provides the fiscal resources. This fact allows the program to get off the ground in a timely manner without needing to identify and piece together the necessary fiscal resources to meet the needs of our youth in Augusta this summer. Bob LaBreck the City's Facilities Director has provided a wealth of expertise and assistance to setting up the physical space. Bob has made a huge contribution to this effort as well

Summer Lunch Program: The Kids Pantry will be in addition to the summer nutrition lunch program that is coordinated with the City's Recreation and Childcare Bureaus and is managed by the Augusta School Department. The summer lunch program provides lunches at four of our Parks (Calumet, Williams, McCall's and Cunningham) plus the Buker Community Center, the Childcare program and, various sport and other camps run the Recreation Bureau. The program feeds hundreds of children each summer and we are seeking ways to reach more children. Part of our meeting agenda with School Department staff was looking for more opportunities to feed our children.