



THE CITY OF AUGUSTA

WILLIAM R. BRIDGEO
CITY MANAGER

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: City Manager Bill Bridgeo
RE: Administrative Report
DATE: May 26, 2015

Meetings:

There will be a meeting of the Planning Board on Tuesday, May 26th at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

The City Council will meet in Council Chambers on Thursday, May 28, 2015 beginning at 6:30 p.m. for an Informational Meeting to be immediately followed by a Special Business Meeting. Agendas are included in your council packets.

Other Items:

The agenda for Thursday's Informational Meeting includes four items. The first is Council authorization for the City Manager to approve night construction this season, as necessary, for the Greater Augusta Utilities District. This was done last year and worked well. GAUD General Manager Brian Tarbuck will be present to answer any questions that may come up.

The second item involves approval of Smokey's Carnival at Mill Park from August 6th through August 9th. It's been several years since the carnival came to town due to the GAUD storm water infrastructure construction that took place in the park. This year, what's proposed is a joint venture between the City and the Red Barn Cares Foundation to promote the event and split the proceeds (which typically represent 20% of the gate and \$50.00 for each concession for a total of about \$3,000 - \$4,000). In the past, City revenues from this activity have gone into the account that funds the 4th of July celebration. In recent years, that activity has been paid for with Downtown TIF funds. This year, staff recommends that the proceeds go into the Mill Park improvements account.

The third item on the agenda is a recommended end of year budget amendment necessary to address two items. The first is the \$450,000 in extra costs incurred with emergency snow removal in February and March. Although the extra costs for snow removal were not confirmed until the end of March (as referenced in my budget message at that time), I did indicate on a number of occasions in my administrative reports in February and during Council meetings that clearing the intersections for safety purposes and widening certain streets to enable emergency vehicles to access them was very costly (on the order of \$50,000 a week to outside contractors) and that the salt budget was exhausted in mid-February. In hindsight, it might have been better to shift more money into the snow budget back when people could more easily appreciate the connection, but I assure you that ensuring the public's safety was staff's sole motivator in the actions that were taken. An accounting of the extra snow removal expenses is included, as is a breakdown from Ralph of the status of the fund balance. The second involves the \$370,000 necessary to cover the costs associated with the two moves of the Lithgow Library and the rental costs of the temporary Library space at the Ballard Center. As Ralph St. Pierre has explained in the past, when the City refinanced our pension obligation bonds this year we had excess

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funds in the debt service account of \$1,229,758. It has always been part of the Library project financing plan to use some of that money to pay for the one time relocation and leased space costs (see the enclosed document from 2013).

The last item on the agenda is the transfer of dedicated Lithgow Library renovation/expansion funds. The City Council had assigned \$500,000 of the city's unassigned fund balance for the renovation and expansion of Lithgow Library. In addition the council has allocated the sale of surplus property totaling \$75,599 for this project. The City will be executing a contract with J.F. Scott Construction Company in the near future. The City has not formally transferred this \$575,599 to the Lithgow Library renovation/expansion capital improvement project account.

After the Informational meeting concludes, the Council will hold a special meeting to consider adoption of the 2015 -2016 appropriation resolve. It is written to reflect the Manager's budget revisions provided to you during the first wrap-up session which brought the tax rate increase down from 5.37% to 4.4%. Consistent with last Thursday evening's final wrap-up discussion, two alternate proposals (Bilodeau/Blodgett and Grant/Paradis) are included with this packet. The Bilodeau/Blodgett proposal would reduce the municipal expenditures by \$325,000 which is \$100,000 from Manager's reduction to Police/Fire/ DPW/Parks & Cemeteries as well as the \$225,000 contribution to the FY 2016 cash CIP. The Grant/Paradis proposal is the Manager's \$100,000 reduction coupled with a \$45,965 additional appropriation from unassigned fund balance. The first amendment would result in a tax rate increase of 3.27% and the second a tax rate increase of 3.91%.

Please note that as of close of business today we had yet to receive the final numbers from the School Department to plug into the resolve. What you have highlighted in yellow are last year's numbers. When I get the current numbers I will provide a substitute amendment. Since the gross amount appropriated is accurate, this should not impact your ability to finalize the budget (assuming, of course we have the school detail by Thursday evening).

C: Department and Bureau Directors
Augusta Legislative Delegation