



THE CITY OF AUGUSTA

WILLIAM R. BRIDGEO, CITY MANAGER

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: William R. Bridgeo
RE: Administrative Report
DATE: January 14, 2019

Meetings:

A public hearing for the City of Augusta Comprehensive Plan will be held at 6:00 p.m. tonight at Cony High School.

There will be a City Council Business Meeting on Thursday, January 17, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. Agendas are included in your Council Packets. A pre-meeting will take place in Conference Room A at 6:30 p.m.

Other Items:

The agenda for this Thursday night's meeting is light. For next week's informational meeting we will have the follow-up material you need for going forward with medical marijuana regulation and plastic bag ban/deposit fees ordinance consideration. As to the proposed ordinance dealing with a fine for violating the recycling policies, that should be addressed by amendment at the meeting (to modify the amount of the fine).

Once again, the General Assistance Office has received the results of the annual audit conducted by the State of Maine and once again our dedicated staff are to be commended for their capable work. Please see the enclosed memorandum from Community Services Director Leif Dahlin advising me of that.

I am happy to report that the last detail associated with re-opening the Lecture Hall in City Hall has been completed (railings to meet ADA standards) and the beautiful, state-of-the-art large meeting and training room is now available for use by staff and the public. It has indeed been a long project (held up for months waiting for seats coming from overseas) but I think that when you see it you will appreciate the good work that went into its restoration. Thanks to Facilities Manager Bob LaBreck for making it happen.

Please refer to your packet for a separate year end summary report from me.

C: Department and Bureau Directors
Legislative Delegation



THE CITY OF AUGUSTA

WILLIAM R. BRIDGEO, CITY MANAGER

To: Mayor Rollins and Members of the City Council
Department and Bureau Directors
Fr: City Manager Bill Bridgeo
Re: A Review of 2018
Da: January 14, 2019

If one takes the time to review calendar 2018 Council minutes and my administrative reports for the same period (as I did this weekend), you get a pretty good sense of what we accomplished and what Council priorities (at least based on last year's goal-setting) either might still need some attention or are not still matters of concern. As it relates to ongoing operations of City government, I feel comfortable saying that we had a good year. All of our departmental operations (including our enterprise operations at the Civic Center, the Augusta Airport, Hatch Hill and Child Care) did well (although due to an especially harsh winter we did incur extra costs associated with winter maintenance). We were good custodians of the public funds (local taxes and fees) provided to pay for the services we provided. If the absence of negatives and controversy are indicators (and I would argue that it is a good starting point in gauging a year's performance) then we did well. You, as a Council, worked hard to implement a comprehensive 2018/2019 budget with a modest tax rate increase of under 3% and little if any push-back from the public. You provided fiscal authority for us to address pay deficiencies in our Police and Fire Departments that have had an obvious and immediate positive effect on our ability to attract and retain high quality employees in a tough labor market for those positions. We had virtually no labor disputes during the year (bearing in mind that over 80% of our workforce is unionized). We maintained exemplary public decorum and avoided the type of negative publicity that was sadly in evidence in many communities around the state. You should take pride in this last consideration. It is often the exception not the rule. Consistent with that spirit, you adopted a core values statement as standing City policy.

You grappled with complicated policy decisions centered on the legalization of marijuana. You worked through a sound public process that addressed whether or not to convert Water Street to two-way traffic. You studied and adopted a local food sovereignty ordinance.

You approved my appointment of Jared Mills as Police Chief and my recommendation to allow Fire Chief Roger Audette to reside outside of the City limits. You established a comprehensive plan review committee. You studied and put to the voters seven proposed City Charter amendments with all but one (raising Council's independent bonding authority) passing.

You authorized the purchase of our 2,200 CMP-owned street lights and their conversion to City-owned LED lights –something that will save hundreds of thousands of dollars and 670,000 kilowatt hours of electricity every year for decades to come (and improve the quality of the lighting, to boot). You

authorized the implementation of a \$3 million methane gas to electricity project at Hatch Hill that just went online and will benefit the taxpayers for many years to come. You approved \$2.3 million in general obligation bonds (\$750,000 Council bond; \$1.6 million in voter-approved bonds) for capital projects including streets, sidewalks and equipment – most of which will be repaid from various TIF programs.

With appropriate recommendations from staff and the Planning Board, you rezoned Whitten Road to allow for a crane operators educational facility; you created opportunities for new “small distilleries, breweries and bakeries” in the ordinance; you allowed small conference facilities in the downtown district; you created a permitting system for home occupations; you approved a rezoning that will allow for construction of a 250 unit apartment complex off outer Civic Center Drive.

Recognizing the need for more expansive code enforcement services you authorized the creation of a third fulltime CEO and a bureau director’s position to lead that team. You also authorized the creation of the position of Parks and Recreation Director (ultimately filled by Bruce Chase) and a new Recreation Coordinator position (soon to be filled). You also approved the demolition of six dilapidated buildings at a cost of about \$55,000.

You authorized funding (\$50,000) to begin the process of analyzing the need for and potential location of a new police station (with proposals due from consultants the end of this month).

You assisted the Kennebec Valley YMCA and our local immigrant community by sponsoring a \$50,000 Community Development Block Grant to allow the Y to provide expanded services targeted to that group (and at the same time freeing up Y resources for the rest of the community at large). You accepted a \$50,000 grant from the Friends of Maine’s Mountains for improvements to the Bond Brook Recreation Area. You also accepted a gift of \$82,000 from the Friends of Lithgow Library which then enabled the final restoration of the iconic Reading Room. You designated the City-owned 154 acre Howard Hill property as “Howard Hill Historical Park” and finalized the conservation easement process with the Kennebec Land Trust (and then recognized KLT as a recipient of the Mayor’s Excellence Award as you did with U Maine women’s’ basketball head coach and former Cony stand-out Amy Vashon).

With an eye toward protecting the interests of the City yet trying to reasonably accommodate the unique hardship circumstances of property owners abutting our DPW, you worked with Corporation Counsel and me to ease their circumstances without jeopardizing City employees’ safety or the security of public property.

Responding to changes in the recycling markets and logistical challenges with existing residential recycling locations you studied and sought public input on a better way to meet the public’s desire to recycle and in the end authorized the consolidation of services at DPW and Hatch Hill (to take effect Monday, February 4th).

Other items of note that occurred in 2018 included:

- The continued reconstruction and expansion of the Hartford Fire Station
- The specifying and bidding out of a new \$624,000 fire engine

- Notification from MDOT of award of \$3.5 million in federal funds to replace all of the City's traffic control devices over the next two years
- The \$75,000 replacement of the deteriorated Bangor Street retaining wall
- The reconstruction (by MDOT) of Airport Road from Blaine Avenue to Western Avenue (and associated parking lot improvements)
- The completion of the last ¼ mile of the Rail Trail down to Waterfront Park
- Over 300 events in the City's parks during the summer of 2018
- An \$870,000 construction project to install intermediate cover over part of Phase III of the Hatch Hill Landfill
- The reconstruction or mill and fill of Cross Hill Road, Bridge and North Streets, Gage Street, Purington Avenue, Cedar Street and Oak Street (the latter three done in conjunction with the Greater Augusta Utilities District)
- An additional several hundred thousand dollars in annual street and sidewalk maintenance paving work
- A Herculean effort by Leif Dahlin and other members of his staff to combat the widespread infestation of grubs throughout the City's public grounds and cemeteries

During the past year, we said goodbye to a number of valued City employees. Among that group were Police Chief Bob Gregoire, Police Lieutenant Chris Read, Police Sergeant Danny Boivin, Fire Department Lieutenant Tom Freeman, City Engineer Lionel Cayer, Street Superintendent Jerry Dostie, Library Director Betsy Pohl, Assistant Economic Development Director Dan Nichols, Code Enforcement Officer Gary Fuller and Payroll Specialist Theresa Arbour. And, of course, three term Councilor Darek Grant.

All in all, I'd call it a notable year and say that 2019 is off to a good beginning. I hope this information is of assistance to you as we engage in goal setting for 2019 and, before you know it, tackle the budget process for 2019/2020.



City of Augusta, Maine
Department of Public Works

January 14, 2019

Memo to: William Bridgeo
City Manager

From: Lesley Jones *Lesley Jones*
Director of Public Works

Re: ecomaine single sort bins - Status update

As a result of too much contamination in the ecomaine bins, excessive use by non-Augusta residents and overflowing bins on the weekends; the Augusta City Council has approved some changes to our ecomaine single sort drop off program. Below is a summary of the changes that we are (or will be working on):

- On Monday, February 4 (or when they are reasonably full shortly thereafter) the ecomaine bins that are currently located at City Center and the Police Department will be emptied and not returned to those locations. ecomaine has generously offered to allow the City to keep using one of these bins as a "swap bin" at Public Works. We will work with Riverside Disposal, our transporter for the bins to ecomaine, on storage of the "swap bin" so it can be put in place at Public Works when the full bin is being transported to and from ecomaine. This will insure that there is capacity at Public Works when the facility is open to residents.
- The hours for the Public Works drop off will be normal business hours which are 6:45 am to 4:00 pm Monday to Friday (with the exception of holidays) with "extended hours" on Wednesday evening until 6 pm and Saturday morning from 8 am to 1 pm. We will provide a schedule of available time slots for these "extended hours" and any slots not filled voluntarily will be assigned on a rotating schedule of Public Works employees. For the extended hours the employee will be asking people of couple of easy survey questions which will include their name and address to verify that they are Augusta residents.
- Hatch Hill will continue using the 40 yard open top roll-off container that we have been using since the program went into effect March of 2015. At Hatch Hill, residents empty their recyclables into one of several wheeled totes located in the recycling area. The recycling attendant then removes as much contamination from the totes as he can and empties the tote into the open top roll off. Because of the set-up at Hatch Hill with the retaining wall, residents cannot empty their recyclables directly into the open top roll-off due to safety concerns. This also provides the opportunity for the recycling attendant to talk to people about contamination and he will remove the old corrugated cardboard (OCC) which gets compacted separately and hauled to ecomaine when that container is full. In the past OCC has been one of the commodities in the recycling market that has the highest value per ton. In the event that the market for OCC improves it may be possible to again start selling the OCC and receive a revenue from the sale this material.

Physical Address:
Augusta Public Works
55 North Street, Augusta, ME 04330

Mailing Address:
Augusta Public Works
16 Cony Street, Augusta, ME 04330-5298

Tel (207) 626-2435 Fax (207) 626-2437 TDD (207) 626-2370

- Hatch Hill hours of operation are Tuesday to Saturday, 8:00 am to 4:00 p.m. (closed legal holidays). People using the Hatch Hill facility will be required to get weighed in and out so we can record the weight of the recycling. If they are bringing in just single stream recycling there is no charge for this. If they bring in other items for recycling or disposal the typical rates will apply.
- Hatch Hill is also available for small businesses to recycle small amounts of recyclables for a tipping fee of \$25.00 per ton with a minimum fee of \$2.00 for less than 161 pounds of recyclables. Hatch Hill is not set up to take large amounts at one time so we refer these businesses to a recycler, for instance they could work directly with ecomaine.
- Information on these changes will be posted on the City's website and social media sites and at the Police Department and City Center locations. I anticipate the Kennebec Journal would also do a story on the changes to help get the word out.

Please let me know if you would like any additional information.

cc: Lissa Bitteman, ecomaine
Melinda Cameron, Riverside Disposal
Mark White, AFSCME Union Steward



THE CITY OF AUGUSTA

LEIF ERIK DAHLIN, COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR

To: William Bridgeo, City Manager
From: Leif Dahlin, Director of Community Services
RE: Annual General Assistance Audit
Date: January 4, 2019

The attached memorandum from the DHHS, General Assistance Program, Field Examiner who conducted the annual audit of the City's General Assistance Bureau records once again shows the city is in compliance with State Statutes and DHHS General Assistance policy.



Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Office for Family Independence
19 Union Street
11 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011

PAUL R. LEPAGE
GOVERNOR

BETHANY L. HAMM
ACTING COMMISSIONER

December 19, 2018

Debra Lymneos
Town of Augusta
16 Cony Street
Augusta, ME 04330

Dear Debra:

This is in reference to the General Assistance audit conducted in Augusta on November 18, 2018.

The review indicates that your program for the town of Augusta is in compliance with the General Assistance statutes and the Department of Health and Human Services' General Assistance policy.

If this office can be of any assistance to you, please call 1-800-442-6003.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gerard R. Biron".

Gerard R. Biron
Field Examiner II
General Assistance Program