



THE CITY OF AUGUSTA

WILLIAM R. BRIDGEO
CITY MANAGER

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Bill Bridgeo
RE: Administrative Report
DATE: July 11, 2016

Meetings:

There will be a meeting of the Planning Board on Tuesday, July 12, 2016 beginning at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. Agendas are included in your Council packets along with minutes from the last meeting.

An Informational Meeting of City Council will take place on Thursday, July 14th beginning at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers. Agendas for this meeting are also included in Council packets.

Other Items:

We were pleased to be notified by the State Department of Economic and Community Development that our application for \$49,000 in CDBG funds from their new Safe Neighborhoods program has received pre-approval. As the letter states, this is not a formal commitment of funds but a very likely indicator that they will be awarded to us. This money will, you will recall, help support our ongoing efforts to fight the substance abuse related problems we as a community are grappling with. Thanks go out to Dan Nichols and Deputy Chief Jared Mills for their work on this project.

There has been a fair bit of media attention paid the proposed female homeless veterans facility proposed for 8 Summer Street. As you can imagine, no one in City government wants to be perceived as being unsympathetic to the plight of homeless veterans. However, it needs to be said that, as proposed, the facility in question does not comply with the City zoning ordinance and this information has been conveyed early on and more than once to the project's organizer. Despite that, she has chosen to proceed with significant investment and unwarranted public criticism of the City. At this point, the matter is in the hands of the City Attorney.

Speaking of the City Attorney, depositions of Mayor Rollins, Development Services Director Matt Nazar and me are scheduled for later this week as part of the lawsuit brought by the City against Steven McGee for violations of the City's blasting ordinance that occurred earlier this year.

On a more upbeat note, good progress is being made with the construction of the new North Augusta Fire Station. According to Chief Audette, our owner's representative on the job, in the last couple of weeks, site preparation – including the access road construction – has come along and pile driving has advanced quicker than anticipated. Power is being brought into the site and we should see the concrete contractor in there next month.

As the recent KJ article indicated, the Lithgow Library project is approaching completion. There are a few issues remaining to be resolved between the design team and the contractor and us but they will not hold up completion and do not represent a significant budgetary impact.

Because we had no responses the last time we sought them, RFP's are going out this week for realtor services to help sell two of our tax acquired properties (5 Mayflower Road and 6 Amanda Lane). Individual realtors have already expressed interest in participating this time, probably due to the anticipated value of the properties.

Recently, Mayor Rollins and I have had a couple of conversations with officials from the City of Hallowell about the possibility of the Augusta Fire Department providing fire protection services on a contractual basis to their community (beyond the mutual aid service we have always provided). Based on a conversation today with Mayor Walker, he tells me that he is going to float that concept to his City Council at their meeting tonight. If there is a sense of general receptivity, then I will seek your guidance as to how we wish to proceed. Presuming that there is mutual advantage to such a concept, this could represent a nice win-win opportunity.

Finally, we have all been transfixed with the national news regarding the shootings in Dallas and elsewhere around the country. Quite naturally, local residents may wonder how our public safety personnel are trained to respond to such situations and, as importantly, what sort of training our police officers have related to appropriate use of force and de-escalation. To the former question, I offer the text of an e-mail Chief Audette sent me a few weeks ago just after the Orlando shooting:

Good morning, I am just leaving beautiful Greenville after a relaxing rainy Sunday at camp. I watched the news with a heavy heart most of the day thinking how chaotic an incident like Orlando must be. I was hopeful that you could mention our massive full scale exercise that took place at Cives Steel on Saturday? Augusta Police & Fire along with many other local, county, state and federal agencies spent all day on a simulated chemical leak from rail cars. While this is much different than a mass shooting the collaborative effort I saw this weekend was impressive. I have been doing these drills for almost 30 years and I could not believe how smooth all of these agencies worked together. We have extensive training in response to a mass shooting. Our department has led the way in tactical EMS training, policies and gear. We have participated in active shooter drills with the State of Maine, Kaplan University, The National Guard and Riverview as well as other small drills with Augusta Police. I hope and pray that training is the only time we use it.

To the latter question, Chief Gregoire offers the following:

We conduct an extensive background investigation on all police candidates. We begin with the review of applications and then an oral board interview. A conditional offer of employment is given after a successful interview. An extensive background investigation of previous employers, place of residency, significant others, family, financial, etc. medical screening, polygraph and psychological. We do an internal 10 week Police Training Officer course (field training) with the new employee. This internal training is well documented and based on a national model. The new officer is trained and mentored by one or more "trained" training officer on different shifts. The officer is then sent to the Maine Criminal Justice Academy for a 18 week course. During the training officers are provided training on de-escalation, communication, relationship building and use-of-force to include "active shooter." We have officers that have advanced

training in special weapons and tactics as well as negotiations. Like the FD we conduct drills with the state, county, other municipalities, Kaplan University, National Guard, Togus VA and Riverview. We have also gone to local businesses and organizations to speak on work place violence and safety.

Department and Bureau Directors
Augusta Legislative Delegation