



CITY OF SACO, MAINE

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Michaud and City Council
FROM: Kevin Sutherland, City Administrator
DATE: August 3, 2017
RE: **Administrative Update**

Taxes Committed

Today, taxes were committed. The mill rate (or tax rate) will be 19.38 or four cents below last year's rate. How is this possible? At budget time wasn't it quoted to be an increase to 19.63? Yes, but two factors drove this:

1. The increased value of the community, which is a combination of new value or what I call "new lumber" and market demand or what people are willing to pay for homes in Saco. This latter number is continuing to increase here in Saco and by law, municipalities have to assess properties within 91% and 106% percent of the market rate. My initial assumptions at the time budget development were below what is actually being reported;
2. Through the state budget process, the legislature moved additional revenues towards education and this year, 50% of those revenues are to be used for property tax relief. For Saco, that's an additional \$355,000 in revenue offsetting the amount that would have otherwise been charged to the property owner.

A version of this is being sent as a press release as well as through social media. The release is also an attachment to this document.

A Proposal to the Army Corps

Several community stakeholders met with the Army Corps of Engineers on June 15th regarding the Camp Ellis Jetty spur and learned that the new price tag for the project is close to 70 million dollars. This project is only authorized by Congress at 27 million and therefore the Army Corp of Engineers will not be able to move the project forward until we've been authorized at the higher amount. City Administration is working through the Application Process now (due date of August 9th) to ensure we're considered by Congress for additional funding. This continues to be a challenge for us and further delays resolve.

Finance Director Search

An interview team comprised of the Mayor, Councilor Doyle, Human Resources Director MaryLou Kadlik, and I held interviews last week with several candidates we believed could serve as Saco's next Finance Director. I however do not believe this round yielded the type of candidate I was looking for to serve in this role and have opened the application process back up. The position description is posted back to our [website](#) and will remain open until filled.

Great turnout at the Pedestrian Safety Forum

On July 25th, the MaineDOT, Bicycle Coalition of Maine, and the City of Saco held a public meeting as part of a state-wide effort to address the recent spike in pedestrian/vehicle crashes in Maine. There was a great turnout and a lot of participation! At this meeting, the attendees identified intersections or roads that they felt were the most problematic or dangerous for pedestrians. The locations that the majority of participants identified are the intersection of Jenkins Road and Buxton Road, the intersection of King Street and Route 1, and insufficient crosswalks and sidewalks on the Ferry Road.

Additional data will be compiled from the sheets the participants completed to give us a better picture of the areas that we will need to work together to address in the future. The MaineDOT, Bicycle Coalition of Maine, and the City of Saco will be using the information gathered as the first step in a multi-step process. The next steps involve site visits to these locations, conducting feasibility assessments, and developing mitigation plans.

CDBG Workforce Development Program

You may recall that a public hearing was held for the Community Development Block Grant Workforce Development Program application that the City of Saco has collaborated with Shalom House, Inc to develop. Jill Slander from Shalom House and Emily Roy from the Administration Department prepared and submitted the full application in June.

Good news! We have received an invitation from the Department of Economic and Community Development to enter into the project development phase and will need to seek Council acceptance of the grant at the meeting in August. We will receive the funds (up to \$50,000) sometime in the fall.

Jill Slander and Eric Grainger from Shalom House and Emily Roy and Dick Lambert from the City of Saco are the advisory committee members for the CDBG project and have begun preparations for the project development phase. The project development phase is required to be completed within three months of receipt of the invitation, which gives us a deadline of October 7th. Emily will be attending a certification and implementation training for CDBG grants on August 3rd and 4th in order for us to be able to receive the grant funds.

You will see this on the September 18th council agenda for a public hearing and the acceptance of the CDBG funds. We will communicate any additional information once we have it.

Update to the Flood Insurance Rate Map

FEMA will be hosting a meeting on August 23rd to discuss the changes in the map they plan to implement. Attached is the letter that was sent to the Mayor. Dick Lambert and I intend to attend. If any of you are interested in attending as well, please let me know. I have documents in my office showing the effects on the Saco community. If you'd like to review just stop by!

River cleanup prior to Saco River Dredging

The Request For Proposals (RFP) should be going out on Friday (tomorrow). We're still on schedule to be done with this phase of the project by October 31st.

NNEPRA Board Meeting held in Saco

On Monday, the NNEPRA Board held their meeting here in Saco at our train station conference room. This is the Board that oversees the Downeaster Train. Staff did a presentation on all the positive energy, development, and business happening around Saco and Biddeford. It's important to recognize how incredible it is to have a train station in the heart of our downtowns and walking distance from many of our amenities.

With the proposed future development of the East side of Saco Island to include a hotel, this could really add to idea of making our downtowns a destination for train riders (eliminating the need to have access to a vehicle when you arrive). A short video on the [Trainriders Northeast website](#) showcases some of the discussion.

I can also report that the gates go back up on Route 9 (Main Street) while the train is stopped to board and off-load passengers! Now you can see it for your own eyes.



Kerry Bogdan, Senior Engineer, FEMA Region I

Sue Baker, CFM, State NFIP Coordinator, Maine Floodplain Management Program, Department of
Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry

Arthur W. Cleaves, EMA Director, York County Emergency Management Agency

Alex Sirotek, Regional Service Center, Region I

Brian Caufield, Project Manager, STARR Region I