

City of Sanford



**From the Desk of
Steven R. Buck
City Manager**



Memorandum

To: City Council
Subject: Manager's Report
Date: December 16th, 2014

Award of Pre-K School Grant:

On Wednesday, December 10th the school district received notification from the Maine Department of Education that Sanford had been awarded a preschool program grant for children who are four years old. Only 18 out the 36 states that applied received this federal grant; Sanford is the sole award winner in York County. This grant will enable Sanford schools to set up five classrooms in the city, each staffed by a teacher and ed tech. This program is expected to serve approximately 100 children. Additional details and information will be provided in the coming months; the current plan is for the program to start in September of 2015.

Federal Government Spending Bill:

Senator Collins issued a Press Release on December 14th, 2014 making statements pertaining to the recent passage of the 2015 Omnibus Federal Appropriations Bill carrying the Government through September 20, 2015, the end of the current fiscal year. There are several points made by the Senator that relate favorably to our Region as follows;

Quote Senator Collins:

"We also provide \$500 million for the TIGER program, an effective initiative that helps advance transportation infrastructure projects. We all have seen firsthand how TIGER projects create jobs and support economic growth in our home states. In fact, in Maine, this highly competitive program has supported more than \$90 million in funding for roads, bridges, ports, and rail projects."

"The bill also includes funding for the procurement of 38 F-35s and for four additional aircraft. The F-35 is vital to maintaining air superiority, and components of the aircraft are built by skilled workers at Pratt & Whitney in North Berwick, General Dynamics Ordnance and Tactical Systems in Saco, Hunting Dearborn, Inc. in Fryeburg, and Fairchild Semiconductor in South Portland. Neither the bill, nor the report, recommends an unnecessary study of an extra engine for the F-35 fighter, which would have wasted billions of dollars.

"Turning to our nation's public shipyards, I am pleased that this bill funds our Navy's facility maintenance and modernization efforts, including projects at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in

Kittery, Maine. The agreement contains language I secured that ensures the capital investment for the Navy's four public shipyards, including the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, is funded at the level required by law." End Quote

Downtown Parking:

City Administration met recently with management of the Sanford Mill on winter parking and the need to better coordinate the multiple lots. Actions were being considered pertaining to the Mid-town Mall and the lower parking lot, but modifications to the Mill's rear parking criteria have been made that no longer necessitates actions by the City. The City will continue to work with the Sanford Mill and other pending development in the Mill District as we strive to redevelop and revitalize the historic properties into complexes as beautiful as that now developed by Northland.

York County Advocacy Group:

The Advocacy Group met last Monday, December 8th, 2014. New and returning Legislators from York County were in attendance in the Sanford Council Chambers as were numerous elected officials and managers. Richard McCarthy from the Eaton Peabody Consulting Group facilitated the meeting as the Groups Advocate. Major items being advocated for in the next session are:

1. **Workforce Development** – Given the known need for skilled trades people in both the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard and Pratt & Whitney, emphasis is placed on increasing education and training opportunities to meet this need. Sanford can benefit from its continued relationship with York County Community College and expansion of educational program in Sanford. Sanford can also work to be the Community of choice for this new workforce as well as the retiring workforces.
2. **Transportation** – Seeking to restore URIP funding as the State reduced by 1% of Federal funding last cycle. Also to support future transportation bonds for roads and bridges. The Group also seeks to prevent any changes to the use of Excise Tax to fund local costs of roads as well as the Legislature identifying other improved funding sources of revenue from MDOT.
3. **Economic Development:** - Seeking to cooperatively develop the build out of Broadband and discuss the development of municipal utility districts centered on broadband. This would provide for greater cooperative build out, looped connectivity for redundancy and resilience, and allow the Region to become a key attractor of high tech industry.
4. **EB5 Designation for York County:** - Discussion to pursue a County wide application for the Employment-Based immigration program or EB-5 to attract venture capital for economic development projects within the Region. I have attached a brief summary on the EB-5 Program Overview to this Memo.
5. **County Jails:** The Group discussed the currently stressed State relationship as it pertains to the operations of County Jails. Concerns are to be addressed centered on capitalization of maintenance and improvements to the existing jails that are not currently being met.
6. **Stormwater Management:** - The Group discussed pending changes to broaden EPA's jurisdiction and override that of DEP under the Federal Waters of the United States. The Act seeks to expand the EPA's jurisdiction to most seasonal and rain-dependent streams and bring them under the Federal Clean Water Act. The City and Region could find these new regulations burdensome in the form of compliance as well as fiscally. Many are just now starting to research the extent of this Act and the Group recognizes it needs to be aware and carry a common message on this Act.

7. Consolidated Court System: - the Group also discussed future actions seeking to consolidate the court's dockets into a singular system and disband the district court system. Little information was available during the meeting but it will be further researched and reported out.

The Advocacy Group is setting a series of in person meetings with our Legislative Delegation in Augusta during the Session starting in January through the end of the Session.

Department Shorts:

Metrocast Franchise Agreement – Attorney Piampiano has submitted yet another revised Franchise Agreement to Metrocast outlining numerous points of disagreement with the current revisions. We are pushing for a timely resolve as a commitment by Metrocast to our community.

Public Works - “In the past two weeks, the 17-member plow and mechanic crew for the Public Works Department has managed multiple winter weather events working a total of 1,665 hours plowing, salting, and keeping the roads and sidewalks clear. This effort resulted in no school cancellations and only one school delay. Sheila Beckwith-Hibbard of Ledegmere Transportation, providing student bus transportation, has extended their compliments to the Department of Public Works.”

Planning – is working on two models; 1. A tool to measure the amount of development within a given newly created subdivision in comparison to the future cost of the City taking over and maintaining infrastructure such as roads, utility structures, and drainage systems. A model is also being examined to create a TIF type of benefit for future redevelopment and infill within the Urban Zone, or elsewhere, to encourage the redevelopment of blighted districts.

Parks & Recreation – is working on events to promote the 100th Anniversary of Goodall Park. A number of events are being planned as well as hosting the Playoffs with year. Several positive comments have also been received on the Department's decorating of the City, especially at Gowen Park and the gazebo.

Finance – is working with All Departments to complete the first draft of the FY 15-16 Municipal Budget and Capital Improvements Program. The last of submissions are due on December 24th, 2014 with a completed first Draft prepared by mid-January.

Codes – we have now implemented a first Consent Agreement with a property within Shoreland Zoning in support of the Council's recently approved amendments to property code enforcement.

The EB-5 Program Overview

Congress created the fifth employment-based preference (EB-5) immigrant visa category in 1990 for qualified foreigners seeking to invest in a business that will benefit the U.S. economy and create or save at least 10 full-time jobs.

The basic amount required to invest is \$1 million, although that amount is reduced to \$500,000 if the investment is made in a rural or high unemployment area. Of the

approximately 10,000 EB-5 green cards available each year, 3,000 are reserved for foreign nationals who invest through a Regional Center.

The EB-5 Regional Center Investment Program

To encourage immigration through the EB-5 program, Congress created a pilot program in 1993. The program specifically sets aside 3,000 visas annually for foreign investors who apply through a United States Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS) designated Regional Center Investment Program.

A Regional Center is a private enterprise or corporation or a regional governmental agency with a targeted investment program within a defined geographic region. The Regional Center program in many

ways mirrors long active and successful investment-employment based programs in the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and other foreign nations.

An investor seeking an EB-5 immigrant visa through a designated regional center must generally make a qualifying investment of \$1 million and demonstrate that at least 10 jobs were directly or indirectly created through the investment. Certain rural, high unemployment or Targeted Employment Areas (TEA) qualify for a lesser capital investment of \$500,000. The American Dream Fund, LLC and the Los Angeles Regional Center is a designated regional center that focuses solely on qualifying projects within targeted employment areas.

An investor seeking an EB-5 immigrant visa through a designated regional center must also demonstrate that at least 10 jobs were directly or indirectly created through the investment. The American Dream Fund, LLC utilizes a USCIS approved job methodology to measure and verify a qualifying project's required job creation.

Before participating in a Regional Center EB-5 investment program, each investor independently petitions USCIS for an EB-5 visa. Qualified investors investing through a



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Regional Center receive a conditional green card valid for two years. The investor, spouse and unmarried children (under age 21 at the time of petition) can then apply for permanent residency based on investment. If approved, the investor and his immediate family become permanent green card holders and can later apply to become U.S. citizens. Upon receipt of conditional permanent resident status, the investor and immediate family are entitled to the same benefits as other lawful permanent residents.