

## City of Sanford



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



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### Memorandum

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To: City Council  
Subject: Manager's Report for February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015  
Date: February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015

### **City of Sanford Fire Department to install Smoke Alarms and Carbon Monoxide Alarms**

The Sanford Fire Department is beginning a new campaign in an effort to reach out to local residents. Firefighters will visit local residents to perform smoke alarm inspections, replace batteries, or install smoke alarms if needed. This program is part of a community-wide fire prevention effort.

Members of the Sanford Fire Department will install smoke alarms in the homes of Sanford/Springvale residents who don't have them or have older units, with a focus on older adults, young people, and residents with disabilities who are vulnerable to fire deaths at no cost. This new program will increase the odds of surviving a home fire.

Smoke alarms are the most effective early warning device available. By simply having a smoke alarm in your home, your chance of dying in a fire is reportedly cut by fifty percent. The goal of this program is to ensure residents have the protection of a smoke alarm in their home. Residents, who wish to schedule a home visit, should call the Fire Marshal at 207-324-5293 or email at [smokealarm@sanfordmaine.org](mailto:smokealarm@sanfordmaine.org). This program is made possible through a donation from a local family who lost a family member in a house fire. The house had no working smoke alarms.

For More Information Contact:  
Fire Marshal Patrick Cotter  
917 Main Street, Suite 300  
Sanford, Maine 04073  
(207)324-5293  
[Firemarshal@sanfordmaine.org](mailto:Firemarshal@sanfordmaine.org)

**Broadband:**

I recently participated in a broadband meeting in Augusta on January 21<sup>st</sup> coordinated by the Mayor's Coalition and overseen by the Governor's Office of Policy and Public Advocate's Office. A number of Communities convened to review various levels of current infrastructure as well as best practices to build and operate fiber based systems that currently do not exist. For those Cities that do not have strong infrastructure and are seeking to create such infrastructure, Sanford is defining a critical pathway. The City contracted to complete our Feasibility Study mapping all existing assets, community anchors, developed the routing and engineered construction and operating systems costs. We also studied the benefits of investing into the critical connection to the Three Ring Binder (TRB) to obtain competitive backhaul and internet connections. Even for a nine mile build to make the TRB connection, the anticipated return on investment given current community anchor institutions use is less than 2 years. This short ROI is due to the extremely limited access and backhaul options given Sanford's rural location as it pertains to the TRB.

Sanford has also produced an RFP for construction and operation of a fiber network. The specific purpose of the competed RFP is to gauge responses for a **Best Business Model** using existing infrastructure of fiber, copper, and cable systems, existing installation companies, existing line maintenance companies, and existing broadband companies to partner in a hybrid system using the newly constructed dark fiber network as its backbone.

Sanford's overall goals are:

1. Construct an internal Dark Fiber Loop connecting not less than 80 Community Anchor Institutes
2. Connect this Internal Loop to the Three Ring Binder for cost competitive backhaul
3. Create a Best Practice Public-Private Partnership to construct, own, operate, and encourage private business growth stemming from broadband connectivity

To this end, the Mayor's Coalition is drafting a "Concept Proposal for "Urban" Broadband in Maine." The Concept Proposal is seeking matching funds towards achieving community broadband through planning grants in 2015. The planning grants would be provided through Department of Community and Economic Development (DECD) on a competitive basis. If created by the Legislature, this could provide the leverage funding necessary to complete Sanford's RFP process to define future construction and broadband operations.

**Legislative Policy Committee (LPC):**

The LPC met on January 22<sup>nd</sup> to review the first of the printed Legislative Declarations (LD's). The LPC discussed the Governor's proposed Biennial Budget as well as the number of LD's already proposed to counter the significant tax structure changes. The brief summary is that the LPC recognizes the opportunity to engage in meaningful dialog with the Governor and Legislators as the Governor's Budget Proposal has opened the door to discuss overall tax reform. Elements that have become open at a minimum are:

1. **Property Tax Relief** –
  - a. Homestead Exemption, targeted property tax relief
  - b. State Revenue Sharing – distribution of broad based taxes to provide widespread property tax relief

- c. Essential Programs and Services – School funding and the State’s contribution
2. **Income Tax Reform** – the phased elimination of State Income Tax and how to replace that level of taxation, or reduction of offsetting expenses
3. **Expansion of Sales Taxes** – provide a greater equitable balance of taxation across income, sales, and property taxation. Municipalities recognize the current imbalance and overreliance of property taxation and favor other broad based taxation to offset.
4. **Expansion of Taxation to Non-Profits** – viewed as being one of the most controversial and least productive considerations currently on the table
5. **Business Equipment/Personal Property Tax Reform** – BETR versus BETE, the benefits of reduced business equipment taxes

For the discussion of all of these major areas of Tax Reform, I continue to express the following founding philosophies:

- Equalize Tax Burden across Sales, Income, and Property Taxes – Property Taxes carrying the largest burden and seeking relief
- Need to balance these burdens during any transitional period of changes within the Tax Code – A Phased Approach is better than an “all or nothing” approach
- Be mindful of the pro and cons of the Shifts and account for the impacts of these shifts until such time as the positive economic gains sought from the reduction of income tax produces meaningful results
- Municipalities are the greatest partners in economic development that the State has YET the State refuses to recognize this partnership, the maintenance of infrastructure, and the need to distribute from the gains in broad based taxation those funds necessary to reduce the burden upon Property Taxes and the cost of providing municipally delivered services
- Blend Direct Targeted Property Tax Relief (Homestead type) in conjunction with Rev II of the Revenue Sharing Program – This addresses homestead type property tax relief while also addressing the disproportionate tax burden upon Service Center Communities (Rev II)

The Executive Board of MMA has been tasked with communicating these points to the Governor and Legislature during a January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015 Legislative Meeting. I will report the outcome as soon as it is communicated.

### **Road Posting:**

The City is considering posting road to weight limit restrictions during the spring thaw period to better protect the City’s investment in road infrastructure. Public Works Director Hill has worked with the Council’s Property Subcommittee, the Growth Council, Chamber, and other City Departments on the development of a number of roads to be considered for weight restriction postings. Businesses that might be impacted by these postings have been sent a communication and map outlining the City’s proposed plan. A Public Hearing will be held for the next meeting in February to solicit comment on the Posting Plan as part of the Council’s overall consideration before further actions are taken.

**Budget:**

Administration continues to work across all Departments on Expense Budgets, Revenue Projections, as well as Capital Improvements requests. All Department completed their initial reviews as of today, 2/3/15 and the work now begins to amend the Budget into a form acceptable by the Budget Committee to be recommended to the City Council in April of this year.

**School Construction:**

I traveled to Augusta last Thursday with Superintendent Theoharides and Architect Whitehead to meet with Department of Education Architect Brown and Bureau of General Services Projects Director Chang. The next years' worth of work towards final engineering, bid document development, bidding, and contract implementation for the construction of Sanford's approved New High School was scoped. The timing and sequence of events have been drafted to allow the City to participate in the spring issue of the Maine Bond Bank for Final Funding pending the State's approval of the final funding plan. This final authorization will take place no later than the second week in April to coincide with signed construction documents for a May 2016 start to construction. The next year is scoped as:

2018 July Deadline to meet for occupancy

Bid Package complete December 2015 - must have 100% complete Plans and then seek State Board Approval (January 13th for DOE Board)

75% Plans issued to BGS October 20th, 2015 for preview pending December 100% Plan issuance - 30 Day review time for BGS

85% CD November 4th, 2015

Final Plans to BGS November 24th, 2015

Pre-Qualify GC's

DOE Approval at December 8th Meeting of 100% Plans

Bid Issued December 9th, 2015

8 Weeks for Bid Development

February 3rd Bids are Due

Bid Review - Owner location (City) for review - 30 days

March 2nd for Bid Acceptance

March 23rd - Final Funding Approval at Scott Brown's Office - Does not need

Commissioner or State Board Approval - performed after Contract has been signed -

March 30th, 2016 - Final Funding Approval and Budget - Documents to Maine Bond Bank

April 15th, 2015 deadline for all documents to MBB

Administration also worked with the DOE to scope the processes for a Facilities Feasibility Study to address Sanford's needs for its remaining elementary and middle school student population. An RFP will start the process as the City again seeks competitive proposals for architectural services to study these facilities and develop the most cost effective means to refurbish our existing inventory of facilities to consolidate and reduce the number of facilities and to improve the remaining facilities for efficiencies in operations. While the Feasibility Study will incorporate all facilities, the focus will be on the refurbishment of the current middle and high school buildings to address the needs. The processes were reviewed to ensure that a November of 2018 deadline to start the phased refurbishment of the current High School would be met.