

City of Sanford



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



Memorandum

To: City Council
Subject: City Manager's Report for June 2nd, 2015
Date: June 2nd, 2015

MetroCast:

On May 29th, 2015 MetroCast Communications provided notice to the City of Sanford that starting August 3, 2015 they will be broadcasting Station CKSH out of Sherbrooke, Quebec. CKSH is a CBC Radio-Canada affiliate broadcasting all French programming. The French speaking channel will appear as Channel 4, again starting in August. MetroCast Customers will be receiving notice of this very positive change. (Letter attached)

The City will return to negotiations with MetroCast for a successor Franchise Agreement on June 9th, 2015.

Broadband Initiative:

The Sanford Regional Economic Growth Council's Request for Proposals closed this past Thursday, May 28th, 2015 at 5:00PM. Four responses were received. The Growth Council, as part of the RFP, has confidentiality agreements in place to protect and preserve proprietary rights to business process information. The RFP's are currently under review with a first meeting to discuss future actions still being scheduled.

At the State level, LD 1063, "An Act to Promote Community Broadband Planning and Strengthen Economic Opportunity throughout Maine" seems to have the most support by the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee (EUT). This Bill provides for State planning for universal availability to reliable cost effective broadband. It changes the roll of the ConnectME authority as the entity developing the strategy and will be in charge of implementing an accepted strategy. There are proposed funds for community studies, but no proposed funding for construction. Sanford has already moved beyond this juncture and now seeks sources of leveraged funding towards a cooperative build out and operation of more robust systems.

Representative Higgins' Bill LD 1185 has more positive potential for Sanford. LD 1185 seeks to establish a \$6.0 million fund to be administered by DECD and such funds to be distributed competitively to Communities as planning grants up to \$20,000 and construction grants up to \$200,000.

School Construction:

As progress is continuously reported, I will be refereeing to Phase I, the New High School construction Project, and Phase II the Feasibility Study and resulting renovations/additions to Sanford's existing schools to address future Student needs. Phase I has a Core Building Committee, CBC I, as does Phase II the CBC II.

CBC I met recently with the Design Committee to work with the Architect to select interior and exterior finishes, patterns, and colors for the New High School. Material selections were specifically made for consideration of locally available and sourced materials adding to the green aspects of the facility as well as reduction of costs. A primary color scheme for each of the four wings as well as the performing arts center was selected. Interior and exterior materials were selected to provide continuity and flow of the character from the exterior into the interior. The Architects will now render views of the Facilities as they might appear for further review prior to making any finalized decisions.

The CBC II has performed site tours of renovation projects engineered and performed by the remaining two Architectural Firms of Lavallee Brensinger and Harriman. Sites were toured in both South Portland and East Rochester, New Hampshire. The CBC II will meet again on June 4th, 2015 tentatively to select a Firm for the Phase II Project. The decision will be difficult as both Firms are very qualified and have provided excellent projects for review.

State Budget & Legislation:

Reports from Rick McCarthy of the Mayor's Coalition summarize recent actions of the State Appropriations Committee as follows:

The Appropriations Committee and leadership continued negotiations on the budget over the weekend. A good deal of progress was made, although some decisions and challenges remain. The split between House and Senate Republicans was the biggest reason they didn't reach agreement last night. Here are some major issues of interest to Coalition members:

1. Revenue Sharing – In at \$62.5M in each year of the biennium – flat funding.
2. Telecommunications Tax – Out, cities won't be receiving this tax revenue
3. General Purpose Aid to Education – Rumors of a \$25M increase in FY 16 that would lower the mill expectation from 8.48 to 8.29. Not voted yet.
4. Homestead Exemption – maintain current program.
5. BETE/BETR – still being negotiated.
6. General Assistance – Committee moved out the \$5M a year reduction in GA funding.
7. Tax Reform – Committee moved out most sales tax proposals. Final terms still being negotiated.

Firefighter Incident:

On May 23rd, 2015 a Sanford Call Firefighter suffered a serious medical emergency while driving a Sanford Fire Truck in response to a fire. Medical details cannot be disclosed, but the positive response by numerous City Departments and the lifesaving outcomes can be reported.

The Firefighter lost consciousness while driving yet was able to slow the truck before it hit a guardrail. Sanford Paramedics were on the scene in less than two minutes. The timely response coupled with their training and expertise obviously contributed to the positive outcomes stemming from this very serious incident. The spouse of the Firefighter was contacted and transported to the Hospital by Members of the Paid Call Company. City Administrative Staff reported to document and file all necessary reports immediately. Dispatch by protocol notified the City Manager and linked communications to both Chief Benotti and Chief Connolly. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor were notified; Finance and HR reported to complete necessary actions, all without losing responses to either the medical incident or fire response.

I want to take this opportunity to express well wishes to Firefighter Harmon. As of this past Saturday, he was discharged and was back in Sanford talking with Chief Benotti. It is also obvious that the continuum of medical care in our City and Region is truly exceptional as is Firefighter Harmon for all that he has been through.

I also want to express appreciation and recognition to all the fine men and women that comprise our Public Safety Personnel, Police and Fire/EMS, the Administrative Staff, and the Members of the Call Fire Company for their exceptional response and obvious dedication during and after this event. The preparation, training, and dedication becomes apparent when an event hits so close to home for all personnel involved and such a rapid and professional response is made. I couldn't be more proud of serving with such dedicated individuals that comprise our City's public servants. You have my respect and admiration for your continued exceptional service to our Residents and to one of our own. Thank you

Notification of Retirement:

On Monday, June 1st, 2015 I received a letter from Planning Director James Q. Gulnac announcing his retirement from the City after 14 years of dedicated service. Mr. Gulnac, Jim, indicates he and his wife Linda wish to spend more family time as grandparents and have decided that now is the time to do so.

Jim indicates he will work with the City towards his replacement and to fulfill the City's newly created position of Director of Planning and Community Development. Jim offered to make contact with his associates in an effort to fulfill the position and the loss of his years of institutional knowledge. Jim is willing to work with the City through this transition up to September 30th of this year.

As City Manager, I would like to recognize Mr. Gulnac, known to most of us as Q., for his exceptional knowledge of planning, his working relationship with EPA Region 1 fulfilling the City's Brownfield and environmental cleanup efforts, and for his cutting edge implementation of the Land Stewardship Program. Jim has indicated he desires to further implement the next phase of the Land Stewardship Program, expanding it from the current Urban Zone to others areas of Sanford before he retires. He feels he can hand to his successor a well-crafted and implemented Stewardship Program as a starting point for that person to further develop. Jim is extremely civic minded as he has worked with numerous non-profits organizations to address Sanford's socio economic challenges during his tenure with the City.

I will further highlight Jim's work for the City through the Manager's Reports and will encourage Jim to present on his work before he departs in September. As with many complex and specialized areas such as land use and municipal planning, not everyone speaks and understands the vernacular of the trade. Jim lives for planning, and yes speaks the vernacular exceptionally well, and the City of Sanford has benefited from Jim's work and will continue to for decades to come. I extend heartfelt thanks to you Jim and my appreciation for your continued work with us as we transition to a new with a focus of building upon the foundation and infrastructure that is the product of your years of service. Thank you.