



The Biddeford Beat

CITY OF BIDDEFORD WEEKLY NEWSLETTER | TUESDAY, JAN 17, 2017

Volume 17.2

A1

Call For Art: Winter Wonderland Due by January 27th

We invite artists to submit work to the City of Biddeford's annual non-juried Winter Wonderland exhibition at Biddeford City Hall opening on Friday, February 3 and showing through March 18. The opening reception will be from 4-6pm on Friday, February 3 during the annual Winterfest celebration (Feb 3-5).

We will accept 2D work only, no sculptures. All ages are welcome to participate. Details can be found here:

<http://feedtheengine.org/winter-wonderland-2017/>

The exhibition is a joint effort of the City of Biddeford and Engine, an arts organization in downtown Biddeford. For questions please contact City Manager Executive Assistant Andrea Fagan at (207) 284-9313 or Engine at (207) 370-9130.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Tue Jan 17

5:00pm - Finance Committee
(City Hall Council Chambers)

5:00pm - Capital Projects Committee
(City Hall 2nd Floor Conference Room)

6:00pm - City Council Meeting
(City Hall Council Chambers)

Thu Jan 19

6:30pm - Airport Commission
(City Hall Council Chambers)

7:00pm - Conservation Commission
(City Hall 2nd Floor Conference Room)

7:00pm - Harbor Commission
(Biddeford Pool Fire Station)

For Full Calendar, [click here](#)

Audit FY16 (July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016)

On Tuesday, January 10, City Council and School Board members heard a presentation of the City's auditing firm Runyon Kersteen Ouellette. The results were very favorable. The actual audit and the summary presentation are available on City's website, [click here](#).

While we hope you take the time to read the entire audit on City's website, we realize some might not. So, here are the two quick highlights of the audit. First and one of the most important findings is that the audit found no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies. In simple terms, there are no current financial practices or procedures that were discovered during the audit that would not comply with the standards/recommendations of a national board (Government Auditing Standards GAS). *(continued on A2)*

City Valuation, is it Growing?

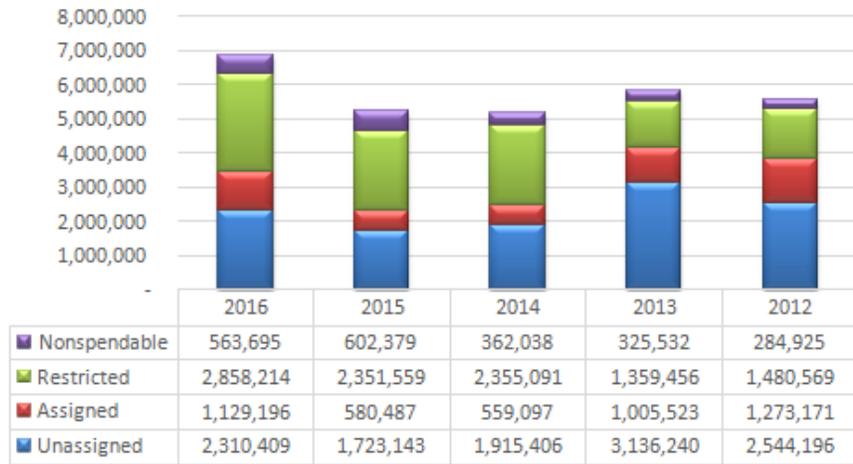
A recent a social media post criticized the City for not increasing its valuation. The post stated that the local audit shared that the 'City's assessed value dropped by \$1.7 million in 2016.' While the figure is accurate, the statement is inaccurate in terms of the year. Sadly, the conclusion the person was trying to portray is really wrong as the post was arguing that the city was not growing. This article will provide the accurate information and more importantly, the correct conclusions about the growth in the City. *(continued on A2)*

Reminder to Residents: Dog Registration Deadline

- Dog license renewals are due by January 31st to avoid the \$25 late/warrant fee.
- Residents need to provide the most current/valid proof of rabies vaccination.
- Dog licenses are \$6.00 for dogs that are neutered/spayed and \$12.00 for dogs that are not fixed.
- Residents are able to renew their dog licenses online as well, by going to the "Online Services," section on homepage of the City's website, [click here](#).

(continued from AI FY16 Audit)

Next, from a financial perspective, the City had \$1,603,946 available to be spent last year that it did not spend. After several years of using city fund balance (surplus) to pay the bills, the city returned money. The following chart shows the changes over the last few years



Total fund balance increased \$1,603,946 over the prior fiscal year.

In an upcoming issue of the 'Beat' we will talk about the need for a surplus and why that is critical for a community.

(continued from AI Valuation)

The actual local change from FY15 (July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015) to FY16 (July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016) actually went up by \$19,813,000 (from \$2,237,820,000 to \$2,257,633,000). There is another column that shows the estimated *state valuation* numbers. State valuation is always several years behind. The state valuation, which is not used for determination of the local tax rate, does show a decrease on the chart. This is reflection of the drop in valuation several years ago with the former Maine Energy site was purchased by the City. You can find this information in table 6 in statistical section of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) provides the accurate information. To access the CAFR, [click here](#).

In next year's audit, the local valuation will appear to have gone down. Many of you may recall that the state granted an increase in the homestead exemption from \$10,000 to \$15,000. Last year, 3,256 residents qualified for the homestead. The increased exemption caused \$16,280,000 of taxable value to come off the city tax rolls (3,256 x \$5,000 = \$16,280,000). City staff also sent out mailers to citizens and conducted a public relations campaign to encourage qualified citizens to take advantage of the program. As a result, we had another 131 new homes sign up for the program. Those new homes reduced the value by another \$1,925,000 (131 x \$15,000 = \$1,965,000) for a grand total reduction in local value of \$18,245,000.

Once the new 'exempted' (previously taxable) value is eliminated from the properties to spread the tax burden among, it did go down in this current year by \$1,704,700. However, if it was not for the new homestead, the actual increase would have been \$16,540,300. The bottom line, the community is continuing to grow its tax base so that more people are contributing to the tax burden of the City.

As always, if you have questions about anything happening within the City, we encourage you to simply ask.

#365BiddefordMEpositives

For email subscriptions, [click here](#)
 For questions or comments:
 t. 207.284.9313 | e. newsletter@biddefordmaine.org
 Thank you for reading.