

Open Line

A Monthly Newsletter for City of Auburn Citizens

August 2014

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City of Auburn



City Council Deepens School Funding Commitment

On June 3rd, the Auburn City Council approved the City's next biennial budget, covering fiscal years 2015 and 2016. The new budget, which will go into effect on October 1, reflects several years of planning, analysis and community input culminating in major budget changes to allow for increased school funding in the face of rapid enrollment growth. The challenge to the City Council in considering the budget was to balance the needs of Auburn City Schools (ACS) with the need to maintain city services at the level that citizens expect and demand.

Currently, the City of Auburn provides \$9.5 million in annual funding to the Auburn City Board of Education. After considerable analysis of the impact on city operations, city management recommended and the City Council approved an increase of \$5.6 million in school funding, resulting in total school funding of \$15.2 million for FY 2015.

To achieve this new level of school funding, the Auburn City Council has dedicated 1.25 pennies of sales tax, over 30% of sales tax revenue, to Auburn City Schools. The Council also set a floor requiring a minimum of \$11.5 million in school funding from sales tax, even if that requires more than 1.25 of the 4 pennies of sales tax revenue collected by the City. The Council has also turned over the Special Five Mill Tax fund to ACS, which has an annual value to the schools of \$3.7 million.

These changes will have significant impacts on current City finances, with increased school funding requiring decreased funding for City services. The adopted budget continues funding for the vital city services delivered by Public Safety (Police, Fire, 911, Codes Enforcement), Environmental Services (trash and debris collection), Public Works (transportation infrastructure), and other City departments. To make this possible, the City will scale back, delay or cancel a number of previously planned projects that would have been funded by Five-Mill or sales tax revenue.

This increase in school funding is only possible due to the fiscally conservative strategy the Council has approved in budgets since the national economic downturn began. No cost-of-living adjustments have been provided to City employees in five years, and the net number of City employees has decreased. The City has long operated on a very lean personnel budget, currently spending 40.5% of the General Fund on personnel costs, while most cities spend well over 60%. Operating costs have been held roughly level throughout the recession. The City has also aggressively pursued grant funding, and the award of almost \$11 million in ATRIP funds over the past two years has allowed general revenue funds to be shifted from transportation projects to other priorities.

These strict budget controls helped the City weather a historic national recession and now, along with delays, reductions or elimination of planned City projects, help to provide increased school funding. Even with these cuts, the adopted budget doesn't provide the school system with everything they need. In fact, the City of Auburn cannot fully meet the needs of Auburn City Schools without compromising basic City services. The City of Auburn and Auburn City Schools will have to carefully manage this balance and continue to plan for how best to meet the school system's future needs. The newly adopted budget responsibly balances the Council's unwavering commitment to excellence in both Auburn City Schools and essential City services.

Previously Planned Special Five Mill Projects

(require alternate funding - will be delayed, canceled or reduced in scope as necessary):

- Lake Wilmore Community Center and pool/aquatics facility
- Additional multi-use practice fields (soccer, lacrosse, etc.)
- New basketball courts, both indoor and outdoor
- Renovations to and replacement of existing community pools
- Duck Samford baseball complex renovations
- Upgrades to Dean Road Recreation Center

NOTICE OF ELECTION OF MUNICIPAL OFFICERS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on Tuesday, August 26, 2014, the Regular Municipal Election will be held in the City of Auburn for the purpose of electing a **Mayor, and Councilpersons from each of the City's eight single-member wards as follows: Ward 1 (District 1, Post 1), Ward 2 (District 1, Post 2), Ward 3 (District 2, Post 1), Ward 4 (District 2, Post 2), Ward 5 (District 3, Post 1), Ward 6 (District 3, Post 2), Ward 7 (District 4, Post 1), and Ward 8 (District 4, Post 2).** All registered and qualified electors of the State who reside within the corporate limits of the City of Auburn, Alabama, and who have resided therein for 30 days or more immediately preceding the date of the election, will be authorized to participate in the election.

The polls will be open at the following locations from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM on Tuesday, August 26, 2014:

- Ward 1 (District 1, Post 1) - Boykin Center Gymnasium
- Ward 2 (District 1, Post 2) - National Guard Armory
- Ward 3 (District 2, Post 1) - Frank Brown Recreation Center
- Ward 4 (District 2, Post 2) - Frank Brown Recreation Center
- Ward 5 (District 3, Post 1) - Dean Road Recreation Center
- Ward 6 (District 3, Post 2) - Dean Road Recreation Center
- Ward 7 (District 4, Post 1) - Clarion Inn and Suites
- Ward 8 (District 4, Post 2) - Clarion Inn and Suites
- Absentee Box - Auburn City Hall

Voting Locations

City of Auburn voters should vote at the locations listed above for the 2014 Regular Municipal Election. To look up your voting ward and location by address, please visit the City's Public Service Map at <http://webgis.auburnalabama.org/publicservice/>

Voter Registration

Voter registration is governed by state law and the federal National Voter Registration Act. The deadline to register to vote is Friday, August 15th. Voters must have resided within the City limits for at least 30 days to vote in the Regular Municipal Election.

Voter registration forms can be obtained at Auburn City Hall at 144 Tichenor Avenue in Auburn, at the County Board of Registrars office at 215 South 9th Street in Opelika, or online at <http://www.sos.state.al.us/elections/GetRegForm.aspx>. Registration forms should be returned to the Lee County Board of Registrars Office at PO Box 1530, Opelika, Alabama, 36803-1530. Registration forms returned to the City will be forwarded to the Lee County Board of Registrars.

Absentee Voting

If you are unable to vote at the polls on election day, you may apply for an absentee ballot if you meet any of the following conditions:

- If you will be out of the county on election day
- If you have a physical illness or disability that prevents a trip to the polling place
- If you are a registered voter living outside of the county, such as a member of the armed forces, a voter employed outside the United States, a college student, or a spouse or child of such a person
- If you are an appointed election official or poll watcher at a polling place other than your regular polling place
- If you work a required shift of at least 10 hours that coincides with polling hours

How to Apply

The City will accept applications for absentee ballots through Thursday, August 21. Applications may be obtained from City Hall. Applications for absentee ballots must be made in writing to City Manager and either hand-delivered or mailed to:

Auburn City Hall
Attn: Absentee Ballots
144 Tichenor Avenue, Suite 1
Auburn, AL 36830

The application form must be signed by the applicant and must state the applicant's name, residence address, information necessary to verify the applicant as a registered voter, and the address to which the ballot should be mailed. As soon as ballots are printed, absentee ballots will be mailed to those persons who have made a proper application.

Business Emergency or Medical Emergency applications can be made after the absentee deadline but no later than 5 PM on the day before the election, if the voter:

- is required by an employer under unforeseen circumstances to be out of the county on election day for an emergency business trip, or
- has a medical emergency requiring treatment from a licensed physician

*The **business emergency application** contains an affidavit acknowledging that the voter was not aware of the out-of-county business trip prior to the normal absentee ballot deadline. The **medical emergency application** requires that the attending physician describe and certify the circumstances as constituting an emergency.*

Absentee Voting Deadline

An absentee ballot returned by mail must be postmarked no later than the day prior to the election and received by the Absentee Election Manager no later than noon on election day. If hand-delivered, the ballot must be in the office of the Absentee Election Manager by the close of business at 5:00 p.m. on the day prior to the election.

Sales Tax Holiday

As students head back to school this fall, Auburn's residents will enjoy tax savings on many back to school necessities. The Auburn City Council approved an ordinance authorizing Auburn's Sales Tax Holiday Weekend at the May 20, 2014 City Council meeting. The Sales Tax Holiday will begin Friday, August 1 at 12:01 a.m. and end on Sunday, August 3 at midnight.

Items exempt from state and city sales tax fall into 3 major categories:

Clothing – All human-wearing apparel suitable for general use is exempt unless it otherwise appears on the taxable list; clothing items must cost \$100 or less per article of clothing to be exempt.

Computers, Computer Software, and School Computer Supplies – A single purchase with a sales price of \$750 or less will be exempt. Exempt items include computers, computer software and any item commonly used by a student in a course of study in which a computer is used.

School supplies – Any items of \$50 or less per item commonly used by a student in a course of study will be exempt. Supplies may include art supplies, reference maps and globes, textbooks on an official school book list with a sales price of more than \$30 but less than \$50, and books with a sales price of \$30 or less per book. An all-inclusive list of exempt school supplies may be found on the City's web site at www.auburnalabama.org.

Items not exempt during the Sales Tax Holiday Weekend include:

- Clothing accessories such as handbags, jewelry, sunglasses, umbrellas.
- Protective equipment such as breathing masks, hard hats, helmets, and safety belts.
- Sports or recreational equipment such as athletic gloves, goggles, shin guards, ballet or tap shoes.
- Furniture, any systems, devices, software, or peripherals designed or intended primarily for recreational use, video games.
- Magazines, newspapers, periodicals, or any other document printed or offered for sale in a non-bound form.

For more information, please contact the City of Auburn's Revenue Office at 501-7224 or go online to www.auburnalabama.org to find an all-inclusive list of taxable and tax exempt items.

Board Vacancies

Two vacancies on the **Greenspace Advisory Board** were announced at the July 1, 2014 meeting and will be filled at the August 5, 2014 City Council meeting.

One vacancy on the Board of Directors of the **Lee County Youth Development Center** will be announced at the August 19, 2014 meeting and will be filled at the September 16, 2014 City Council meeting

Citizens interested in serving are encouraged to contact their City Council member or notify the City Manager's Office.



Free Downtown Parking

Downtown parking will be free between Auburn University's Summer Graduation and the beginning of Fall semester: Monday August 4th through Friday, August 15th. Take advantage of free downtown parking to shop and dine in downtown Auburn. ShopAuburn and help keep tax dollars local.

50+ Aged to Perfection Expo

Auburn Parks and Recreation and the Opelika-Auburn News will host the 50+ Aged to Perfection Expo on Saturday, Aug. 2 from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. at the Harris Center. This FREE community event is targeted to adults ages 50+ and includes a full roster of speakers on a variety of topics, as well as vendors offering many different products, samples, and giveaways. Whether you're looking for a hobby or hoping to find out more on 50+ living, this is the expo for you! For more information, visit www.auburnalabama.org/parks or contact Auburn Parks and Recreation at 501-2930.

MEETING SCHEDULE AUGUST

- 1 Tree Commission**, 11:30 a.m., Chamber of Commerce Conference Room, 714 East Glenn Avenue
- 4 Cemeteries Advisory Board**, 4 p.m., Harris Center, 425 Perry Street
- 5 Parks & Recreation Advisory Board**, 5:15 p.m., Harris Center, 425 Perry Street
- Committee of the Whole**, 6:55 p.m., Council Chamber, 141 North Ross Street
- City Council**, 7 p.m., Council Chamber, 141 North Ross Street
- 6 Board of Zoning Adjustment**, 4:30 p.m., Council Chamber, 141 North Ross Street
- 12 Greenspace Advisory Board**, Noon, Harris Center, 425 Perry Street
- Historic Preservation Commission**, 4 p.m., Library Board Room, 749 East Thach Avenue
- Board of Education**, 6 p.m., AHS Multi-Media Room, 405 South Dean Road
- 14 Planning Commission**, 5 p.m., Council Chamber, 141 North Ross Street
- 19 Committee of the Whole**, 6:55 p.m., Council Chamber, 141 North Ross Street
- City Council**, 7 p.m., Council Chamber, 141 North Ross Street
- 21 Water Works Board**, 4 p.m., Water Board Conference Room, 1501 West Samford Avenue

Meeting times and places are subject to change.

For more information, including a map of City meeting locations, please visit www.auburnalabama.org/boards.

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Auburn City Schools
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Open Line Feedback

Do you have any suggestions, feedback, or story ideas that you would like to share?

If so, please contact us at openline@auburnalabama.org or call 501-7266.

up COMING EVENTS

Due to space considerations, we are unable to publicize any events that are not directly affiliated with a City department.

Auburn Public Library For more information, contact Auburn Public Library's Youth Services at 501-3196.

WEEKLY PROGRAMS

Baby Time - Tuesdays at 10 a.m. & 1:00p.m. for ages birth – 18 months and their caregivers.

Toddler Time - Wednesdays at 10 a.m. & 1:00p.m. for ages 18 months - 3 years and their caregivers.

Preschool Time - Thursdays at 10 a.m. & 1:00p.m. for preschoolers ages 3 - 5 years and their caregivers.

Legomania – Join us every Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. for “free play” with Legos®.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

LitWits Reading Club Tuesdays 7/8 & 7/22 @ 3:30p.m. for ages 13 and up. For more information call Youth Services, 501-3196.

SHOUT! Thursdays @ 3:30 for rising grades 5 - 7

Teen Café, Thursdays @ 6:30 for rising grades 8 - 12

Salmagundi, Wednesdays @ 2:00 for rising grades K – 5

Batman Day, Saturday, 7/26 – join us to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Caped Crusader with crafts, activities, and more! For more information call Youth Services, 501-3196.

Computer Classes for Beginners – If you'd like to learn about the basics of how to use your computer, the Auburn Public Library wants to help! Each class begins 10:00 am and lasts approximately 90 minutes. Space is limited, so call our Electronic Services division at (334) 501-3194 to register.

August 7 - Computers 101 - Learn how to use a mouse and navigate in Windows. (Designed for people new to personal computing.)

August 14 - Internet 101 - Learn about navigating the World Wide Web and using Google to find information. (Designed for people who are new to the Internet.)

August 21 - Email 101 - Set up your own free email account and learn to send and receive email messages. (Designed for people who have never used email.)

August 28 - Computers 102 - Learn how to perform common tasks in Windows 7 such as creating, deleting and renaming folders and files. (Designed for people with basic computer experience.)

By appointment only! Windows 8 Computer Skills - Learn how to use Windows 8 apps and charms and how to personalize the start screen. This one-on-one session is for beginners who own or who are thinking about purchasing a Windows 8 computer.

Parks and Recreation

Fall Sports Registration – Registration for fall sports and programs is going on now. Auburn Parks and Recreation offers a variety of fall sports, including baseball, cheerleading, football (tackle and flag), soccer, and softball. For more information, including registration details, visit www.auburnalabama.org/athletics or contact Auburn Parks and Recreation at 501-2930.

July 15 - 31: Register for fall baseball instructional league at the Harris Center

July 14 – Aug. 9: Register for fall baseball and softball online at www.auburnalabama.org/baseball. Register for flag and tackle football online at www.auburnalabama.org/football. Register for cheerleading online at www.auburnalabama.org/athletics.

July 21 - Aug. 6: Register online for fall soccer at www.auburnalabama.org/soccer.

July 21 - Aug. 22: Register online for fall lacrosse at www.auburnyouthlax.com.

Aug. 6: Walk-in registration for fall soccer from 6 - 7 p.m. at the Auburn Soccer Complex.

Aug. 7: Walk-in registration for fall baseball, softball, and flag football from 6 – 7 p.m. at the Dean Road Recreation Center.

Aug. 9: Walk-in registration for tackle football from 10 a.m. – noon at the Dean Road Recreation Center.

Aug. 21: Walk-in registration for fall lacrosse at the Harris Center from 6 - 7 p.m.

5th Annual Farewell Summer Block Party and Outdoor Movie at Town Creek Park Sponsored by Chick-fil-A Magnolia Avenue - If we have to say so long to summer, we're going to do it in style! Join Auburn Parks and Recreation for the 5th Annual Farewell Summer Block Party and Outdoor Movie, sponsored by Chick-fil-A Magnolia Avenue, on Friday, Aug. 1 at Town Creek Park at 6 p.m. This FREE community event has become an end of summer tradition and now features a FREE outdoor movie! Come for the live music and sales tax holiday weekend specials and stay for a showing of the “The Blind Side!” Purchase food on-site from Chick-fil-A Magnolia Avenue and be one of the first 150 individuals or families in attendance to receive a FREE goody bag full of coupons and specials for the sales tax holiday weekend. For more information, please visit www.auburnalabama.org/parks or contact Auburn Parks and Recreation at 501-2930.

Aug. 22...End of Summer Luau - Cool off from the summer heat, celebrate the last lazy days of summer, and close your eyes and imagine the tropical fun of the Hawaiian Islands. Join the staff from the Auburn City Pools for the End of Summer Luau at Samford Pool on Friday, Aug. 22 from 6 - 8 p.m. Admission is FREE with a 2014 Splash Pass or \$2/person.

