

# Open Line

## A Monthly Newsletter for City of Auburn Citizens

December 2020

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**Open Line** is produced  
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City of Auburn

### City Manager retiring after 25 years of service



**James C. Buston III**

After 25 years of service to Auburn and its residents, Auburn City Manager James C. Buston III will retire on Jan. 31, 2021.

In his early career, Buston served as a Peace Corps volunteer and was the U.S. Technical Advisor for Latin American Affairs in Honduras. He obtained a master of science degree from Auburn University before serving 13 years in the private sector as vice president in charge of software development for the New York-based Intermark Corporation and later as technology group chairman for the Tennessee-based R.U.R. Group.

Buston joined the City of Auburn in 1996 to create its Information Technology Department. He later served in the dual role of assistant city manager and chief information officer for 11 years. During this time, he graduated from the Senior Executives in State and Local Government program at Harvard University's

John F. Kennedy School of Government. Buston was appointed city manager in 2017.

During Buston's tenure as city manager, over 1,150 new jobs were announced in Auburn's industrial sector, and seven new companies located in Auburn. Another 32 Auburn companies expanded their existing operations.

In the most recent citizen survey, residents rated their satisfaction with the "value received for tax dollars and fees" 38 points above the national average. The City's customer service also received high marks with 74% of residents surveyed satisfied with the quality of the City's customer service, putting Auburn 32 points above the national average. A graduate of the Leading, Educating and Developing (LEAD) program through the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service of the University of Virginia, Buston has demonstrated a commitment to LEAD's principles that empower city employees to better serve the public.

With better customer and city services in mind, Buston streamlined city operations in 2018 by reorganizing city departments into business units based on the services they provide. This reorganization enhanced teamwork and communication throughout the organization by coordinating departments and programs to improve growth management, customer service, the City's efficiency, the community's appearance and the quality of city infrastructure. These goals are reflected in the biennial budgets Buston presented to the City Council, providing \$53.9 million in capital projects while maintaining a comfortable ending fund balance of over 25% and keeping personnel costs below 50%.

"I'm beyond thankful that Jim was here to provide a steady hand of experience at a time when we had a new Mayor, six new Council members and three key retirements of long-serving department heads. I will miss his counsel," said Auburn Mayor Ron Anders. "The

*Continued on Page 2...*

## City Manager retiring after 25 years of service, continued.

City of Auburn is better for his years of dedication to providing the best quality city services possible."

In 2020, Buston guided city operations through unprecedented challenges. As the COVID-19 pandemic changed life in Auburn and throughout the world, he provided policy research and recommendations to the Auburn City Council and oversaw a workforce of more than 800 employees. In that time, he led the City's management team through the biennial budget process, providing support and recommendations to ensure the City's continued financial stability through uncertain times. Through it all, Buston maintained a commitment to the safety and wellbeing of residents and city employees as well as the continued provision of quality city services.

"The City of Auburn's employees form a strong, high-performing organization with a well-deserved reputation for outstanding achievement, and I was honored to lead some of the finest and most dedicated public servants in the nation," Buston said. "My time here has been a wonderful journey, and I hope to have made a meaningful contribution to making Auburn a better place for all who live, work, visit and study here."

## 2020 Jingle Jog

Join Active Auburn for the merriest race of them all. The 2020 Jingle Jog will begin at 7 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 19, at Toomer's Corner. Wear your ugliest holiday sweater to add to the fun. Registration for the race is open at [auburnalabama.org/parks/register](http://auburnalabama.org/parks/register).

Early bird registration is \$20 and will end Nov. 23. Regular registration is \$25 and will continue through Dec. 14. To be guaranteed a T-shirt, participants must register by Monday, Nov. 30. There will be NO day-of race registration.

\*COVID-19 note: Participants will be required to sign a COVID-19 waiver prior to race day. A mask is required prior to race start. Six feet between each runner will be marked for starting waves. There will be no race day award ceremony, and no spectators will be allowed at the finish line.

For more information, visit [auburnalabama.org/parks/programs/active-auburn](http://auburnalabama.org/parks/programs/active-auburn).



## Holiday Schedules

City Hall and most City facilities will be closed on Thursday and Friday, Dec. 24-25, in observance of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day and Friday, Jan. 1, in observance of New Year's Day. Public Safety services including police, fire and communications will remain on their regular schedules. There will be no changes to the garbage, trash and recycling pickup schedules during these weeks.

The Auburn Public Library will close at 6 p.m. on Dec. 24 and 31 and will be closed on Dec. 25 and Jan. 1. Book drops will remain open, and the online collection of e-books, e-audiobooks and digital magazines are always available. Parks and Recreation facility hours will be adjusted during the holidays, so keep an eye on [auburnalabama.org](http://auburnalabama.org) for more details.



## Business license renewals

Any business providing services or selling goods within Auburn city limits, including a home-based business, is required to have a City of Auburn business license. City business licenses for 2020 expire on Dec. 31 and must be renewed by Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2021, to avoid late fees.

All current business license holders will receive renewal packets in late December. Any business that does not receive its renewal packet by Dec. 31 should contact the Revenue Office to verify its mailing address and request another packet. The City Revenue Office is located in City Hall at 144 Tichenor Ave. Business hours are Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. except City holidays. For more information, visit [auburnalabama.org/revenue/business-licenses](http://auburnalabama.org/revenue/business-licenses) or contact the Revenue Office at (334) 501-7239 or [revenue@auburnalabama.org](mailto:revenue@auburnalabama.org).

## Author talk: Jess Michaels

Calling all writers! The Auburn Public Library is pleased to host bestselling author Jess Michaels, who has written more than 80 historical romance novels. She will give a talk called "Write Like You Mean It: How to Write Like a Full-Time Writer, Even If You Can't Write Full-Time."

The event will be held via Zoom on Wednesday, Dec. 2, at 5 p.m. To register, check out the Auburn Public Library's calendar at [auburnalabama.org/library/events-and-programs](http://auburnalabama.org/library/events-and-programs) or email [libraryevents@auburnalabama.org](mailto:libraryevents@auburnalabama.org).

## Holiday Recycling Tips

As you clean up after this holiday season, keep in mind the many ways the City of Auburn can help you make less of an impact on our environment.

1. Recycling your Christmas tree is as easy as placing it at the curb. The City of Auburn Environmental Services Department will collect and recycle Christmas trees during customers' weekly curbside collections.
2. Don't forget to recycle the boxes from your gifts this holiday season. Cardboard boxes and gift boxes are included in our curbside recycling program and may be recycled at the Recycling Drop-Off Center at 365-A N. Donahue Drive. Please break down all boxes before placing them for recycling.
3. Before frying or baking those hams and turkeys, pick up a free container from the Recycling Drop-Off Center to recycle the used cooking oil rather than pouring it down the drain. Though it may seem harmless, letting grease and cooking oil run down the drain is the main cause of sewer back-ups. Instead, simply pour any used, cooled cooking oil into a leak-proof container and bring it to the Drop-off Center or place it by the curb for recycling. To schedule a free, curbside grease recycling pickup, call the Water Resource Management Department at (334) 501-3069.



## Taking a look back at student housing regulations

Student housing in downtown Auburn has been a topic of conversation within the community for years. For more than a decade, City planning efforts have prioritized the regulation of the development of student housing, from more specifically defining it and steering it out of protected areas, to now working to create new design standards and updated zoning laws.

We've compiled a timeline to explore how regulations on student housing have developed over the years and to take a look at what's to come. Visit [auburnalabama.org/facts](http://auburnalabama.org/facts) to see an overview of the changes over the years. You can also subscribe to the City's eNotifier to stay informed of future work sessions, public hearings and other updates. Register at [auburnalabama.org/eNotifier](http://auburnalabama.org/eNotifier).

## Picking up pet waste: Do your part!

Pet waste may seem harmless, like compost, but it actually has an impact on Auburn's waterways. Stormwater runoff may pick up animal waste if left on the ground and wash it into the City's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4), untreated, which means that it ends up polluting our local waterbodies like Town Creek, Parkerson Creek, Moores Mill Creek and Saughatchee Creek.

Animal waste contaminates water by carrying bacteria (E. Coli), viruses and parasites that threaten the health of humans and wildlife. Animal waste also contains nutrients that can feed algae, leading to uncolorful and cloudy water. As the increased algae decays, it reduces the oxygen level within the water and harms aquatic life. You can help prevent this by picking up and properly disposing of pet waste. Let's protect our blueways, Auburn—don't pollute!

Here are some ways to dispose of pet waste that can help keep our waterbodies clean:

### DO:

- Carry plastic bags when taking your pet for a walk, run or a stroll in the park.
- Pick up your pet's waste using a plastic bag, scoop or disposable gloves. Seal the waste inside a plastic bag (or two) and throw it in the garbage. Remember to wash your hands afterward.
- Pick up after your pet in your yard every few days or more often if you have small children who play there.
- Utilize pet waste stations located at dog parks, apartment complexes or within neighborhoods.
- Bury pet waste in your yard at least 12 inches deep and cover with at least eight inches of soil to let it decompose slowly. Bury the waste in several different locations and keep it away from vegetable gardens.
- Communicate to others how easy and important it is to protect our waterways by picking up after our pets. Let's all do our part!

### DON'T:

- Don't leave pet waste on the curb or neighbor's lawn, and don't throw pet waste down a storm drain or into a stream.

For more information on the City's Stormwater Program, please contact the City's Watershed Division at 334-501-3060 or [webwtrswr@auburnalabama.org](mailto:webwtrswr@auburnalabama.org).





# DECEMBER UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Programs and events are subject to change. Please visit [auburnalabama.org](http://auburnalabama.org) for up-to-date information on program and event cancellations.

**Auburn Public Library**  
[auburnalabama.org/library](http://auburnalabama.org/library)  
 (334) 501-3198

**City Meetings Schedule**  
[auburnalabama.org](http://auburnalabama.org)  
 (334) 501-7268

**Parks and Recreation**  
[auburnalabama.org/parks](http://auburnalabama.org/parks)  
 (334) 501-2930

<p><b>1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Parks &amp; Recreation Advisory Board 11:45 a.m.</li> <li>Adding Class - Design Your Own Business Cards 5 p.m.</li> <li>Committee of the Whole (RD) 7 p.m.</li> <li>City Council 7 p.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Board of Zoning Adjustment 4:30 p.m.</li> <li>USA Today Bestselling Author Jos McInnes 5 p.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Puppet Show 10:30 a.m. &amp; 3:30 p.m.</li> <li>Tree Commission 11:30 a.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning Commission Packet Meeting 11 a.m.</li> <li>Comentary Advisory Board 4 p.m.</li> <li>Word 4 Meeting 5:30 p.m.</li> <li>Daddy Daughter Date Night Themed Boats Co On Sale</li> </ul>	<p><b>7</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Historic Preservation Commission 4 p.m.</li> <li>Starting a Business in Lee County 2 p.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>8</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Historic Preservation Commission 4 p.m.</li> <li>Starting a Business in Lee County 2 p.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>9</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Planning Commission 5 p.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>10</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> </ul>
<p><b>11</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Puppet Show 10:30 a.m. &amp; 3:30 p.m.</li> <li>City Council Agenda Review 4 p.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>12</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Every Child Ready to Read 4 p.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>13</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>14</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Greenspace Advisory Board 11 a.m.</li> <li>Library Board 3 p.m.</li> <li>Reader's Review Adult Book Club 2 p.m.</li> <li>Committee of the Whole (RD) 7 p.m.</li> <li>City Council 7 p.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>15</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Greenspace Advisory Board 11 a.m.</li> <li>Library Board 3 p.m.</li> <li>Reader's Review Adult Book Club 2 p.m.</li> <li>Committee of the Whole (RD) 7 p.m.</li> <li>City Council 7 p.m.</li> </ul>
<p><b>16</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Greenspace Advisory Board 11 a.m.</li> <li>Library Board 3 p.m.</li> <li>Reader's Review Adult Book Club 2 p.m.</li> <li>Committee of the Whole (RD) 7 p.m.</li> <li>City Council 7 p.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>17</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Greenspace Advisory Board 11 a.m.</li> <li>Library Board 3 p.m.</li> <li>Reader's Review Adult Book Club 2 p.m.</li> <li>Committee of the Whole (RD) 7 p.m.</li> <li>City Council 7 p.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>18</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Greenspace Advisory Board 11 a.m.</li> <li>Library Board 3 p.m.</li> <li>Reader's Review Adult Book Club 2 p.m.</li> <li>Committee of the Whole (RD) 7 p.m.</li> <li>City Council 7 p.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>19</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Greenspace Advisory Board 11 a.m.</li> <li>Library Board 3 p.m.</li> <li>Reader's Review Adult Book Club 2 p.m.</li> <li>Committee of the Whole (RD) 7 p.m.</li> <li>City Council 7 p.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>20</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Greenspace Advisory Board 11 a.m.</li> <li>Library Board 3 p.m.</li> <li>Reader's Review Adult Book Club 2 p.m.</li> <li>Committee of the Whole (RD) 7 p.m.</li> <li>City Council 7 p.m.</li> </ul>
<p><b>21</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Greenspace Advisory Board 11 a.m.</li> <li>Library Board 3 p.m.</li> <li>Reader's Review Adult Book Club 2 p.m.</li> <li>Committee of the Whole (RD) 7 p.m.</li> <li>City Council 7 p.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>22</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Greenspace Advisory Board 11 a.m.</li> <li>Library Board 3 p.m.</li> <li>Reader's Review Adult Book Club 2 p.m.</li> <li>Committee of the Whole (RD) 7 p.m.</li> <li>City Council 7 p.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>23</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Greenspace Advisory Board 11 a.m.</li> <li>Library Board 3 p.m.</li> <li>Reader's Review Adult Book Club 2 p.m.</li> <li>Committee of the Whole (RD) 7 p.m.</li> <li>City Council 7 p.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>24</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Greenspace Advisory Board 11 a.m.</li> <li>Library Board 3 p.m.</li> <li>Reader's Review Adult Book Club 2 p.m.</li> <li>Committee of the Whole (RD) 7 p.m.</li> <li>City Council 7 p.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>25</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Greenspace Advisory Board 11 a.m.</li> <li>Library Board 3 p.m.</li> <li>Reader's Review Adult Book Club 2 p.m.</li> <li>Committee of the Whole (RD) 7 p.m.</li> <li>City Council 7 p.m.</li> </ul>
<p><b>26</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Greenspace Advisory Board 11 a.m.</li> <li>Library Board 3 p.m.</li> <li>Reader's Review Adult Book Club 2 p.m.</li> <li>Committee of the Whole (RD) 7 p.m.</li> <li>City Council 7 p.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>27</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Greenspace Advisory Board 11 a.m.</li> <li>Library Board 3 p.m.</li> <li>Reader's Review Adult Book Club 2 p.m.</li> <li>Committee of the Whole (RD) 7 p.m.</li> <li>City Council 7 p.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>28</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Greenspace Advisory Board 11 a.m.</li> <li>Library Board 3 p.m.</li> <li>Reader's Review Adult Book Club 2 p.m.</li> <li>Committee of the Whole (RD) 7 p.m.</li> <li>City Council 7 p.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>29</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Greenspace Advisory Board 11 a.m.</li> <li>Library Board 3 p.m.</li> <li>Reader's Review Adult Book Club 2 p.m.</li> <li>Committee of the Whole (RD) 7 p.m.</li> <li>City Council 7 p.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>30</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Greenspace Advisory Board 11 a.m.</li> <li>Library Board 3 p.m.</li> <li>Reader's Review Adult Book Club 2 p.m.</li> <li>Committee of the Whole (RD) 7 p.m.</li> <li>City Council 7 p.m.</li> </ul>
<p><b>31</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Greenspace Advisory Board 11 a.m.</li> <li>Library Board 3 p.m.</li> <li>Reader's Review Adult Book Club 2 p.m.</li> <li>Committee of the Whole (RD) 7 p.m.</li> <li>City Council 7 p.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>32</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Greenspace Advisory Board 11 a.m.</li> <li>Library Board 3 p.m.</li> <li>Reader's Review Adult Book Club 2 p.m.</li> <li>Committee of the Whole (RD) 7 p.m.</li> <li>City Council 7 p.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>33</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Greenspace Advisory Board 11 a.m.</li> <li>Library Board 3 p.m.</li> <li>Reader's Review Adult Book Club 2 p.m.</li> <li>Committee of the Whole (RD) 7 p.m.</li> <li>City Council 7 p.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>34</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Greenspace Advisory Board 11 a.m.</li> <li>Library Board 3 p.m.</li> <li>Reader's Review Adult Book Club 2 p.m.</li> <li>Committee of the Whole (RD) 7 p.m.</li> <li>City Council 7 p.m.</li> </ul>	<p><b>35</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story Time in the Outdoor Classroom 9:30 a.m.</li> <li>Virtual Story Time 10:30 a.m.</li> <li>Greenspace Advisory Board 11 a.m.</li> <li>Library Board 3 p.m.</li> <li>Reader's Review Adult Book Club 2 p.m.</li> <li>Committee of the Whole (RD) 7 p.m.</li> <li>City Council 7 p.m.</li> </ul>



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