



CITY OF ST. MARYS, GEORGIA

BUDGET WORKSHOP

4:00 p.m.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING

September 8, 2008

6:00 p.m.

AGENDA

I. **CALL TO ORDER**

II. **INVOCATION:** *Councilmember Greg Bird*

III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

IV. **ROLL CALL**

QUORUM: YES **NO**

V. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** *August 25, 2008 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes*
August 25, 2008 Public Hearing Minutes

PRESENTATION:

PROCLAMATION: *Military Order of the Purple Hearts Month*

CAMDEN COUNTY HEALTH BOARD: *Appointment*

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION: *Appointment*

NESTOR TRAFFIC SYSTEMS: *Rick Ledford, Regional Sales Manager*

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY REPORT: *Craig Root, Chairman*

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

VI. **GRANTING AUDIENCE TO THE PUBLIC:**

VII. **OLD BUSINESS:** *NONE*

VIII. **NEW BUSINESS:**

A. **2008 MILLAGE RATE:** *Advertisement of the Five-Year Tax History.....TAB "A"*

B. **REQUEST FOR PROPERTY COMMITTEE REVIEW:**.....TAB "B"
Proposed Agreement for Weed Street Pole

C. **REQUEST FOR PROPERTY COMMITTEE REVIEW:**.....TAB “C”
Placement of Pavement Marking on the Designated Bicycle Routes

D. **BIOLOGICAL MONITORING:**.....TAB “D”

IX. **REPORT OF AUTHORITIES, BOARDS, COMMISSIONS & COMMITTEES:** *NONE*

X. **REPORT OF MAYOR:**

XI **REPORT OF CITY MANAGER:**

XII. **GRANTING AUDIENCE TO THE PUBLIC**

XIII. **EXECUTIVE SESSION:** *Personnel & Legal*

XIV. **ADJOURNMENT:**

CITY OF ST. MARYS, GEORGIA
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
September 8, 2008
6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

The Mayor and City Council for the City of St. Marys, Georgia met for its regular City Council session on Monday, September 8, 2008 in the Council Chamber at City Hall.

PRESENT WERE:

Mayor Rowland Eskridge
Councilmember Greg Bird
Councilmember William DeLoughy
Councilmember Deborah Hase
Councilmember Larry Johnson
Councilmember Chuck Trader
Councilmember Gull Weaver

CITY OFFICIALS PRESENT:

William Shanahan, City Manager
Max Tinsley, Asst. City Manager
Amanda Blackledge, City Attorney
Roger Weaver, Planning Director
Wiley King, Building Director
Tim Hatch, Police Chief
Bobby Marr, Public Works Director
Chad Kinzey, Asst. Public Works Director
Robby Horton, Fire Chief
Tom Lackner, Asst. Fire Chief
Jennifer Brown, Finance Director
Marsha Hershberger, Asst. Finance Director
Kim Dockery, Staff Accountant
Donna Folsom, HR Director
Alyce Thornhill, Economic Dev. Director
Janet Brinko, Tourism Director
Kathy Johnson, Deputy Clerk
Shavon Gibbs, Court Administrator
Rindy Howell, Sr. Center Coordinator
Nicole Goebel, IT Assistant
Bilal Muhammad, City Marshal
Richard Riggle, Sergeant-At-Arms

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Eskridge called the City Council Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Councilmember Bird gave the invocation. Mayor Eskridge led the audience in the pledge of allegiance. Council roll call indicated a quorum of council members present for the meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

August 25, 2008 Regular City Council Meeting Minutes

Councilmember Weaver made a motion to approve the August 25, 2008 regular City Council meeting minutes as presented. Councilmember DeLoughy seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous in favor of the motion.

August 25, 2008 Public Hearing Minutes

Councilmember Weaver made a motion to approve the August 25, 2008 Public Hearing minutes as presented. Councilmember DeLoughy seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous in favor of the motion.

PRESENTATION:

PROCLAMATION: *Military Order of the Purple Heart Month*

Mayor Eskridge proclaimed the month of September 2008 as “*Military Order of the Purple Heart Month*” and urged all St. Marys’ to support the Purple Heart recipients by remembering and supporting our Veterans.

CAMDEN COUNTY HEALTH BOARD: *Appointment*

Mayor Eskridge stated that William Sloan has expressed an interest in the Camden County Health Board appointment.

Councilmember Weaver made a motion to appoint William Sloan to the Camden County Health Board. Councilmember Hase seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous in favor of the motion.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION: *Appointment*

Mayor Eskridge stated that Kris Roth and Verna (Jeanie) Shugart have expressed an interest in the Historic Preservation Commission appointment.

Councilmember Johnson made a motion to appoint Kris Roth to the Historic Preservation Commission. Councilmember Trader seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous in favor of the motion.

NESTOR TRAFFIC SYSTEMS: *Rick Ledford, Regional Sales Manager*

Mr. Ledford presented a PowerPoint presentation on Nestor Traffic Systems program for mobile speed enforcement, fixed speed enforcement, red light enforcement and collision avoidance. The System provides video evidence for violations and convictions, at no net cost to the City.

RECESS

Mayor Eskridge called a short recess at 6:35 p.m., calling the meeting back to order at 6:40p.m.

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY REPORT: *Craig Root, Chairman*

Mr. Root presented the annual St. Marys Downtown Development Authority report on activities, events, accomplishments and meetings held in the Economic Development building. He also recognized the authority's founding member; the late Diane McCoy for her leadership, commitment and accomplishments to organize the revitalization of downtown. In her honor, "The Diane McCoy Downtown Revolving Loan Fund" was established this year. The fund provides \$470,000 from the Employment Incentive Program (EIP) Grant to expand the GEM Plant. As monies are paid back to the DDA it will be available for other projects. Mr. Root also reported on an increase in economic development with 26 new businesses downtown but 17 previously established businesses closed. Out of the nine (9) net increase, two were restaurants. The Downtown Concierge Program contacted 1,000 visitors in the area with 700 directed into local businesses. In closing, Mr. Root thanked all the volunteers for their contributions and the mayor and council for funding. A copy of the annual report is attached as part of the minutes.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Councilmember DeLoughy made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Councilmember Weaver seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous in favor of the motion.

GRANTING AUDIENCE TO THE PUBLIC:

Stuart Sullivan, resident spoke in support of a tax increase to keep the current employees and services in public safety. Mutual aid will not protect the citizens of St. Marys.

Carl Lewis, resident and volunteer firefighter spoke about a recent fire in his home while he was out of state and the fire department's response to protect the safety of his family. Mr. Lewis also spoke in opposition of cutting public safety and his willingness to pay extra taxes.

Shavon Gibbs, resident spoke in support of the fire, police and public works departments and a tax increase. She also requested a list of which cuts would be made to support the departments.

Ed McCoy, resident spoke in support of the fire and police departments and an increase in taxes.

John Morrissey, resident commented that he heard the City's methods to balancing a budget, alternatives, changes to the millage rate, productions and people. But what was not heard is a strong message that it is a structural problem in the long term. When the solution is designed, how the long term structural problem would be solved is important for a permanent fix that supports the future.

Helen Dean, resident spoke in opposition of cutting the budget at the expense of the police and fire services by creating problem later. Ms. Deans recommended evaluating every department before cutting positions and/or services; bring more businesses to St. Marys that generate revenues and increase taxes, if necessary.

Robert Arnt, resident expressed concerns about using other entities for public safety and supports paying more taxes in order to keep public safety in St. Marys.

Patty Jackson, resident urged Council to visit the fire station to see what the assistant fire chief does and how many hours that are put in above and beyond what is required. Ms. Jackson also spoke in opposition of cutting the fire, rescue and police department.

Carl Lewis, firefighter commented that a firefighter gets paid for working 24 hours and for what they know. He also spoke about the maintenance and cleaning of the equipment and facilities which is the sole responsibility of the fire fighters.

Shane Barberly, resident spoke about public safety's role during the storms to assure the safety of St. Marys' citizens, which the cuts would not provide. He is willing to pay more in taxes than to pay the higher homeowner insurance rates that an increased ISO rating would bring.

Dave Schmitz, resident spoke about the effects on Floridians when taxes were reduced by not having money to get things done. He supports an increase in taxes and opposes cutting public safety. Mr. Schmitz also expressed concerns about yard waste not being picked up once a week as stated in the contract but being picked up once a month.

Sidney Howell, resident stated that the City should have continued to provide solid waste and yard waste services because when the City picked up yard waste the area was raked and he never had to wait a month before the garbage was picked up.

Cookie Johnson, resident commented that the point is well stated that sometimes we move too quickly and emotionally instead taking everything in. She believes that the majority of people will tell you that they support recycling 100%. When Council voted for the solid waste contract this is the service we get, for example, who is cleaning up the extra debris from Fay?, city employees.

Dave Shepler, district manager for Advance Disposal stated that yard debris was cleaned up when they took over the contract. Storm debris is not included in the contract and is usually subcontracted out at additional costs for the service. The service area was divided into a grid system to work through each area. Unfortunately, some of the debris from the first storm was not picked up when the second storm came through and Advance could not run for two days. But with the help of public works, he assured residents and council members that they would get it cleaned up as soon as possible.

Councilmember's discussed areas with storm and yard debris, continual problems from the beginning of the contract and the possibility of controlling the debris in containers.

William Sloan, resident spoke about families who live on his block, that pile debris on open lots because they do not want it sitting in front of their homes for weeks. Since it was not in front of a residence, it does not get picked up. Recently, it did get picked up compliments of the City of St. Marys. Advance is not removing the storm debris. It is getting done by the City's employees with only two trucks and more efficiently. Mr. Sloan also spoke in opposition of

cutting fire and police because it will not keep the citizens safe if we need to rely on the County and Kingsland.

Marvin Thomas, general manager Advance Disposal stated that a number of employees do live in St. Marys and the County. Mr. Thomas agrees that some areas need to be improved and the increased scope of work should have been looked at. He has heard all the concerns and the problems will be solved.

Billy Walker, resident spoke in support of the fire and police departments. He also spoke about an incident at his own home when his family could not be reached. The assistant fire chief went above and beyond by checking on the problem at someone else's house.

Bill Dawson, resident spoke in support of an increase in taxes because the police and fire department are needed as our first responders in the city. A growing community brings more crime. Will the citizens be putting their own fires out?

Leon Pinkney, resident does not support cuts in the fire, police, rescue or any department because the jobs will not get done.

OLD BUSINESS:

There was no "Old Business" for Council consideration at this time.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. 2008 MILLAGE RATE: *Advertisement of the Five-Year Tax History*

The City Manager stated that approval is needed to set the proposed 2008 millage rate and advertisement based on the Budget Workshop recommendation.

Councilmember Hase moved to advertise a millage rate of 5.6 mills, and direct the City Manager to reduce the budget and begin by implementing proposal number three (3) of his budget proposals, with no reduction in services. For the record, proposal number three (3) includes not filling the unfilled positions in the budget with the exception of the three (3) police and three (3) firemen positions, and eliminating the department assistants; and with the understanding that the City Manager will also conduct an internal analysis of the departments to see where other budget cuts may be realized by reorganization or other means. Councilmember Johnson seconded the motion.

Councilmember's discussed reviewing the structure of each department by performing an in depth study before removing assistants, cutting more from supplies, strains of new assessments and lowering or increasing the millage rate. Following much discussion, Councilmember Weaver amended the motion to implement option number one (1) with the 18 unfilled positions and number two (2) with the return of three (3) police and three (3) fire positions. The amended motion failed for lack of seconded.

Councilmember's continued discussions on the millage rate, taxes, personnel and services. Following much discussion, Councilmember Hase withdrew the original

motion by amending it to advertise for setting the millage rate at 5.6 mills. Councilmember Johnson withdrew the original motion and seconded the amended motion.

Councilmember's discussed the effects the millage rate would have on the budget and newly assessed property. Voting was recorded as follows:

FOR

Councilmember Hase
Councilmember Johnson

OPPOSED

Councilmember Bird
Councilmember DeLoughy
Councilmember Trader
Councilmember Weaver

Councilmember Trader moved to advertise at 6.1 percent. Councilmember Weaver seconded the motion. Councilmember Bird spoke in opposition of an increase in taxes because of the recession. Voting was recorded as follows:

FOR

Councilmember DeLoughy
Councilmember Trader
Councilmember Weaver

OPPOSED

Councilmember Bird
Councilmember Hase
Councilmember Johnson
Mayor Eskridge

Councilmember Bird made a motion to revisit 5.6 for advertising purposes. Councilmember Hase seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous in favor of the motion.

B. REQUEST FOR PROPERTY COMMITTEE REVIEW:

Proposed Agreement for Weed Street Pole

The City Manager recommended discussing the proposed contract prepared by Mr. Charles Smith representing Alltel for an existing TDS pole located in the Weed Street row at the Weed Street Waste Water Treatment Plant. Options should be reviewed by the Property Committee because of the property's future when the plant is closed and a possible revenue source.

Councilmember Weaver, Chairperson stated that a committee meeting should be called anytime and not necessarily be brought to Council because it wastes time when business cannot be taken care of for weeks. The City Manager stated that this was the normal practice until January, when there was confusion on how Council wanted it handled. Councilmember's agreed that a committee meeting could be called to take care of business as long as it was advertised and all Council Members were notified.

Councilmember Weaver scheduled a Property Committee meeting on September 15, 2008 at 5:00 p.m. and Ethics Committee meeting at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber at City Hall.

The City Manager reiterated that the chairman of every committee could call a committee meeting. The City Attorney stated that she would need to research the City's ordinance first on whether it must come to council before going to committee. Mayor Eskridge stated that the committee makes a recommendation to Council but if there is none, it dies.

B. REQUEST FOR PROPERTY COMMITTEE REVIEW: *Placement of Pavement Marking on The Designated Bicycle Routes*

This item was added to the Property Committee agenda.

C. BIOLOGICAL MONITORING:

The City Manager recommended approval to award the watershed protection plan biological monitoring project to Environmental Services, Inc. in the amount of \$9,100.00. As part of the long term monitoring portion of the watershed protection plans, the City must conduct biological monitoring of fish and macro invertebrates within the watershed at identified points. In order to perform these tests, a state license is required. Therefore, requests for bids were sent out and three companies responded. The three companies and their bids were as follows:

Environmental Services, Inc.	\$9,100
Ecological Solutions, Inc.	\$15,150
JJG, Inc.	\$17,500

All three companies possess the necessary licenses to perform the work as well as experienced personnel. Therefore, the Public Works Department recommends that the low bid from Environmental Services, Inc. be accepted.

Councilmember Weaver made a motion to approve the biological monitoring project to Environmental Services, Inc. Councilmember DeLoughy seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous in favor of the motion.

REPORT OF AUTHORITIES, BOARDS, COMMISSIONS & COMMITTEES:

There were no reports at this time.

REPORT OF MAYOR:

August 29, 2008 – The Mayor and City Manager met with the new dean at Coastal Georgia College, who has presented the four year program.

September 2, 2008 – Met with residents regarding a drainage problem in Sugarmill by the railroad tracks.

September 3, 2008 – Attended the Health Board meeting.

September 8, 2008 – Presented a proclamation at Magnolia Manor for Assisted Living Week, attended the Budget workshop and Council meeting.

September 9, 2008 – The Mayor and City Manager will be attending a military presentation by the Governor in Atlanta.

Mayor Eskridge asked if any Council Members were interested in attending the monthly Regional Development Center meetings. If so, they could ride with the City Manager.

REPORT OF CITY MANAGER:

- Many hours were spent reviewing the budget.
- City employees continue to work on the debris cleanup from the storms.
- The Downtown Development Authority received a grant for the Historic District Pod-Cast in the amount of \$1,975.
- The Pt. Peter Wastewater Treatment Plant process renovation – Haskell has completed the 1.8 Million Gallons per Day (MGD) plant expansion. The Plant is substantially complete and is undergoing operational testing. Approval for full plant use and discharge to the North River is pending inspection by the Environmental Protection Division (EPD). The design on the 4.0 MGD plant is continuing and the NPDES draft permit has been received from EPD and advertised. The Design Development Report has been approved by EPD for the updates. Haskell Company has been selected as the contractor for the 4.0 MGD expansion.

GRANTING AUDIENCE TO THE PUBLIC:

Dave Schmitz, resident stated that there is a difference between the solid waste contractor's employees and city employees. The people the city employs for garbage pickup, yard waste, firefighters, and police officers come to work, where they live so they take pride in what they do in St. Marys. These are intangible things these people are doing because they love the job they are doing. The city is getting much more from it's employees than what they are being paid to do. If a millage rate of 6.1 does not support the budget, then go to 7.3. Do what needs to be done and do the right thing.

Mayor Eskridge commented on Mr. Schmitz statements about city employees. He does not believe there is anyone on Council that does not agree with him about our city's employees. St. Marys has the best city employees in the state. Council does not want to cut jobs or put anyone out of work. There are a lot of vacant positions that have not been filled and those were the ones being taken out of the budget at the City Manager's recommendation.

John Morrissey, resident expressed his appreciation for Council's efforts and allowing the public to contribute their views. The holistic approach to look into the future 10 to 12 years out and where it is leading the City is very important. If the \$2.0 million drawdown on the general fund and the situation in the county does not reverse itself in time, that deficit spending will become debt management because the general fund will be gone.

Cathy Kloess, business owner stated that the airport could have been a viable airfield with more than three (3) businesses on the property, if it was to remain in St. Marys. Ms. Kloess spoke about her clientele and the time they spend in St. Marys. The airport's pending future has hindered growth because the Airport Authority will not allow her to build.

Ms. Kloess questioned Councilmember Hase on whether the airport property was ever signed back to the City by the Airport Authority when she was mayor. Councilmember Hase responded yes. Ms. Kloess asked whether Ms. Hase actually received a letter from someone in the Federal Aviation Administration authorizing the Airport Authority Board to do that. Councilmember Hase responded that she could not recall but she is welcome to look at the files. Councilmember Hase stated that the FAA told her verbally that they wanted it deeded back to the City. She believed there was a letter. The City Manager responded that he thought there was a letter but it would take some time to go through all the files.

Ms. Kloess questioned who she would contact to get a copy of the letter. The City Manager responded that a copy could be provided with a record request to the City Clerk's office.

Ms. Kloess stated that she received a telephone call complaining about the early hours she was flying over residential areas. She has stopped flying at 6:00 a.m. but it has caused her to lose money. Whoever called inadvertently did not leave a call back number but she urged them to speak with her about any complaints. Ms. Kloess also addressed airport safety, comparing the threat and damage a jet plane from Jacksonville would cause opposed to her Cessna from St. Marys.

Mayor Eskridge requested that the City Attorney explain why the Airport Authority will not allow Ms. Kloess to build. The City Attorney stated that there is a pending case of Declaratory Action between the Airport Authority and the City of St. Marys to determine who has the power to make the decision at the airport.

Ms. Kloess commented on the city's tax issue by recommending a planned community shindig to raise money. These events supplemented the City of Zephyr Hills budget.

Councilmember DeLoughy stated that the events held throughout the year are hosted by the Kiwanis.

Sidney Howell, resident suggested bringing more businesses to St. Marys and questioned whether anyone has talked to the Joint Development Authority to help bring industry to St. Marys industrial park.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: *Personnel & Legal*

Councilmember DeLoughy made a motion to adjourn to executive session to discuss personnel and legal. Councilmember Hase seconded the motion. Voting was unanimous in favor of the motion.

The Mayor and Council adjourned to executive session at 8:28 p.m., returning at 8:52 p.m. with Mayor Eskridge calling the Council meeting back to order.

PERSONNEL/REAL ESTATE/LEGAL

No official action was taken at this time.

ADJOURNMENT:

Councilmember DeLoughy made a motion for adjournment. Councilmember Trader seconded the motion. Mayor Eskridge declared the meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Darlene M. Roellig, City Clerk