

**CITY OF ST. MARYS, GEORGIA**  
**July 10, 2006**

**THIRD QUARTER – TOWN MEETING**  
**6:30 P.M.**

**“MINUTES”**

The Mayor and City Council for the City of St. Marys, Georgia conducted a Town Meeting on Monday, July 10, 2006 in the Council Chamber at City Hall.

**PRESENT WERE:**

*Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Lockhart*  
*Councilmember William DeLoughy*  
*Councilmember Larry Johnson*  
*Councilmember Gull Weaver*

**ABSENT WERE:**

*Mayor Rowland Eskridge*  
*Councilmember Gary Blount*  
*Councilmember L. J. Williams*

**CITY OFFICIALS:**

*William Shanahan, City Manager*  
*Gary Bacon, City Attorney*  
*Tim Hatch, Police Chief*  
*Robby Horton, Fire Chief*  
*Max Tinsley, Planning Director*  
*Bobby Marr, Public Works Director*  
*Jennifer Brown, Finance Director*  
*Wiley King, Building Director*  
*Alyce Thornhill, Economic Dev. Director*  
*Lt. Roger Wooten, Sergeant-At-Arms*

Mayor Pro Tem Lockhart called the Third Quarter Town Meeting to order at 6:30 P.M., and opened the floor to the public for questions and/or comments.

**GRANTING AUDIENCE TO THE PUBLIC:**

**Frank Saffold**, resident commended Council for their involvement in the 2007 City Budget process, but, strongly felt that the budget increase is larger than it needs to be. Mr. Saffold distributed newspaper articles from the Tribune and Georgian on the City's 2007 Budget and his comments on the Budget. This information is attached as part of the minutes.

Councilman DeLoughy encouraged citizens to attend all budget meetings. He stated that the 18% is not a true number because a million dollars of capital equipment gives the appearance that expenses are increasing by a million dollars. For example, if a vehicle is purchased for \$25,000 it is indicated in the year of purchase as revenue even though it is

**Frank Saffold (CON'T.)**

financed. The proposed budget initially began at the Goals and Objectives when a tremendous amount of growth was anticipated, which in all actuality will not come through. This is when departments received their direction. Now, there is a budget completely overblown, which was cut back substantially. When the budget is reviewed there are three major departments: police, fire and public works. Police added five positions, five in fire and nine in public works. Council decided there were areas in public works that needed to be addressed. Equipment was referenced to be over a million dollars and \$380,000 for police vehicle replacements, which is identified in the City's on going Capital Replacement Program. The Fire Department is estimated at \$36,000 and public works \$739,000 that are substantial amounts of money that is mostly financed and is shown as revenue. Last year, the financing figure was \$136,000 and this year is \$1,081,000 to address some of the problems. Most problems are for public works from either ditches or flooding. Councilman DeLoughy reiterated his statement at the Public Hearing prior to approval of the budget, "I think, unless something changes drastically, the maximum amount of an increase based on this budget would be about a half (½) mill". Councilman DeLoughy agreed on some of Mr. Saffold's points because of correlations of people or service though there are outside factors. This year, traffic deaths doubled and robberies have occurred when they have not in the past. Sometimes, an assumption is made that the budget two, three or four years ago was appropriate. A few years ago, the budget was cut drastically when the paper mill closed because the revenue was not being received. Council has spent enough hours reviewing the budget. And, unless there is a major problem or a substantial increase in the mileage rate, only then would everyone be asked to come back and take care of it. In three years, this Council has reduced the mileage rate from 8.5 mills, when the paper mill closed, to the current rate of 6.2 mills.

**Walt Natzic**, resident suggested contract assessments for employees and contractor compensation for performance based contracts through incentive programs. Mr. Natzic thanked the Public Works Department for doing a great job cutting grass and picking up trash on the roads. He requested some of the bridges and concrete be pressure washed.

The City Manager stated that there is a merit based system in place that evaluates employees once a year and at the end of the evaluation a merit increase is given on a scale from one percent to five percent identifying weaknesses, improvements and objectives. In part, the increase in the 2007 Budget is for salaries. Mayor and Council approved a salary level increase that will bring City employee salaries to levels comparable to the County and local municipalities. Employees were being lost to other counties and there were no incentives to stay or move up.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There were no further requests to address Council. Mayor Pro Tem Lockhart declared the Town Meeting closed at 6:59 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

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Darlene M. Roellig, City Clerk