

MEETING MINUTES OF ST. MARYS CITY COUNCIL

PRESIDING OFFICER:
James J. Harris
Council President

April 28, 2025
6:30 p.m.
Council Chambers

ROLL CALL: Bubp, Lunz, Christman, Childrey, Fitzgerald, Uhlenhake, Aquaro

Moved by John Bubp, seconded by Jim Christman, to accept the Minutes of the April 14, 2025, meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

PETITIONS & COMMUNICATIONS:

Mr. Kim Reiher, President of the newly formed Veterans Foundation and Museum of St. Marys (VFMSM) addressed Council to petition Council and administration support for this project. He said this has been several years in the making to get this off the ground. The foundation aspect could possibly give some help to those starting their military careers to help with tickets for transportation. The museum aspect would showcase the service of Veterans who are from St. Marys or those who were stationed in St. Marys in the National Guard. Citing an example of Richard Bushong who graduated from St. Marys in 1941 and went to the Army Air Corps. Richard Bushong went through pilot training, became an officer, and ended up in the 390th Bomber Group in England during WWII completing 20 bombing missions in occupied territory. In the last flight, his plane was shot up and made a crash landing in England. He received his Distinguished Flying Cross. Mr. Bushong served until 1974 between fighter jets and Vietnam. In 1991, he was driving through Tucson, Arizona and discovered a museum dedicated to the 390th Bomber Group. He has been working there ever since. He is now 102 years old. He had an amazing career. This is one example of many stories that can be told. The museum in Arizona and Mr. Bushong have been working with us on getting some memorabilia for a museum that we could use to represent soldiers from St. Marys. Kim Reiher also noted the possibility of working something out to use some space on the second floor in the Municipal Building where it could be open for the community. Greg Foxhoven added that the southern half of the second floor has been rented out. The northern section has not. He said everything that Kim has learned through this process indicates to us that the museum will outgrow the space and will have to move. It's not a permanent space. Right now, it seems the most logical place. The City can make sure things are done properly and families can feel comfortable in allowing their items to be displayed. We would like to use this space. We currently do not have anyone else interested in utilizing the space. The administration believes this is a viable option for it. There is a lot of work and fund raising that needs to be done. They are not asking for any funding from the City at this time. Greg Foxhoven also said when the legislation is read later in the meeting they would request it be passed under suspension of the rules so they can get started on the work that needs to be done.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked if the Veterans Foundation had applied for 501(c)3 status. He was told that it has been completed. Kim Reiher stated there are many models of Veterans Foundation Museums. Some are strictly non-profit and some are sponsored by local governments, which is the safest way. The last thing you want to happen is to have the museum in a venue that is someone else's property and get kicked out. Greg Foxhoven commented there will be a large fund raising event, sponsorships available, annual memberships, etc. The St. Marys Community Foundation has agreed to handle all of the financial aspects for this. Zach Ferrall said it will operate as a donor directed fund under the Community Foundation.

Dan Uhlenhake commented that while working with Kim on a book there are so many intriguing and incredible stories of Veterans with uncommon valor right here in St. Marys. This is something that should be pursued. Kim added there are thousands of members that served during peace times that have amazing stories and artifacts that the community would love to see.

Michael Aquaro asked about when the museum would be open. Greg Foxhoven responded they are working through those details. He said one of the beauties of it being in this building is the building is open during the week. We would need volunteers or board members to staff it. This building would offer the security of the artifacts. The idea is to have it open as much as we can. There is also the art of switching out and having different items on display. There are still a lot of things to work out.

Greg Foxhoven asked Police Sgt. Boos to speak about an incident that happened this past Saturday at the Circle K where an individual was jumped and a gunshot fired. Sgt. Boos said officers responded to the scene and found a 22 year old victim with a gunshot wound to the leg. The St. Marys Fire Department responded to the scene and transported the victim to JTDMMH who was later transported to another hospital for additional treatment. He said the injuries were non-life threatening. Through the

investigation officers found witnesses and involved parties at the scene. They also determined there were some individuals that fled from the scene. They were able to determine who those individuals may be and they were located a short time later. As a result, there is a 17 year old male from Columbus that was transported to the West Central Ohio Juvenile Detention Center in Troy and is being held. The case has been sent to the Auglaize County Prosecutor's Office to be reviewed for charges. No charges have been filed at this time.

REPORTS OF CITY OFFICIALS COMMITTEES ETC.:

The Tax Commissioner's Report was presented.

The Auditor's Report was presented.

Treasurer's Report

The Director of Public Service and Safety's Report was presented.

Ms. Childrey asked the administration to explain how monies for the tax levy will be spent over the next ten years. She said she would like people to understand what type of budgetary issues it could or could not cause if we lost the half percent and what type of impact it would have on our upcoming operating budget. Mr. Foxhoven responded stating it would have a huge impact if it did not pass. He continued by saying that prior to 1985, the capital improvement projects and purchases were funded through the one percent. By law we are allowed to impose a one percent tax. That one percent is broken down into three different areas, 72% of that one percent goes into the general fund; 18% of that one percent goes into the general services department; and 10% of that one percent goes to the capital improvements. The capital improvements are anything over \$500 and lasts over five years. The voted tax language in the legislation is very specific on what we can use it for such as police, fire, parks, roads, and things of that nature. Every department within the City has a five year plan. Most municipalities, villages and schools forecast out five years. When you get to years four and five you are really trying to guess what might need to be replaced. Sometimes things last longer than we might think and sometimes they break sooner. We do the best we can but there are unknowns. When you look at the plans there are certain patterns that are established such as replacing vehicles, ambulances, police cars, police uniforms, etc. There are unforeseen issues that come up. Furnaces or air conditioning go out, or a roof starts to leak. It is really difficult to go out much further than five years. The roads we are going to fix in 2026 are being evaluated in 2025. To speculate certain roads need to be fixed in 2032 seems ridiculous. There are a lot of things that have an impact on the roads. The weather is a factor as far as how much we plowed, how much salt was put on the roads, truck traffic. We don't know which ones are going to break down or need resurfaced and we don't know what the costs are going to be. It's difficult to pinpoint everything out for ten years. There is too much speculation in it. The voted tax is critical to our operations. If it doesn't pass, things will change. We did not assume this would pass and budgeted accordingly this year. If the voted tax passes on May 6th, there are some projects we may bring back if we feel we have the funding. We were not going to over fund that account. Mayor Hurlburt added a lot of this pertains to weather. If we have a tornado and it would wipe out K.C. Geiger Park that is where the half percent goes to. We hope things like this don't happen, but we don't know. There are a lot of invariables we can't account for ten years down the road. We can work within five years. Greg Foxhoven said that every month there is equipment failure or a vehicle breaks down. We have good mechanics and make sure these things are taken care of, but we can't control all of these things. It's too difficult to be close to being accurate ten years out.

Ms. Childrey asked if there are any specific projects in the short term that we know that we have every intention of utilizing voted tax money for should this pass. Greg Foxhoven said typically every year we will have some roads that are fully reconstructed including the utilities. Not wanting to assume, we scaled back the reconstruction of any streets to the resurfacing of streets this year. We looked for grant opportunities and will always look for grant opportunities no matter how healthy funds may be. If the voted tax does not pass, and is by no means a threat, but we have to have police cars. The Police Officers have to be able to respond to a shooting call. We have to have ambulances to respond to calls. We would have to cut money from streets or parks to be able to fund these things. The quality of life things that we enjoy are the things we would have to take a hard look at. We have to have good equipment and reliable transportation for our officers. We are not going to put them in jeopardy. The 15 parks and the ball diamonds may not get the attention they might need. The roads may not get reconstructed or resurfaced as soon as they should be. That's just the reality of it. There is only so much money and every department vies for a share of that. We work through it with the cooperation of the City workforces. The utilities are funded through their own means. Police, Fire, Parks, General Services, and Engineering are all at the table for these funds.

Fire equipment is getting more expensive and we have added more staffing for the Fire Department, which means additional breathing apparatus, and every five years turn out gear needs to be replaced. This is per National Safety regulations.

Ms. Childrey said it is important for the public to know that they have that opportunity for input and to voice any concerns they may have to Council regarding any projects. Greg Foxhoven added that we save money any way we can. Most of our equipment purchases are done through state or national purchasing programs. He noted that he, Mr. Riesen, the Mayor, and the Treasurer watch these funds and are very good stewards of the monies spent. Right now in the five year plans there are items lined out because we simply couldn't afford it. If the levy passes, we may take another look at these.

Mr. Bubp asked about the five year plans. Greg Foxhoven responded they are put together by the department heads. Each department head looks at their respective facilities and puts together a list of capital improvement items such as vehicles and equipment that are giving us trouble or the turn out gear and life span that needs replaced, as well as needed building repairs. They look at these things and document them. We look at these things and we take them to the Finance Committee. John Bubp also asked if the five year plan is a rolling five year plan or once the five years is up there is a new plan made. Greg Foxhoven responded it is a rolling five year plan. Each year it is extended to the next year. All of the departments including the utilities look at it and makes adjustments according to what may or may not be needed that year.

Mr. Bubp also commented that a lot of people think this levy is a slush fund. His understanding is this money goes into a special fund. He wants to make sure they understand that we can't just use this money for anything. It is designated for what we can use it for. If we use it in the wrong way it would be miss appropriation of funds. Greg Foxhoven said the legislation spells out specifically what the money can be used for. When you look at the Tax Commissioner's report, this money is not mingled with the general fund money. It is separated from the moment it comes in. It never goes into the general fund. The voters had to give us permission for the half percent. A few years ago we had to pass new legislation to use that half percent for the water tower storage, fire suppression and pressure. This is a safety issue therefore it fits for the voted tax and the voters had to give us permission to add it. Our Auditor, our consulting firm, and the State Auditors make sure that everything we spend is spent per the appropriate fund. It was noted the City is audited every year. John Bubp commented that we have strict controls on what the monies for this levy can be used for. Greg Foxhoven said we have a firm we hire to help us prepare for the audit. They look at everything and prepare it for the State Auditors.

Mr. Christman asked about receiving no bid for the Indiana Avenue safety project and one bid for another project that was rejected and whether this would be an ongoing issue or run into problems with the State. Zach Ferrall stated this is a very specialized project which involved doing the linings of the sewer system in several areas of town and under the canal. There were two bids. After the bid was awarded, the company in further investigation found they could not do the project; therefore, it was awarded to the backup bidder. Overall, we have been happy with the bids our Engineering Department has received the past couple of years. We have been getting good bids. Greg Foxhoven added the bid for the Indiana Avenue project was rejected due to the fact that ODOT didn't like the wording in their bid. Therefore, it was rejected until the wording is rectified.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked about interviews and employees helping out in Solid Waste. Greg Foxhoven said we have openings in a couple of departments we did not post because we knew ultimately they would end up being for Solid Waste. We weren't prepared to cause that turnover right away so we delayed the postings. With Doug Metz' retirement and Corey Stoker's promotion it left a void and we are filling that now. We also have an opening in General Services to fill and the Solid Waste department was not complete when this happened. We are finally able to post the jobs and let employees bid. CDL school will be over next week for some of our employees and we have had some good applicant candidates so we took advantage of that.

Mayor Hurlburt commented that Tuesday, May 6th is voting day and encouraged residents to vote and support this half percent income tax renewal so we can continue doing what we have been over the past ten years. He thanked members of Council in helping to get the word out with yard signs distributing door hangers and to the Committee that helped organize this campaign. He thanked the Police Department for their professionalism in handling the situation at Circle K and also noted the first Friday event coming up encouraging residents to attend.

Mayor Hurlburt noted that all of the windows for the Municipal Building are now in and they are continuing to work on the punch list. He also noted there will be a public open house for the Municipal Building on Thursday, May 15th from 5:00p.m.-8:00 p.m. and on Saturday, May 17th from 9:00 a.m. to noon.

Mayor Hurlburt said the last auction for phase 3 Sleepy Hollow was held last Thursday with three of the five lots up for auction sold. We are pleased that eleven of the thirteen available lots have been sold.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Fitzgerald presented the Finance Committee meeting report. The committee met on April 21st and reviewed eleven appropriation requests for \$570,202.77 listed in legislation later on the agenda. The largest items were for a garbage truck and a recycling truck.

ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS:

Ordinance No. 2025-12 was presented to Council for a first reading.

ORDINANCE NO. 2025-12 – An Emergency Ordinance to Make Appropriation for Current Expenses and Expenditures of the City of St. Marys, State of Ohio During the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 2025

Moved by Bob Fitzgerald, seconded by Michael Aquaro, to read Ordinance No. 2025-12. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Foxhoven said the eleven supplemental requests submitted by supervisors and staff throughout the City total is \$570,202.77. The requests are supported by the Mayor and have been approved by the Auditor. As indicated the biggest share is for Solid Waste vehicles. Money is also requested for a new digger truck for the Electric Department for \$355,000. He explained a digger truck is used to set poles as well as to hold them for support until they can be changed out. We also use it to transport heavy transformer equipment. These transformers are heavier and our current 40 ft. truck struggles. The requested one is 60 ft. We can save \$100,000 on buying this demo truck now. If we would order this truck today they told us we could get it in five years. He requested this supplemental be passed under suspension of the rules.

Moved by Dan Uhlenhake, seconded by Arienne Childrey, to suspend the rules for Ordinance No. 2025-12. Motion passed unanimously.

Moved by Jim Christman, seconded by Dave Lunz, to pass Ordinance No. 2025-12 as an emergency. Motion passed unanimously.

Resolution No. 2025-10 was presented to Council for a first reading.

Resolution no. 2025-10 – A Resolution for the Support of the Veterans Foundation and Museum of St. Marys (VFMSM) Whose Goal is “To Promote an Appreciation of Veterans of St. Marys, Ohio”, and to Authorize the Director of Public Service and Safety to Collaborate With the VFMSM and Authorizing the VFMSM to Utilize the St. Marys Municipal Building for Their Museum and Office

Moved by John Bubb, seconded by Dave Lunz, to read Resolution No. 2025-10. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Harris noted with this being a resolution of no monetary value he could accept a motion to pass.

Moved by Jim Christman, seconded by Arienne Childrey, to pass Resolution No. 2025-10. Motion passed unanimously.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS:

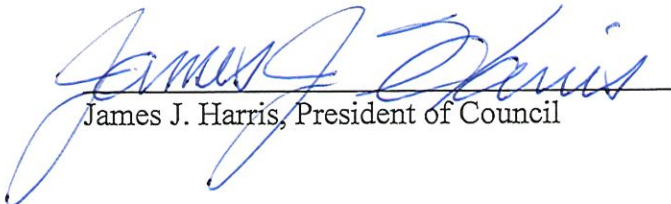
Mr. Kim Reiher announced that on Memorial Day there will be a dedication for highway signs that after some of our Veterans in St. Marys. For Ronnie Blair who lost his life in Viet Nam and was highly decorated for valor and for Charles Kettler and Herbert C. Linville who lost their lives in WWII. We worked through State Legislature for the last two years to have some of our highways renamed after these soldiers. State Route 29, U.S. 33, and State Route 66 will be renamed in honor of these soldiers. We are going to have a dedication ceremony that will be held at the Armory on Memorial Day at 11:00 a.m. Our Mayor will be speaking along with Brigadier General Woodruff from the 37th Infantry Division. We are also having several high ranking non-commissioned officers

from U.S. Army Garrison Hawaii representing Sgt. Blair who will also be speaking. ODOT will have some of the signs actually placed and some at the Armory for display. He encouraged Council members and the public to attend. Mayor Hurlburt commented that this will be held following the Memorial Day parade and ceremony at the Elm Grove Cemetery.

Moved by Mr. Bubp, seconded by Jim Christman, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Council adjourned at 7:17 p.m.


Debra Kable, Clerk of Council


James J. Harris, President of Council