

**CITY OF SAINT MARYS COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING**

**DECEMBER 15, 2025**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The regular monthly Council meeting of the City of Saint Marys was called to order by Mayor Lyle Garner on Monday, December 15, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. Notice of this meeting was sent to Council on December 11, 2025, posted at City Hall and published in the Daily Press.

**PLEDGE TO THE FLAG**

**ROLL CALL**

Mayor Lyle Garner, Deputy Mayor Shane Schneider, Jerome Sorg, Nedward Jacob, Stephen Bagley, Anthony Gregory, Joe Sarginger, City Manager Joseph Fleming, Solicitor Lauren Brennen, and Recording Secretary Rachael Hughes.

**VISITORS**

Gretchen Bonfardine, Michael Groll, Bill Carr, Nadine Carr, Jody Beck, Adam Brem, John Geci, Char Geci, John D'Amore, Tina Moore, Daniel Carr, Jennifer Pollino, Dylan Palmer, Christina Geci, Tami Geci, Jenny Rettger, Suzan Beigel, Nanette Cordero, Joe Goetz, Lucas Smith, Michelle Brooks, Adam Brooks, Missy Cheatle, Julia Kopp, Leroy Kopp, Fritz Lecker, Clark Lecker, Brandon Stewart, Denise Stewart, Andrea Stewart, Joe Jacob, Molly Reddinger, Jennifer Bish, Marcie Hoare, Tami Anzinger, Kathy Wittman, Richard Phillips, Mary Schneider, Steve Schneider, Priscilla Phillips, Christian Sloff, Tony D'Amore, Caroline D'Amore, Abigail D'Amore, Phoebe Menard, Amanda Fleming, Tracy Duncan, Jeana Marquez, Richard Sadley, Sarah D'Amore, Suzette Benson, Amy Cherry, Nienna Bender, Cassandra Hanes, Brian Hanes, Joseph Hanes.

City Staff: Charles Nunamaker.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

November 17, 2025 – Regular Meeting

**Motion Passed**

Nedward Jacob made a motion to approve the November 17, 2025 minutes, seconded by Joe Sarginger, and all were in favor.

**PRESENTATION OF  
PLAQUES TO OUTGOING  
COUNCIL MEMBERS**

Mayor Garner presented plaques to the following:

Councilman/Deputy Mayor Shane Schneider 2021-2026

Councilman Nedward Jacob 2022-2026

Councilman Jerome Sorg 2022-2026

**PRESENTATION OF  
PLAQUE TO CHIEF OF  
POLICE**

Mayor Garner presented a plaque to Thomas Nicklas, Chief of Police for his 30 years of dedicated service to the St. Marys Police Department.

Chief Nicklas thanked past and present city councils, city managers, Police Civil Service Commission, city departments,

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first responders, and the St. Marys community for their support and collaboration. He expressed his honor in working with the SMPD officers and staff and stated that the future of SMPD will be in excellent hands with Chief Shaffer.

**PRESENTATION OF  
CERTIFICATES OF  
APPRECIATION FOR  
OUTGOING BOARD  
MEMBERS**

Mayor Garner presented a certificate of appreciation to Priscilla Phillips for her 10 years of dedicated service to the Board of Health.

Priscilla thanked the St. Marys Health Board and highlighted the outstanding speakers and resources available in St. Marys.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS ON  
AGENDA TOPICS**

Warren Stewart raised concerns about the difficulty citizens face in obtaining information from the governing body and asked why it is such a big deal to get public information.

Stephen Bagley questioned what specific information Mr. Stewart was seeking.

Mr. Stewart stated the instances were mostly related to construction and other projects.

**MANAGER'S REPORT**

Manager Fleming provided the following report:

- “I wish to congratulate and thank our outgoing Councilmen Shane, Jerry, and Ned on your hard work and service to the City. You have always kept the City in the best interests of your heart and I have very much enjoyed working with you in progressing this City forward. I wish you the best as you move onto your next chapter. I also want to thank our tax collector Bud Bloam for his hard work and service for the last couple of decades as I enjoyed our conversations. Chief Nicklas, for 30 years you have dedicated your life to serving our community and I thank you for your knowledge and expertise in modernizing our police force. Most if not all of the technology that is in use today in protecting and serving St. Marys can be credited to your efforts. I will miss the rattling of keys coming down the hallway toward the office. Thank you for being there at any given time to answer any of my questions or concerns. Of course, you will not be going far as you will just be moving your office from Erie Ave to the first floor of City Hall as you

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take the reins as our new City Tax Collector. Finally, thank you to Priscilla Phillips for your dedication and service as a part of the City's Health Board.

- In addressing the community pool closure, I would like to reiterate that the closure is due to the structural integrity of the pool due to the recent feasibility study performed solely on the community pool, even though the previous 2 studies performed, the strategic management plan and the comprehensive parks and recreational plan, both expressed concerns of the current structure. The most current study was performed by aquatic specialists who specialize in pool structures and aquatic facilities. The findings which are available publicly show structural concerns such as daily water loss, structural shift, and inadequate filtration due to the shift. There is visible separation from the concrete decking which can only mean a deficiency in the support steel structure underneath the pool liner. Due to the closed construction of the pool, it is not known the extent of the deterioration of the steel structure. Since the pool is 60-some years old and all of the structures are grandfathered in as far as code and compliance, any replacement of any part of the pool would force the City to bring the entire facility up to the current code and standard which it does not currently meet. For these reasons with additional mechanical issues of the heating and pump system, the closure of the pool was deemed necessary, and the study recommended that the current structure was unfit for reuse. This structure has turned into a city liability instead of an asset. It is the obligation of the City to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all residents. Currently, not all residents can enjoy the community pool, so efforts were being made to ensure there is access for everyone to include our youngest, hence the closure of the baby pool, and our oldest citizens. As a public pool, it must be accessible to everyone, not just certain individuals. This closure is not, and I repeat not, based on the annual expenditures or daily attendance. Statistical data on attendance and expenditures would be considered for designing the new structure. Yes, the expenditure which is available from

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this closure will be directed to improvements at Memorial, Luhr, and Benzinger Parks since the total allotted amount for the Parks and Recreation Department is roughly \$400,000 which equates to about half of the department's budget going directly to the pool, as we seek out funding for the replacement of the pool. With any type of replacement, money will be needed. Of course, this project will be listed as a major project. This administration and Council have done a tremendous job in maximizing the taxpayers' dollar, so we don't have to go back to the residents raising your taxes and placing the burden on your wallets. We have done or are currently doing multiple projects without affecting the millage rate such as the new playground at Memorial Park, Pedestrian Pathway at Benzinger Park, and the upcoming amphitheater at Shawmut Park to name a few. These projects had funding which were strictly allotted to them for their construction. These monies were granted to us beyond our local tax base, and we will do the same in seeking funding for the new community pool. For the ball to start rolling, I proposed a multi-phase plan which I spoke about at the last monthly meeting. The plan started with the closure of the pool. I also discussed a capital campaign drive to solicit funds for the community pool and wanted to release the plan once I had illustrations to put forth which provided a simple zero-entry and new slide design so the pool can be accessible for everyone. It was a very basic and simple design so grant applications and discussions can be held in the funding efforts. Does this mean that it is final? No, the amount of funding we receive will depend on the final design of the pool. Personally, I would love to see a \$10 to \$15 million dollar facility, but we must be realistic. I am not in favor of seeking a municipal bond or any type of loan for 100% of the cost. Any of these actions mean a rise in taxes. Again, if any bond or loan is acquired, the money for these items falls back on the taxpayer. I would rather seek funding elsewhere to see what can be achievable and feasible for our city first before establishing this campaign drive, which is why I have decided to delay the campaign so I

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can establish what the minimum dollar amount is needed to fill in the gap between state and federal grant funding versus the minimal amount needed to construct a pool. Yes, a timeline has not been established because it depends on the funding received and I do not want to provide false guarantees about when it will happen. Even with a proposed budget of the initial plan of roughly \$3million is a lot of money or one third of our total operating budget. With the recent events and online activity, these efforts will prove more challenging as staff is addressing more requests about the closure of a failed structure than they are in seeking funding from outside resources, even though the discussion about a replacement was started back in August 2024 when I made a presentation to City Council about options for a new structure. If the City took a blind eye to the results being given to us and kept the current pool open, we would be kicking the can down the road even further, costing the residents more money either by construction or maintenance cost and/or liability issues. I am not willing to bet the City's money on it. There have been no votes or resolutions for St. Marys not to have a pool, we will have one and I will update as the project moves forward.

- Winter weather has made its presence felt for the past couple of weeks with the street department having to address adverse road conditions. For the past 4 or 5 days, they have been constantly clearing the roadways and I want to acknowledge their hard work as it has not been easy.
- N. Michael St. is open but concrete work is still needed to be completed which tentatively scheduled for this week which will cause traffic delays on East and West Oilwell Street, but N. Michael Street will remain open.
- City offices will be closed on Christmas Day and New Years Day.
- I wish to thank all city staff and City Council for your hard work this year as it has been an extremely busy year with projects. Also, I want to wish all of St. Marys a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Manager Fleming provided the following Treasurer's Report for November 2025:

Total revenue for the General Fund as of November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025, is \$7.9 million (89%) of budget. Last year was \$8.2 million (92%) and 2023 was \$8.3 million (98%). Expenditures for the General Fund as of November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025, are \$8.6 million (96%) of budget. Last year it was \$8.5 million (96%) and 2023 was \$8.2 million (97%). Total Real Estate tax collections as of the end of November are at 98% of budget. In 2024 it was 98% and 2023 was 99%. Earned Income tax collection as of 11/30/2025 is at 108% of budget. In 2024 it was 107% of budget and 2023 was 113% of budget. Pension plans increased in value for November 2025.

**PUBLIC HEARING: 2026 City  
Budget  
Opened Hearing**

Mayor Garner opened the public hearing for the 2026 City Budget at 7:22 p.m.

**Public Comment**

No comments were made on the budget.

**Closed Hearing**

Mayor Garner closed the public hearing at 7:23 p.m.

**LEGISLATIVE ACTION:**

**Consider for adoption:  
Ordinance No. 346 - providing  
for the levy and assessment of  
taxes for the fiscal year 2026**

Ordinance No. 346 - providing for the levy and assessment of taxes for the fiscal year 2026 was presented for adoption.

**Motion Passed**

Shane Schneider made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 346 for adoption, seconded by Nedward Jacob. All were in favor.

**Resolution No. 25-25 - 2026  
City Budget for various funds**

Resolution No. 25-25 for the 2026 City Budget for various funds was presented for adoption.

**Motion Passed**

Jerome Sorg made a motion to approve Resolution No. 25-25, seconded by Nedward Jacob, and all were in favor.

**2026 Wage Schedule for  
Management Employees**

The 2026 Wage Schedule for Management Employees was presented for approval.

**Motion Passed**

Anthony Gregory made a motion to approve the 2026 Wage Schedule for Management Employees, seconded by Stephen Bagley, and all were in favor.

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**TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:**  
Planning Commission  
Recommendations for Data  
Center Ordinance

City Solicitor Lauren Brennen stated that The Planning Commission recommends considering a separate zoning ordinance on power generation facilities.

Council unanimously agreed to follow the Planning Commission's recommendation.

**CITIZEN COMMENTS ON  
NON-AGENDA TOPICS**

Molly Reddinger voiced concerns regarding the closure of the community pool and the proposed \$2.8 million rectangle design replacement. She stated that Manager Fleming did not respond to her requests to establish a pool committee and questioned the accuracy of the reported operational costs of the pool. Reddinger requested greater transparency from Council and urged reconsideration of the decision to close the pool.

Discussions occurred over the discrepancy between the water usage figures reported in the feasibility study and those provided to Ms. Reddinger from the water company.

Charles Nunamaker, Director of Finance, clarified parts of the budget regarding operation costs and taxes of the pool.

Mayor Garner stated that he supports the pool closure because the existing study has determined the pool is unsafe to operate. He explained that the council members are the individuals legally liable if the city is sued, not members of the audience. He emphasized that to protect both the council and the city, the pool must remain closed next year.

Sarah D'Amore expressed her passion for recreation and the need for a safe place for children to swim.

Tony D'Amore presented information offering potential solutions for the pool's heater repairs and how to further determine what is causing the pool's structural issues and leaks. He suggested forming a committee to study the pool in the spring on how to effectively use it this summer.

Jennifer Bish expressed concern that the city's long-term budget allocates no funding for the pool and stated her dissatisfaction with the City's transparency on the pool project.

Christian Sloff, former lifeguard, discussed concerns about a smaller pool and the safety issues that may arise.

Former lifeguard Gretchen Bonfardine stated her biggest fear is the pool not reopening after it is closed.

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Nanette Cordero encouraged the city and the community to work together to have a plan for the future of the pool.

Missy Cheatle expressed concern that nothing will entice families to move to St. Marys if there is no pool. She emphasized the lack of family activities in the area.

Phoebe Menard pressed Council to reconsider their decision to close the pool and hire an engineer to do an evaluation to see if it can be opened next summer.

Richard Phillips stated he wants more details about what specifically makes the pool unsafe. He would like the city and the community to come together to find an answer on how to have the pool open.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

There were no comments.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mayor Garner made the following announcements:

- Council will hold their reorganizational meeting on Monday, January 5, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Room at City Hall.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Nedward Jacob made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Anthony Gregory, and all were in favor. Meeting adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

  
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Recording Secretary

  
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Mayor