

STATE OF MAINE

COUNTY OF YORK

CITY OF SACO

- I. CALL TO ORDER** – On Monday December 7, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. a City Council Meeting was held at the Harry P. Garland, II Auditorium, at Thornton Academy.

- II. ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS** – Mayor Roland Michaud conducted a roll call of the members and determined that the Councilors present constituted a quorum. Those present: Margaret Mills, Ronald Morton, Eric Cote and Marston Lovell. Councilor Leslie Smith, Jr., Sandra Bastille and Arthur Tardif were excused this evening.

Also in attendance this evening was Mr. Richard R. Michaud, City Administrator and Lucette S. Pellerin, City Clerk.

III. SACO BAY CHILDREN’S CHOIR

IV. AGENDA ITEMS:

A. OATH OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED BY THE CITY CLERK TO:

MAYOR – ROLAND L. MICHAUD

CITY COUNCIL:

WARD One	MARGARET E. MILLS
Ward Two	Leslie Smith, Jr.
Ward Three	Marie D. Doucette
Ward Four	Jeffrey A. Christenbury
Ward Five	Arthur J. Tardif
Ward Six	Eric B. Cote
Ward Seven	Marston D. Lovell

The City Clerk, Lucette S. Pellerin, administered the oath of office to Mayor Roland Michaud.

Councilors: Margaret E. Mills, Marie D. Doucette, Jeffrey A. Christenbury, Eric B. Cote and Marston D. Lovell were sworn to represent their respective wards.

**B. Mayor Roland Michaud & Mayor Emeritus William Johnson
Presentations to outgoing Councilors.**

Councilor Ronald Morton was recognized for his many years of dedicated service to our community. He will be sorely missed.

Ronald Morton addressed the Mayor, Council and audience speaking of the honor it had been to serve the City of Saco, during the last fifteen (15) years, in the capacity of Councilor for Ward Three and the Saco Board of Education. Mr. Morton wished the newly elected municipal officers much success in their future endeavors.

Remarks by Mayor Emeritus William Johnson

Mayor Emeritus Johnson expressed his love and enthusiasm for the City of Saco. He briefly spoke of events that have made, and make, Saco and great community to live and work at. Mr. Johnson spoke of the 225 dedicated volunteers who serve on 26 Saco Boards and/or Commissions.

Mayor Emeritus wished the Mayor and Council well stating that they will face new challenges that influence the community and Saco's future.

C. Remarks by Mayor Roland Michaud

Let me take a few moments to share some of our successes over the past two years. I use the word "our" as it truly takes the effort and commitment of all us to achieve these results. From councilors who spend hours discussing and debating proposals, to staff who provide the information necessary to make decisions and to the many individuals who share their thoughts and concerns, each plays a vital role in insuring that, in the end, the outcome is a successful one.

A high point was the long awaited opening of our new train station. This is a facility that won the Center for New Urbanism, 2009 Maine Award as well as the 2009 Downtown Achievement Award for smart growth. The station is truly representative of our commitment to the future. From wind energy, to passive solar to geothermal heating and cooling, it is an example of what can be done to address global warming.

Saco was also recognized as the Greenest city in Maine. The designation noted all of the activities we have engaged in to reduce our energy needs. From windmills to passive solar to CFL initiatives, we have been a leader in moving towards a more sustainable energy future.

We were also the first community in Maine to develop a Senior Citizen Tax Work-Off Program where seniors who meet income eligibility guidelines can earn a property tax abatement of up to \$750. I have heard nothing but praise about the program. What a great way to help our neighbors both financially and spiritually.

After months of efforts and with voter support, we were successful in implementing a Regional School Unit. Creating RSU 23 will benefit not only tax payers in the three communities but more importantly, improve the educational opportunities for all of our children.

Our community center was awarded The Maine Recreation & Parks Association Merit award for 2009. As someone who used the building years ago I can say that the parks and rec. department has done a tremendous job renovating and expanding what was once a National Guard Armory.

We added 5 acres of new athletic fields at our recreational complex on the Foss Road. While campaigning this fall, I had the opportunity to see first hand how important these

new fields are to our children If you haven't been there recently I suggest you consider a visit in the spring. I know you will be impressed.

We purchased 135 acres of open space including Saco River frontage on Route 5 that has the potential to become a great public boat launch.

Because of a generous gift from Mr. Elliot Chamberlain, the Cascade Falls is now a part of the city's open space. Generations to come will now be able to enjoy the beauty of the Falls.

Saco was awarded the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the FY09 Budget as well as a Circle of Excellence Award from the Association of Government Accountants. We are only one of two cities in the nation to receive the Circle of Excellence award.

Our public Works director Mike Bolduc was honored as the Public works director of the year in the state of Maine, Peter Morelli our Development Director was recognized by the TrainRiders Northeast for his role in the Amtrak station development, and John Hart from our treatment plant was awarded the water hero award from by the Water Environments federation.

As you can we are a city on the move staffed with high caliber employees led by an outstanding city manager and committed to excellence.

So what do the next two years look like?

While some say that we face challenges, I prefer to think that we face opportunities. As the old saying goes "Necessity is the mother of invention"

Let me note a couple of examples

We all know that we are facing a bumpy financial road. All indications are that revenues will shrink as needs grow. This doesn't have to be all doom and gloom. What we are being given is an opportunity to work with our neighbors to find better ways to provide services cooperatively and efficiently. We already have a great working relationship with Biddeford in sharing equipment and manpower particularly in the area of fire protection. In fact, you could say that the fire departments are really only one department when they respond to calls. It has taken time and effort to achieve this level of cooperation but it serves as an example of what can be done when the commitment is there. While I am not advocating the loss of local control, I do believe that the future will require that we rethink the idea of what local means.

Another is an opportunity that has recently presented itself. As you know our fire station is over 70 years old having been built by the WPA in the mid 1930s. Needless to say we have grown as a community over those 70 years requiring additional equipment and personnel. Coupling the need of new equipment with the increasing sophistication and size of the equipment makes replacing the current

station a priority. We will be soon be at a point where our fire trucks and rescue wagons will no longer fit.

As to why now and not later, let me point out two good reasons

First recent city projects such as our new treatment plant and Main St. improvements have pointed out the value of moving forward on projects now. Cost savings ranging from 20% for the treatment plant to almost 50% for the Main St. project, tells us that construction cost are at their lowest in years.

A second reason is current interest rates. I can't remember when rates were as low as they are today. We all know interest rates play a critical role in overall project cost. For example, a drop of as little as $\frac{3}{4}$'s of 1% yields an interest savings of over 1.3 million dollars on a 30 year, 6 million dollar bond.

Combining reduced construction cost with the lowest interest in decades will result in real savings. We can save as much as half a million in construction cost and over 1.3 million in interest if we are ready to go by spring.

Also I need to point out that ambulance fees will cover the cost of the bond meaning that the project can be paid for without raising property taxes.

Rarely have we had such a great opportunity to address a real need in a cost effective manner.

I urge each of you to come out on February 9th and cast your vote in support of our firefighters and our community. Certainly they deserve our support and the timing couldn't be better.

In closing let me say that we can only succeed if each of us is a part of the process. By working together we can be sure that Saco will continue to be the greatest city in Maine.

D. Music Interlude:

Thornton Academy Wind Ensemble
Jennifer Witherell-Stebbins, Director
Saco Bay Select Children's Choir
Camille Saucier-Curtis, Director
Steve Boutet, Accompanist

V. ADJOURNMENT to the Atrium

Mayor Michaud declared the meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

ATTEST: _____

Lucette S. Pellerin, City Clerk