

## Regular Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held in Council Chambers on Tuesday, February 2, 2026. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

### Present:

Mayor: Todd Nock

Council Members: R. Scott Holland, S. Tull,  
Diane Downing, Brooke Cottman, C. Marshall

Deputy City Manager: Brandy Matthews

Attorney: Andrew Illuminati

City Clerk: Melinda Stafford

### Pledge of Allegiance, Prayer by Mayor Nock, Call to Order

### Closed Session Summary

Mayor read the post session summary from the previous meeting.

### Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of 01/20/2026 open session made by Councilwoman Downing and seconded by Councilwoman Cottman. Motion passes. Motion to approve the closed session minutes of 1/20/2026 by Councilman Marshall and seconded by Councilwoman Tull. Motion passes. Holland – aye Cottman – aye, Downing – aye, Tull – aye, Marshall – aye.

### Approval of Bill List

The bill list was presented for payment. Comment made by Councilwoman Cottman states that she believes “that current process of requiring the council's approval of bills is inefficient as is evident from the complaints we received from vendors stemming from delayed payments when services have been rendered. I do believe that is it is the mayor and council's responsibility to ensure that funds are handled properly. We should do so by putting qualified people and processes in place, which I believe we have done.” City Manager Matthews acknowledged that the city has a third-party entity conducting annual financial audits. Mayor Nock stated the need to have more work sessions and the need for Council to receive a financial snapshot. He does acknowledge “that the process we have now has been the process for a very long time. I'm not saying that we get rid of the process at all. We just need to look at new ways for things to be integrated and incorporated into it. I'm not sure if there is a system that the city has that can necessarily keep track of it and continue to provide us. This is just really the checks and balances.” Councilman Holland comments “Like I said previously, I think last week that we need to address the bills list so that all bills are passed to the council. And I agree with the mayor. I know City manager Matthews has said that there are ways to help fix this and make it more transparent.”

Motion to approve by Councilwoman Cottman, seconded by Councilwoman Downing. Motion passes. Holland – aye, Marshall – aye, Tull – aye, Downing – aye, Cottman – aye

### Special 4<sup>th</sup> Friday Permits

Karah Lacey requested their annual year-wide license for Fourth Friday Street Festivals running April through September from 5 to 8 PM, totaling six events per year. Questions about food truck regulations arose and Ms. Lacey informed the Council that the regulations have improved, though Worcester County remains challenging due to Ocean City regulations. Two food trucks are already registered for the spring festival. Motion to approve made by

It was also stated that the Downtown Pocomoke Association currently has a vacancy in the events coordinator position and is having monthly meetings to take more responsibility as members. Mayor

Nock encouraged the DPA to build out the events themselves rather than relying heavily on city staff. Motion to approve by Councilman Marshall, seconded by Councilwoman Cottman. Motion passes. Holland – aye, Marshall – aye, Tull – aye, Downing – aye, Cottman – aye.

### Crime Statistics Report and Police Department Report

Chief Hancock presented a comprehensive report on the Pocomoke City Police Department's performance and accomplishments over the past five years. Department Statistics include serving 3.9 square miles with approximately 4,300 residents, handles approximately 25,000 calls for service annually, average response time: 2 minutes and 47 seconds.

Crime Statistics (Five-Year Period) include: Overall crime rate: 56.04 per 1,000 people (slightly above national average of 56), violent crime rate: 34.28 per 1,000 people (slightly above national average of 34), property crime rate: 21.77 per 1,000 people (below national average of 22) zero homicides in five year, zero shots fired calls in the past 71 days

Department Accomplishments includes increased staffing from 5 to 10 officers with 83% retention rate, added two K-9 units and certified first drug recognition expert, updated all vehicles (previously 17+ years old), replaced all portable and vehicle radios, new live scan fingerprint machine (\$30,000), added new equipment including body cameras, tasers, computers, laptops, three bilingual officers, implemented REMAC medical training program, shot detector system installed (69% decrease in incidents since October 2025), added 26 citywide camera views and 4 live LPRs. Chief Hancock addressed criticism on social media, stating that elected officials owe the department an apology for unfounded attacks. He emphasized that all statistics come from UCR reports generated by computer without his involvement. The K-9 lease program was explained, where handlers own the dogs to avoid long-term medical obligations for the city.

### Comments

#### a. Comments from the Audience

1. Lynn Duffy – stated other crime websites show Pocomoke City as second highest in Maryland for crime. Requested chat enabled for meeting broadcasts. Provided information about upcoming MRA bills regarding firearms and ammunition regulations, confirmed satisfaction with bill approval process improvements. The Mayor responded that they have no control over the comment section.

#### b. Comments from the City Manager

1. February 6th is the last day to register for District 1 or District 2 elections
2. Work session scheduled for Wednesday at 6:30 PM
3. Market Street repaving project on hold due to cold weather, meeting scheduled Thursday at 10 AM to discuss timeline. Project will take approximately 15 days to complete when weather permits
4. City approved as participant in Sustainable Maryland program for grant opportunities
5. Fairgrounds barn cleaning scheduled, will take about one week
6. Sidewalk repairs from water meter installation delayed until warmer weather, completion by April 1<sup>st</sup>
7. Job postings the Events and Engagement Coordinator and grant regular positions were both posted with currently seven applicants for the Engagement and Events coordinator.

The City Manager reminded the Council of the need to figure out if this is part time whether this is to be a full-time position. Mayor Nock believes the need should be full time due to multiple people wearing different hats. Councilman Marshall believes the person selected can be in charge of and other fundraising opportunities as well. He sees it as a necessary job and as one that will definitely benefit city.

c. Comments from the Council

1. Councilwoman Cottman - thanked Chief Hancock for the informative report and acknowledged the department's continuous efforts
2. Councilwoman Downing – Stay warm, thank you all for being here tonight
3. Councilwoman Tull - announced a Black History program on February 20th at the public library and suggested collaboration with Chief Hancock on community engagement events.
4. Councilman Marshall - announced attendance at tourism conference in Annapolis on February 13th and plans for Veterans Memorial by the river flag as the first project for the economic development committee.
5. Councilman Holland -. Commented that when the streaming of meetings began, comments were taken by chat. However, agreed with the mayor that they are not in control of online questions and comments.

d. Comments from the Mayor

“On February 12th there will be the first hearing for House Bill 239. I'm going on the record unequivocally saying I'm completely against House Bill 239. So, House Bill 239 would permit, prohibit local governments from adapting or enforcing many traditional zoning regulations. So basically, the state is literally trying to strip municipalities of their power and tell us what we can and can't have in our cities. We have in our code. There is a minimum lot size that we have in Boatload City. Well, guess what? That bill is designed to tell us that we can't tell somebody the lot is too small for a house. It also will not let us tell people how far back their house has to be from the property. It has lot coverage limits. It also takes us out of the process of design and architectural elements. So basically, the whole talk that we had about mobile homes going on properties and y' all remember, it's just about a year ago, they're basically telling us you can't tell people you can't put a mobile home on Market Street. There's a lot of exclusion that's in it and it limits subdividing lots. That doesn't work for us. If this bill passes, we will literally have to come to the table and redo our whole entire code. We don't have the bandwidth to do it. It's not fair. The state. I'm not going to go there. I'm just not happy about it. And I hope that our citizens will come together and they will write letters against this bill. And if people want to testify against it, please let me know. I can put them in communication with the proper people. I'm not happy about this at all. I feel like this direction is a setback for municipalities and local jurisdictions and it's not right. I had a great time at the Fireman's Banquet.”

“I just feel like we're never included in these decisions, discussions. We are, we are an afterthought and it really upsets me. We worked hard, all six of us saved up here just to restore our planning and zoning commission only for me to get online and see this building. We have been struggling trying to figure out resources going and getting GMB to, to basically run our planning and zoning department for us so we don't have to come to a halt.

And now the state is doing this. It is despicable. It is disgusting. Our state legislator needs to get on the ball and think about all of the citizens of this state and not people that live in one demographic or one general area. If they want to. If they want to pass legislation, pass legislation to stop this predatory. To stop this predatory spending for electricity. I'm just asking for our state legislature, and I'm sure I'll get. I'll get feedback from it, but I'm just asking for our state legislature to do a lot better and think about small towns and rural areas in this state because we're not all big cities.”

Motion to adjourn at 7:40pm by Councilwoman Cottman, seconded by Councilwoman Downing.

Approved:   
City Clerk