

## Regular Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held in the Council Chambers at City Hall on Monday, April 29, 2019. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

Present: Mayor Bruce Morrison  
First Vice President: Todd J. Nock  
Council Members: Diane Downing,  
Dale Trotter, R. Scott Holland, Esther Troast  
City Attorney: Roscoe Leslie  
City Clerk: Michelle Beckett-El Soloh

Call to Order, Prayer by Pastor Wayne Ayer and Pledge of Allegiance @ 6:30 PM.

Review and Approval of Bills:

Motion to approve and pay bills on current bill list (Troast, Downing passed) @ 6:32 PM.

Acclamation: Trotter-aye, Holland-aye, Nock-aye, Downing-aye, Troast-aye; none opposed

Discuss "Archive Social":

Karah Lacey, Events Coordinator, Archive Social is a company that archives government social media accounts. She emailed the Council some information regarding Archive Social a couple weeks ago. It records and archives several accounts in real-time. It allows us to be compliant to the MD Public Information Act. As you know, once a social post is edited, deleted or a user is blocked you cannot get a posting back unless it's archived. Without archiving, we are losing records daily. There are other companies that do media archiving but this company archives live-feeds and videos that happen live. This company was used in the Obama administration and larger cities like DC and New York. It is also used in Cities in Maryland such as Greenbelt, Seat Pleasant, laurel and Queen Anne's County. She has done training on the phone with them and they have been great, the price is affordable. It is \$199.00 per month but we can get 13 months for the price of 12 months. There is room for 10 City accounts so we can include the Police Dept, Recreation Dept, EMS would be covered as well as Twitter and Instagram are covered too. I think we should consider approving this. Councilmember Trotter clarified billing. Mrs. Lacey explained monthly billing is more expensive but if you pay annually you get the discount month free.

Motion to approve subscribing with Archive Social media archiving (Troast, Downing passed) @ 6:40PM

Acclamation: Trotter-aye, Holland-aye, Nock-aye, Downing-aye, Troast-aye; none opposed

Councilmember Nock recognized former Councilmember George Tasker and thanked him for being in the audience.

Discuss Restaurant Updates:

Planning Director Brandewie stated the restaurant renovations and painting is almost complete. There still is a minor leak around the garage door. Mr. Evans believed that he can fix that himself with caulking. It will be watched and if still leaks a granite slab will need to be replaced. Target date to in

restaurant by 3<sup>rd</sup> week in May. Total cost to date is \$18,812.00. Councilmember Holland asked if missed payments are being followed up on? Planning Director Brandewie commented that is not included at this time. This is only repairs.

Discuss Playground Fence Quote for Cypress Park:

Public Works Director, Bill East said an email including a quote for Cypress Park was sent out to Council for review. There is a difference in approximately \$2,000.00 for each type of fence. Councilmember Trotter said he knows a lot of children play there. Parents have said that they like a chain-link fence for safety reasons. But the split rail looks better. Councilmember Nock asked if all the grant money \$40,000.00 has been spent. Councilmember Troast said some of that money was spent at the other park on equipment also. She understands the preference of chain link fence but prefers split rail. Bill East said we can still put some split rail up for visual purposes even if chain link is used.

Motion to use chain link fencing at Cypress Park and add decorative split rail in front and to accept bid quote for fencing (Trotter, Troast passed) @ 6:50PM

Acclamation: Trotter-aye, Holland-aye, Nock-aye, Downing-aye, Troast-aye; none opposed

Public Works Director East also said that the grass cutting contractor has already cut the Fairgrounds but it will need to be done again before the Sunday circus event.

First Reading of Charter, Section C-22 Resolution (Removal of City Manager):

Councilman Nock read (City Charter requires 2 readings) first reading of resolution to remove current City Manager.

Motion to remove current City Manager under City Charter, Section C-22 by resolution (Holland, Downing passed) @

Acclamation: Trotter-nay, Holland-aye, Nock-aye, Downing-aye, Troast-nay; 2 opposed, Motion passed

Councilmember Nock declared resolution passed and resolution was signed by Councilmembers.

Discuss City Manager Position Job Qualifications:

Councilmember Nock said Mr. Gleason is the Human Resources Rep for the City and is the go-to person for any issues regarding the City Manager position. The Mayor & Council is committed to maintaining the City until the position has been filled. Mr. Gleason read the City Manager Job Position ad. Councilmember Nock said the job will be posted starting May 1, 2019 until May 31, 2019.

Council Comments

Councilmember Trotter said repairs need to be made to the end of the sidewalks at the dock. It is falling away due to erosion.

Councilmember Nock said he walked the trail at Cypress Park. There is still a lot of work to be done. A group of volunteers is needed to finish the work. The Recreation Department will help with the gathering the volunteers. The work that has been done probably should have been contracted out. Public Works has put a lot of time into that project and has taken them out of the Heights. Public Works will be back to working on the water next week.

### Audience Comments

Laurie Kamps, 1306 Dorchester Ave, asked how can the City post a position when things have not been resolved with the current manager? City Attorney Leslie said the process is 30 days to finalize things with the current manager. At this point the Council is exploring options so as not to be caught off guard at the end of 30-days.

KeriAnn Foster, 813 Market St, she understands the vote to remove the City Manager was 3 to 2. It was mentioned that the Council was not happy with the performance of the City Manager. Does the public have the right to know what the reasons in closed sessions were? City Attorney Leslie said the process that is in the City Charter allows the City Manager to ask for a public hearing. At that point, it can go public. As of right now, it is a personnel matter and confidential.

Paul Mason, 1011 Linwood Dr, he has lived there all his life. He has been involved with infrastructure and been involved with City Managers of several towns. Mr. Cowger was easy to work with. Mr. Mason has been to classes to learn how to deal with employees. He has had cases with employees. He wanted to know if the City has any documentation and if there were any warnings or what kind of attempts were made to correct the situation? Councilmember Nock said it is still a personnel matter but understand that we took time and were very diligent. Contrary to popular belief, it wasn't an overnight decision.

Susan Harrison, 2610 Cambrook Dr, she was reading minutes from past meetings and there was a document signed by all the Councilmembers stating the Mayor was supposed to provide a medical evaluation back in December 2018. What became of that? Councilmember Nock said under our current Charter, there is no jurisdiction to vote the Mayor out. It was his decision that was left up to him. He decided to stay and as a Council we respect that decision.

Ann Hurley, (address inaudible). Lives in the Heights. She has had bad water and had to buy 2 washing machines because of it. It has ruined her ice maker and her clothes. She wanted to clarify that public Works would be back in the Heights. Councilmember Nock said yes, they will resume work next week. Ms. Hurley said she has complained many times but Mr. Cowger is the only person who cared and has prioritized the water issues and got things done.

George Young, owns 4 business in the Pocomoke City, has worked with the last couple City Managers. He feels that out of all the managers, that in less than 2 years-time, Mr. Cowger has completed the most. (*audience applause*). He's never seen anybody work as hard as Bobby Cowger. He would like to see the 31 points they had against him because he doesn't believe any of them were true. Bobby has been out on excavators and digging ditches on a Friday night. That shows he has had the most love for the Pocomoke City. Honestly, this makes him want to move all 4 of his business out of Pocomoke. Where else are you going to get someone like that? He told Bobby before he took the job to be ready for 100 fires to start because things were let go for so long. (*audience applause*)

Motion to adjourn meeting (Trotter, Troast passed) @ 7:09PM

Acclamation: Trotter-aye, Holland-aye, Nock-aye, Downing-aye, Troast-aye; none opposed

K.M. Beckett-El Soloh

City Clerk