

## Regular Meeting Minutes

### POCOMOKE CITY MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING

6:30 PM, Monday, August 20, 2018

#### City Hall

Present: Mayor Bruce Morrison  
First Vice President Esther Troast  
Council Members: Diane Downing, Todd Nock,  
George Tasker  
City Manager: Robert L. Cowger, Jr  
City Attorney: Roscoe Leslie  
City Clerk: Michelle Beckett

#### Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance

In a motion (Troast, Tasker passed) call to order meeting @ 6:28 PM

In a motion (Tasker, Downing passed) approval of minutes from meeting of July 23, 2018 and August 06, 2018 @ 6:32 PM

In a motion (Tasker, Downing) review and approval of bills @ 6:35 PM

#### Presentation of Public Works employee appreciation gifts

Councilwoman Troast called Public Works Dept to come forward. The City and Council wanted to recognize the City's Public Works Dept. other than just seeing them in the streets and saying hi. Councilwoman Troast Stated that over the past 6 months or more they have performed above and beyond their job titles. The City is so appreciative; the whole city should be appreciative and we are speaking on the citizens behalf tonight not just on the behalf of the council but on the behalf of the City that we couldn't be prouder of a group of men standing in front of us now. Councilwoman Troast said "You all know how I feel about you, we love you all so much, you're not just employees but family. You all are extraordinary. Pocomoke is blessed to have you. And I know we've asked you to do things out of your comfort zone but you've done it with a smile, you've not complained and keep right on working. We couldn't be prouder of you. What we are presenting to you is a small token of appreciation and we wish it could be more but hopefully in December it will be more. You've worked extremely hard and have earned this."

City Manager added that he has worked in construction for 30 years and have been out there with them. There have been some nights out till 11, 12 even 1AM and it's rare that you don't hear a crew working such hours and not complain. City Manager Cowger states he is proud to be out there with them and he knows he is asking a lot out of them but they are getting it done.

Councilman Tasker added he is also proud of them and thanked Bill East for his leadership. He has also done construction and knows what it's like from the coal mines to have hard conditions and long hours.

#### MD Dept of the Environment Settlement Agreement

City Manager stated this paperwork is an agreement for a fine received from MDE dated back from August 2013 to August 2016 when the City had used an area back by the lagoon for a dumping site and MDE came in and cited them. The City did clean it up which cost quite a bit of money. They thought it was settled about a year ago after the clean-up then we got a letter for \$160,000.00. The City Attorney Roscoe was notified and did a great job getting it negotiated down to \$30,000.00. \$10,000.00 a year for the next 3 years. City Attorney stated the original amount of the fine was \$130,000.00.

#### Grant for Vacuum Truck

The USDA has some grant money available. We are applying for it. The Public Works guys you just complimented use an old vacuum truck that they bought about 10 years ago. The truck is so worn out and the pump barely works. We have got to have a pump truck. Going this route first we are looking at about \$75,000.00 to buy a good refurbished pump truck. If the USDA approves this it would be a 75/25% deal. USDA would pay \$58,000.00 and we would pay \$18,000.00 roughly. We should hear something shortly. But if not, we'll definitely have to bite the bullet and buy a pump truck. The problems we had with that thing had us out late, we wouldn't have been out that late until 12 and 1 AM those 3 nights if it wasn't at least partially for the problems with that truck. Councilwoman Troast asked how long to get a response from USDA. City Manager Cowger answered approximately 60 days. We just need council approval to submit USDA grant.

In a motion (Downing, Nock) to approve submittal of USDA pump truck grant papers @ 7:10 PM

#### Discuss USDA Revised Promissory Note for Ord. 442 Exhibits A & B

City Manager Cowger stated that the governing body has sent this back a 4<sup>th</sup> time to have the language changed. The attorneys have resubmitted it for the council to sign. It's their language and they keep changing it and going back and forth. The attorney Damian sent it back to us again end of last week. City Attorney Roscoe explains that now there is a new heading, Exhibit A and Exhibit B. Exhibit B will be the final correct language version will be the Exhibit B. City Manager Cowger stated that this hasn't held anything up. We've been borrowing against the loan. This has just been administrative clean up. New signatures by the council are needed.

#### Comments from Council

Tasker states no comments

Nock Received email from Eugene Grant, Seat Pleasant. City Manager Cowger stated that still needs to be discussed

City Manager Cowger stated he has 2 updates. Jerry Bozman who is doing the paving. The pavement on Broad St is all done, 8th St from railroad tracks to Cedar St is done, Lynnhaven Dr got finished got finished today, the entire length of Lynnhaven to Somerset Ave to McDonald's and they are prepping Newtown Blvd. That was the main ones from the money for selling trees. Jerry has done a very good job.

City Manager also stated he would like to give an update to clarify Pocomoke Bike Week. We have solicited sponsors. To date, we have 3-\$1,000.00 lead sponsors, 18-\$100.00 sponsors and 3-\$500.00 sponsors. In all \$6,300.00 to help pay expenses for the event. The event itself is from 12 PM to 6 PM and might carry over until 8 PM depending on attendance but the event is strictly from 12 PM to 6 PM. We have a DJ from 12 PM to 3 PM, RT 13 Band from 3 PM to 6 PM, Tyler Wall who is giving boat rides up and down the river from 12 PM to 6 PM, numerous food and soda vendors and beer and wine section that will be roped off, Pocomoke Bike Week tee-shirts, hats and pins. Charlotte Motor Speedway is giving away 2 grandstand passes and 2 pit passes, Pocomoke Bike Week leather jacket, Shorebirds are giving season passes, Ocean City is donating a weekend stay. The more this is being advertised the more giveaways are coming in. Two weeks ago, a call from Solomon's island came in and wanted to make reservations for yachts. This includes 10 to 15 yachts for Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The City's involvement is no more than what the City does for other events. We are closing Market St. from 2nd St to Clarke Ave for bike traffic and parking. Clarke Ave to Front St will be where the vendor tents are set up so you can walk up and down, the grass area where the Pocomoke sign is near Front St and Market St will be the controlled, fenced in beer and wine area. The City crew will come in around 8 AM to close the street and begin setting up to begin at 12 PM and things will be closed down and regular traffic restored by 9 PM. Several merchants had an issue with the street closure so what will be done is designate the Bethany Church parking lot for strictly business parking. We want this to be a community event and not just for bikers. This got started because the restaurant, for the last 2 years during the Delmarva Bike Week, has always been on the "must-stop" for the poker run. Locals had a big interest in drawing in the business and being included in the festivities. Local businesses can contact us for arrangements to set-up.

#### Comments from Audience

Jaime Evans, owner of XO Beanery & Bites, wanted to know the exact hours of the street closures. He stated closing the street 4 hours before the event is his busiest day and time. City Manager Cowger stated we can still let some local traffic thru and open the designated business parking areas.

Planning and Zoning Director, Dan Brandewie stated he has a new part-time employee, Jeremy Mason, who has been hired as a Code Inspector and will be working 2 ½ days a

week. Jason knows a lot of people in town and is very familiar with the history of Pocomoke City.

Lt. Hancock stated he had a barricade situation early August 18, 2018 Saturday morning off of Oxford street at 3:50 AM. The decision was made to evacuate Oxford St and Berwyck Circle. County STAR team was called in. Five hours later the subject surrendered. Initially, the information was that he was armed. It was found that he was armed with a weapon but had no ammunition. Everyone went home safely to their families with no further problems. Upon speaking with City Manager Cowger regarding another issue is parking issues. After doing some research, it was learned that in 2016 the State of Maryland took in over \$4.2 million in parking citations alone. Smaller agencies might make up only 1% of that total but in trying trying to come up with better things for the City, the citizens and the Department, regarding parking complaints we have several options. Pocomoke City is one of the very few agencies left in Maryland the doesn't have their own municipal parking citations. As of right now, we either follow our City ordinance and issue a civil citation or issue a MD State citation for the amount of \$50.00-\$150.00. Article 3, Chapter 220 of our City ordinance doesn't vary much from the MD State citation. As it stands currently, all parking, stopping and standing local citations are \$50.00 each. When the Department writes a MD State citation, the City of Pocomoke doesn't see any of that income. If we implement a municipal parking citation it does 2 things, it's usually a lesser amount and the money goes directly to the Pocomoke general fund as revenue. Citizens might have mixed feelings about parking citations because of amount changes, even though the fine could be less. Council was asked to consider updating and implementing a municipal parking citation.

Councilman Nock stated as of September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018, we are going to start going through the City Charter updates and we need to appoint people for the work-sessions because it will be September 30<sup>th</sup> before we know it. Also, there are 2 stop signs, one on Laurel St and the other on 4th St that need to be moved up because people are stopping at the signs and can't see around the houses. Most people will stop at the sign and then do a rolling stop until they can see clearly but some do not.

Councilmembers decide that the next council meeting will be Tuesday, September 4, 2018 due to Labor Day falling on a Monday.

Councilwoman Troast stated we need to recruit people from the public to form a panel to hear and give opinions on changes made to City Charter. It is decided that Dan Brandewie, Director of Planning and Zoning, should be part of the City Charter panel. It is also decided that after changes are drafted that is the time for the panel to hear changes and have input.

Bill Sparrow of 1955 Orchard Dr stated that the council has to have a public hearing once changes are drafted.

Tonya Ginn of 732 9<sup>th</sup> St stated that she has seen water stains in her toilet and smelled a rotten smell from the water mainly in her master bathroom for the last 2 weeks. City Manager Cowger said he could stop by her house and check the water.

Ronnie White of 804 Walnut St stated he has already reported the street and sidewalk sinking in front of his house where he parks. City Manager Cowger stated it is probably due to the terra cotta pipe and repairs in the past weren't done correctly. That area will also be looked at.

In a motion (Nock, Tasker passed) to adjourn to closed session @ 7:35 PM

Adjourn to closed session under the provisions of Sec. 3-305 (b), (1) of the General Provisions Annotated Code of Maryland to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation or performance evaluation of appointees, employees or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals.