

Regular Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held in Council Chambers on Monday, May 4, 2026 meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm.

Present:

Mayor: Todd J. Nock
Council Members: C.L. Marshall, M. Hall, S. Tull,
D. Downing, B. Cottman
City Manager: Brandy Matthews
Attorney: Andrew Illuminati
City Clerk: Melinda Stafford

Pledge of Allegiance, Prayer by Councilmember Marshall, Call to Order

Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Councilmember Cottman to approve the minutes from April 20, 2026. Seconded by Councilmember Downing. Motion passes. Hall – aye, Marshall – aye, Downing – aye, Tull – aye, Cottman-aye.

Approval of Bill List

The bill list was presented for payment. Motion to approve by Councilmember Cottman, seconded by Councilmember Tull. Motion passes. Hall – aye, Marshall – aye, Downing – aye, Tull – aye, Cottman-aye.

Approval of CIPP Phase 2 Mainlining America, LLC Balancing Change Order – Presented by GMB

John Hibschan of GMB Engineering appeared before Council. Mr. Hibschan explained that this was the balancing change order to close out the Market Street Phase 2 lining project. The change order resulted in a credit to the contract amount of \$57,903.73, reducing the contract from the bid amount of \$1,734,713.00 down to \$1,676,809.27.

During discussion, Mr. Hibschan clarified that this change order would allow the city to issue final payment to Mainline America LLC, which would complete the paperwork exercise for the project. The physical work had already been completed. He noted that final payment would come at a later date, and that the project would not be fully completed until the state came in and paid everything.

A motion was made by Councilmember Marshall to approve the change order as presented by GMB. The motion was properly seconded by Councilmember Hall. The motion passed unanimously with all members voting in favor. Hall – aye, Marshall – aye, Downing – aye, Tull – aye, Cottman-aye

Approval of Pocomoke City Street Improvement Bids

John Hibschan of GMB Engineering presented the street improvement project bids. He reported that three bids were received and opened on April 28, 2026. The bids received were:

1. Mike Houck Construction: \$523,335.97 (low bidder)
2. Terra Firma: \$557,569.00
3. Asphalt Maintenance LLC: \$594,677.00

Mr. Richmond stated that all bidders acknowledged the correct addendums and provided bid bonds. GMB conducted due diligence by calling references for Mike Houck Construction, contacting the City of Fruitland, which had used the contractor extensively and provided good feedback. GMB recommended that Pocomoke City award the construction contract to Mike Houck Construction in the amount of \$523,335.97.

During discussion, a council member raised concerns about cost versus efficiency, noting that cheaper does not always mean more efficient. The council member asked about the timeframe for work and penalties for non-completion, referencing delays experienced during the Market Street project. Mr. Hibschan explained that all bidders were obligated to complete work within the same contract time, which he estimated to be approximately 90 days, though he did not have the exact contract time available.

Mr. Hibschan explained that liquidated damages could be assessed if the contractor exceeded the final completion date or substantial completion date. The penalties varied per day and were larger before substantial completion as opposed to final completion. He confirmed that the City of Fruitland had extensive positive experience with Mike Houck Construction, based on conversations with the city manager.

Council members expressed concern about proper notification to residents, citing issues during the Mainline project where residents received inadequate notice of water shutoffs. Mr. Hibschman committed to providing at least 72 hours' notice before closing any roads, with physical door hangers and notifications to the city manager for posting. A council member requested that all door hangers clearly indicate the work is outsourced and properly use city seals and logos.

Discussion occurred regarding the project timeline, with City Manager Matthews confirming that the work must be completed before July 1st. Mr. Hibschman indicated that once approved, GMB would issue a notice to proceed to the contractor, which would officially start the contract time.

A motion was made by Councilmember Marshall to approve the bid as presented by Mike Houck Construction and presented by GMB. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Downing. The motion passed unanimously with all members voting in favor. Hall – aye, Marshall – aye, Downing – aye, Tull – aye, Cottman-aye

Approval of Special One Day Alcohol Permit – Trader Baby Shower – 05/16/2026

The Mayor opened discussion on a special one-day alcohol permit for a Trader baby shower to be held at the community center. He also expressed confusion about the need for liquor at a baby shower, stating that if they were the expectant mother who liked to drink, they would be upset. The councilmembers clarified they were not suggesting denial of the permit, but simply did not understand it, acknowledging that times have changed. A motion was made by Councilmember Marshall to approve the one-day special permit and seconded by Councilmember Cottman. The motion passed unanimously with all members. Hall – aye, Marshall – aye, Downing – aye, Tull – aye, Cottman-aye

Approval of Special One Day Alcohol Permit – Cooper Wedding & Reception – 06/14/2026

The Mayor presented a special one-day alcohol permit for the Cooper wedding and reception to be held on June 14, 2026, from 3:00 PM to 9:00 PM. The permit was for beer, wine, and liquor for 100 attendees. With no discussion, a motion was made by Councilmember Hall and properly seconded by Councilmember Cottman. The motion passed unanimously with all members voting in favor. Hall – aye, Marshall – aye, Downing – aye, Tull – aye, Cottman-aye

Approval of Special One Day Alcohol Permit – Roblero Quinceanera – June 20, 2026

The Mayor expressed strong concern about serving alcohol at a 15-year-old's birthday party, calling it a child's party. Another council member explained that quinceañeras are common events in Hispanic culture, noting that in Somerset County they hold such events monthly at the civic center, generating \$1,500 to \$2,000 per event.

The Mayor questioned why no one was present to answer questions about the event and what safeguards would be in place to prevent minors from consuming alcohol. Another council member responded that safeguards are in place through the licensed commissioner and the facility (Pocomoke City Firehouse), which are responsible for enforcement.

A motion was made by Councilmember Cottman and properly seconded by Councilmember Tull. The motion passed with all members voting in favor. The motion passed unanimously with all members voting in favor. Hall – aye, Marshall – aye, Downing – aye, Tull – aye, Cottman-aye

Approval of Special One Day Alcohol Permit – Johnson Birthday Party – June 27, 2026

The Mayor presented a special one-day alcohol permit for a Johnson birthday party to be held on June 27, 2026, from 4:00 PM to 10:00 PM. The permit was for beer, wine, and liquor for 100 attendees. A motion was made by Councilmember Downing and properly seconded by Councilmember Cottman. The motion passed unanimously with all members voting in favor. Hall – aye, Marshall – aye, Downing – aye, Tull – aye, Cottman-aye

The Mayor noted that representatives from four events had been approved without anyone from the community center being present to answer questions, and asked if anyone from the fairgrounds was in attendance. Miss Gloria was identified as being present.

Approval of Fairground Event - Zerbini Family Circus - May 11, 2026

Gloria, representing the fairgrounds, presented information about the Sabrina Family Circus event scheduled for May 11, 2026. She described it as the easiest event held at the fairgrounds besides the Saturday event. Gloria explained that the circus handles everything, contracting with the fairgrounds in the fall and selling tickets online. The circus would arrive Sunday night from Greenville, North Carolina, set up Monday, perform their show, and take everything down. She stated that by Tuesday, it would be difficult to tell they had been there, noting that this group is excellent for cleaning up.

With no discussion, a motion was made for approval by Councilmember Cottman. The motion was properly seconded by Councilmember Downing. The motion passed unanimously with all members voting in favor. Hall – aye, Marshall – aye, Downing – aye, Tull – aye, Cottman-aye

Approval of Fairground Event -Fireman's Muster - May 23, 2026

Gloria presented information about the Fireman's Muster scheduled for May 23, 2026. She acknowledged not knowing much about the Fireman's Muster specifically, as she had worked with people whose families were in the fire service but had no direct experience with the event.

The event application indicated that Fire Company Industries would deal with event operations, starting at 10:00 AM. Emergency medical services and fire prevention would be on site. The application requested that grass be cut and trimmed along fence lines, poles and posts, and that grandstand bleachers be washed. No liquor or food would be sold beyond fairgrounds concessions. The application included traffic control and parking information, and required additional permits, licensing, insurance, bonds, and liability certificates. During discussion, the Mayor expressed concern about the condition of the bleachers, stating they need serious power washing due to dust from the limestone track, and noted that limestone dust makes the bleachers difficult to sit on. City staff indicated they would work to address the grass cutting and power washing requests before the event.

A council member emphasized the need for better communication through email rather than phone calls, noting that email provides documentation and accountability for ensuring tasks are completed.

A motion was made by Councilmember Marshall to approve the fireman's muster as presented. The motion was properly seconded by Councilmember Hall. The motion passed unanimously with all members voting in favor. Hall – aye, Marshall – aye, Downing – aye, Tull – aye, Cottman-aye

Approval of Fairground Event - Food Truck Festival - June 20, 2026

Gloria presented information about the Food Truck Festival scheduled for June 28, 2026, from 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM. She indicated this would be a first-time event and might be small in the first year. Several food truck operators had signed up. Gloria explained that parking would be on-site and would not be a traffic issue, so no parking layout was submitted. The gentleman organizing the event had been a vendor at the fair last year and was familiar with Worcester County Health Department requirements, allowing him to advise other participating vendors.

During discussion, a council member confirmed that vendors understood they must obtain permits from the county. Gloria confirmed the organizer's familiarity with health department requirements. Council members inquired about music or other activities in conjunction with the food trucks. Gloria indicated there would be another meeting the following Monday to discuss adding additional elements beyond food trucks.

Council members commended the fairgrounds staff for their work. Gloria was asked to submit flyers for the city's events page for promotional purposes. She indicated she had an event schedule but not flyers yet, and agreed to provide them.

A motion was made to approve the food truck festival by Councilmember Downing. The motion was properly seconded by Councilmember Cottman. The motion passed unanimously with all members voting in favor. Hall – aye, Marshall – aye, Downing – aye, Tull – aye, Cottman-aye

First Reading of Ordinance 2026-O-10; An Ordinance of the Mayor and City Council of the Pocomoke, Maryland Amending the Pocomoke City Code to Authorize the Placement of Unpaid Code Enforcement Fines on Municipal Utility Bills After Sixty (60) Days

The Mayor presented the first reading of Ordinance 2026-O-10, amending the Pocomoke City, Maryland code to authorize the placement of unpaid code enforcement fines on municipal water bills after 60 days.

The summation of the ordinance indicated it amends Section 1-20 definitions to add a definition for utility bills. It also adds Section 1-29 entitled "Delinquency and Transfer to Utility Account," which sets forth the process for collection of unpaid municipal infractions via utility bill. A full copy of the ordinance was made available at City Hall for review.

First Reading of Ordinance 2026-O-11; An Ordinance of the Mayor and City Council of Pocomoke City, Maryland to Amend Chapter 206 of the Pocomoke City Code "Critical Area Program"

The Mayor presented the first reading of Ordinance 2026-O-11, an ordinance of the Mayor and City Council of Pocomoke City, Maryland, to amend Chapter 206 of the Pocomoke City Code for the Critical Area Program.

The summation indicated that following the adoption of Ordinance 2026-04, the Critical Areas Commission provided comments to modify Chapter 206 to:

- Set forth the initial adoption date of the Critical Area Ordinance at the state level as January 4, 1988
- Enumerate the code enforcement officers or designees as the point of contact for critical area matters
- Address standards for variance compliance with COMAR Title 27, Subtitle 1
- Provide an appellate process for enforcement actions
- Amend various definitions

Comments

a. Comments from the Audience

1. Regina Wilson, residing at 206 Second Street, appeared before Council. Ms. Wilson expressed frustration about dust problems related to the fairgrounds track. She stated that she walked out her door that morning to "a mouthful of dust" which was awful. Ms. Wilson indicated she had come before Council previously about this issue but emphasized this was an ongoing problem. The Mayor acknowledged it was ridiculous for anyone to be running horses at 5:00 AM, and noted that even with spraying, people would still hear the noise. He confirmed that Pocomoke has a noise ordinance which was also violated. The police department had tracked down who was running the track that morning and that there would be consequences.
2. Lynn Duffy - addressed recent issues with fiber optic installation work in her neighborhood. She stated that she and neighbors were cursed at, bullied, and harassed about their properties by contractors. It was explained that city staff had previously informed residents there were utility easements on the side of properties. She criticized the contractors' treatment of Pocomoke City residents and stated that anyone representing Pocomoke City should have proper documentation clearly identifying them as working on behalf of the city. She raised concerns about trash receptacle requirements. Stated she had three trash cans destroyed in two years, with lids ripped in half and wheels ripped off. She observed city workers throwing cans "like frisbees" over the past two weeks. Ms. Duffy raised concerns about a new pedestrian crossing light with flashing signals in front of the high school, questioning whether it might cause traffic backups but acknowledging it also addresses speeding issues on that road. She raised questions about vacant buildings including Ruby Tuesday and Rite Aid, asking if the city was in talks regarding those properties. The Mayor responded that the Rite Aid has been purchased but no permits have come before the city yet. Regarding Ruby Tuesday, the Mayor stated the owners want to rent rather than sell, making it difficult for businesses that want to buy them out. She also raised concerns about street conditions on Market Street, expressing relief to hear discussion about street improvements that evening, inquired about updates on Walmart development, noting rumors around town for approximately five or more years, support for a

potential veteran's memorial, expressed desire to see the return of a Pocomoke City Prayer Breakfast.

b. Comments from the City Manager

1. reminded all residents to be mindful of grass cutting and lawn upkeep with the upcoming warmer weather. She noted that municipal parking infractions went into effect May 1st and urged residents to be mindful of no parking on sidewalks, fire hydrants, curbs, and handicap spots.
2. expressed excitement for the Streets and Sidewalk project to commence, referring to it as the "Mayor's Safe Path Initiative." She stated enthusiasm about starting the project and continuing through Phase 2, Phase 3, Phase 4, and all subsequent phases until completion.
3. informed residents about a specific events Facebook page called "Events in Pocomoke City" for events occurring in Pocomoke City. She addressed a penny shortage affecting cash payments, explaining that banks are no longer providing pennies. She stated that for cash payments only, if change is 2 cents or 3 cents, customers will receive a credit on their bill. This does not affect credit card or check payments.
4. Regarding the track dust issue raised during public comment, Brandy reported that she contacted Chief Hancock that morning upon learning about the MDE visit. She stated that Public Works would create two signs: one requiring watering of the track prior to use, and another stating track hours would be from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Bailey indicated Chief Hancock had reached out to the primary contact advising them of new rules and that continued dragging of the track while dry constitutes a public nuisance for which the city will start imposing fines.
5. suggested placing cameras in the track area to identify violators when personnel cannot determine who is using the track. She also stated that horses and their owners should have matching tags or medallions identifying which stall they occupy, referencing an incident where a horse ran down Old Virginia Road and broke a fence with no way to identify the owner. Brandy noted that the city has a list of who occupies each stall but not everyone provides telephone numbers. She indicated that not providing a phone number should result in not being permitted to keep a horse in the barn.
6. stated that one horse owner who let their horse out and left required tracking down by animal control, resulting in broken fences. She recommended addressing these issues in a work session.

c. Comments from the City Council Members

1. Councilman Hall- that he has attended hundreds of meetings and commended the Mayor for running a "first-class professional meeting".
2. Councilman Marshall- commended Brandy and the council for their work on getting the street project moving, referring to the "Mayor's Safe Pathway" initiative. He stated he was one step closer to making it happen and expressed confidence it will happen because the selected contractor is familiar to him and he is confident the contractor will do a good job.
3. Councilwoman Tull- she had the chance to go to the fairgrounds for an event hosted by New Macedonia Baptist Church. She expressed how nice it was to see the community out taking part in activities and being outside on a beautiful day.
4. Councilwoman Downing- None
5. Councilwoman Cottman- acknowledged the Pocomoke Police Department and the new application they released for citizens to receive updates. She stated this was awesome and would help provide citizens with information in real time, helping build trust.

d. Comments from the Mayor

1. dispensary was anticipating coming to Pocomoke, stating he had made clear to the City Manager that he did not want it in downtown.
2. The Mayor reported receiving an email Friday night at 9:22 PM that he felt was unfair because he was unable to reach out to city staff at that time. He explained his general practice of

responding to text messages to his personal cell phone, acknowledging he sometimes misses messages. He stated the person had every right to be frustrated, explaining that four years ago, during the process of selling the historic firehouse, Pocomoke City dug up someone's sidewalk completely and put in a sewer line, but never went back to fix it. He expressed anger that he received an email about something that should have been fixed four years ago. Noting that four years ago, he was not the mayor, current staff were not in their positions, some current council members were not on council, the City Manager was not in place, the City Attorney was not in place, and the City Clerk was not in place.

3. The Mayor reported that he walked 8 miles through the town on foot. stated there are places in the city that need lights, emphasizing "we cannot stop crime from happening if it's dark". He stated there needs to be more foot traffic to address issues in the town and neighborhoods, whether furniture on patios or couches on porches. The Mayor noted that curbs, hydrants, and repaved sidewalks look beautiful, but stated "we got a lot of work to do." He emphasized that the city cannot hold residents to a standard that the city is not willing to hold itself to. He talked about rats in some neighboring homes.
4. The Mayor identified the biggest issue as having so many people doing other people's jobs. He stated that anyone on council can ride around with a legal pad and write down what looks right and what looks wrong. The Mayor emphasized the need to get people doing their jobs, because when one person's job is neglected, everybody's job gets affected. He stated he has been watching City Manager Brandy closely for the past three weeks, observing that she is stressed out, tired, needs a break, and is doing too many people's jobs. He noted that before Melinda went on vacation, she was also doing too many people's jobs, appearing tired and stressed out. The Mayor stated "It's time to get it together," clarifying he was not trying to be hard but emphasizing "we're missing some stuff."
5. He acknowledged that the city has no teeth in its code enforcement, stating the city needs to change the code. The Mayor emphasized that if the city holds people accountable, the city has to be willing to be held accountable as well.
6. The Mayor stated he is not in favor of getting on social media and bashing city employees, noting that even in this meeting he has not said anyone's name and is not bashing anyone.
7. acknowledged he was throwing out a lot of information and expressed appreciation for the hard work of city employees, stating their jobs are not easy, especially when answering to six people who sometimes disagree about how to achieve shared goals. He noted that city employees must figure out how to make every council member happy while helping achieve goals.
8. addressed questions about the city's involvement with the Delmarva Discovery Museum, stating this needs to be put on the table rather than festering. He explained that when the city met with Discovery Museum representatives after rumors of closing, both the city and county took the same stance: requiring a business plan. The Mayor expressed hope that the museum will be able to present a business plan to the city and county so both can provide desired assistance.

Motion to adjourn to closed session at 8:02 pm by Councilmember Cottman, seconded by Councilmember Downing.

Approved:


City Clerk