

Special Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held in the Council Chambers on Monday, September 28, 2026. The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm.

Present:

Mayor: Todd J. Nock

Council Members: M. Hall, C.L. Marshall, S. Tull, D. Downing, B. Cottman

City Manager: Brandy Matthews

Attorney: Andrew Illuminati

City Clerk: Lacey Merritt

Pledge of Allegiance, Prayer, Call to Order

Mayor Nock called the meeting to order at 6:30pm, the Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all in attendance, and Pastor Harmon led the prayer.

Approval of Bill List

The bill list was presented for payment. Motion to approve the bill list as presented made by Council Member Downing. Seconded by Council Member Cottman. Mayor Nock called for any unreadiness or discussion. During discussion, Council Member Hall noted that residents have asked whether the City supports the Great Pocomoke Fair. Council Member Hall explained that the City was preparing to approve payment of \$8,862 associated with the fair, specifically for the winners of the horse races, and stated that this information should be made known to the public. There being no further discussion, the Mayor called for a vote.

Mayor Nock called for any unreadiness or discussion. Mayor Nock called for a vote. Hall – aye, Marshall – aye, Tull – aye, Downing – aye, Cottman – aye.

Second Reading of Ordinance 2027-O-1: An Ordinance of the Mayor and City Council of Pocomoke City, Maryland to Amend the City's Zoning Code to Provide for Regulations to Govern Accessory Dwelling Units – Public Hearing and Vote

The ordinance was presented for the second reading, public hearing and vote. Mayor Nock reads the summation of Ordinance 2027-O-1 in full. The ordinance proposes:

- § 230-5 Add definitions for accessory dwelling unit and housekeeping facility
- § 230-18. Accessory structures in residence districts, adds Section B to govern accessory dwelling unit density and development standards
- § 230-26. Conversion for dwelling purposes is amended to reflect accessory dwelling units.
- § 230-33. Principal permitted uses. Allow an accessory dwelling unit as a principal permitted uses in the R-1 District
- § 230-40. Principal permitted uses. Allow an accessory dwelling unit as a principal permitted uses in the R-2 District
- § 230-47. Principal permitted uses. Allow an accessory dwelling unit as a principal permitted uses in the R-3 District

Mayor Nock opened the public hearing on Ordinance 2027-O-1 and invited members of the public to provide comments, requesting that speakers state their name and street of residence. No members of the public came forward to comment. The public hearing was closed. Motion was made to approve Ordinance 2027-O-1 by Council Member Hall. Seconded by Council Member Downing. Mayor Nock called for any unreadiness or discussion. No discussion. Mayor Nock called for a vote. Hall – aye, Marshall – aye, Tull – aye, Downing – aye, Cottman – aye.

Approval and Vote on Chief of Police

Mayor Nock introduced the appointment of the City's next Chief of Police and provided background regarding the recruitment and interview process. Mayor Nock stated that, following the recruitment and interview process, the Mayor and Council had reached a consensus to move forward with Richard “Andy” McGee as the City's next Chief of Police. The appointment was brought before the Council for an official vote in open

session. Mayor Nock reviewed Mr. McGee's approximately 35 years of law enforcement experience and noted that his law enforcement career began with the Pocomoke City Police Department. According to the information presented, Mr. McGee joined the Pocomoke City Police Department in January 1993. During his service with Pocomoke City, he worked as a patrol officer, responded to citizen calls and emergencies, participated in crime prevention and community policing, served as a patrol supervisor, and served as the department's second K-9 handler. In March 1996, Mr. McGee joined the Somerset County Sheriff's Office, where he continued serving the region as a patrol deputy. In January 1998, he began his career with the Worcester County Sheriff's Office, where he ultimately served at the lieutenant level and held leadership responsibilities involving the Patrol Division and Special Operations Division. Mayor Nock noted that Mr. McGee's experience included supervising more than 100 law enforcement personnel and managing schedules and daily operations involving numerous sworn officers. In April 2019, Mr. McGee became Chief of Police for the Town of Snow Hill, a position he has held for more than seven years. Motion was made to approve the hiring of Richard "Andy" McGee as Chief of Police for the City of Pocomoke by Council Member Downing. Seconded by Council Member Cottman. Mayor Nock called for any unreadiness or discussion. Mayor Nock called for a vote. Hall – aye, Marshall – aye, Tull – aye, Downing – aye, Cottman – aye.

Comments

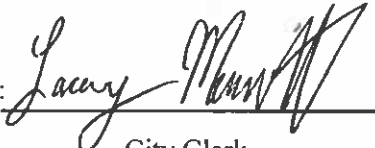
- a. Comments from the Audience
 1. No comments
- b. Comments from the City Manager
 1. No comments
- c. Comments from the City Council Members
 1. Council Member Hall – Council Member Hall congratulated the City on the appointment of the new Police Chief and expressed his confidence in Chief McGee, stating that the City is fortunate to have him serving the new Police Chief.
 2. Council Member Marshall – Council Member Marshall echoed Council Member Hall's comments regarding Chief McGee. He noted that the Police Chief interview and selection process was extensive and that all three candidates who participated in the process performed well. Council Member Marshall expressed appreciation that the City received three qualified applicants for the position and stated that the Mayor and Council look forward to Chief McGee's long tenure with the City. He further remarked that he hoped this would be Chief McGee's first and last position in law enforcement.
 3. Council Member Tull – Council Member Tull commended the City and its staff for the recent Friday evening events. She stated that she enjoyed attending the events, including the live music, and appreciated seeing residents throughout the community participating and enjoying themselves. She thanked those involved in organizing the events and encouraged the City to continue its efforts.
 4. Council Member Downing – Council Member Downing thanked everyone in attendance for coming to the meeting. She also welcomed Chief McGee and expressed her support for his appointment, stating that she looks forward to working with him in his new capacity as Police Chief.
 5. Council Member Cottman – Council Member Cottman echoed the comments of the other Council Members and thanked Chief McGee for his willingness to serve the City. He also recognized and thanked City employees for their efforts in organizing and conducting the recent Hometown Throwdown event. Council Member Cottman stated that the event was well received and that he believed the City's residents greatly appreciated the opportunity to participate. She concluded by thanking everyone for attending the meeting.

d. Comments from the Mayor

1. Mayor Nock echoed the sentiments expressed by the Council Members and welcomed Chief McGee to the City of Pocomoke. Mayor Nock stated that the City has embraced a theme of welcoming individuals to the community and extended a warm welcome to Chief McGee. He expressed enthusiasm regarding Chief McGee joining the Police Department and stated that the Mayor and Council are looking forward to the contributions and improvements he will bring to the department.
2. Mayor Nock also commented on the recent Hometown Throwdown events, stating that he enjoyed attending the activities on Thursday and Friday evenings. He recognized and thanked City staff for taking an initial idea and developing it into a successful community event. Mayor Nock acknowledged the colder weather experienced during the event and expressed hope that future events could be held during warmer weather. Mayor Nock expressed his desire for the City to continue the Hometown Throwdown in future years and to expand it into a citywide event that residents can enjoy for many years to come. Mayor Nock concluded his comments.

Motion to go into the Work Session made by Council Member Marshall. Seconded by Council Member Hall. Mayor Nock called for any unreadiness or discussion. Mayor Nock called for a vote. Hall – aye, Marshall – aye, Tull – aye, Downing – aye, Cottman – aye.

Approved:



City Clerk

Work Session Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held in the Council Chambers on Monday, September 28, 2026. Following the conclusion of the Special Session, Mayor Nock called the Work Session to order.

Present:

Mayor: Todd J. Nock

Council Members: M. Hall, C.L. Marshall, S. Tull, D. Downing, B. Cottman

City Manager: Brandy Matthews

Attorney: Andrew Illuminati

City Clerk: Lacey Merritt

Call to Order

Following the conclusion of the Special Session, Mayor Nock called the Work Session to order. Mayor Nock advised that the Work Session would be conducted for the purpose of discussing the items listed on the Work Session agenda. Mayor Nock then proceeded with the first item of business.

Review of Special One Day Alcohol Permit – Tull Wedding Reception – 11/13/26. Review of Special One Day Alcohol Permit – Wallops Christmas Party – 11/20/26. Review of Special One Day Alcohol Permit – Black Ball Gala – 12/05/26

Mayor Nock requested that City Manager Brandy Matthews present the Special One-Day Alcohol Permit applications to the Mayor and Council. Council Member Marshall requested that the three permit applications be heard and considered together. City Manager Matthews presented the three Special One-Day Alcohol Permit applications for Council review. The first application was for the Tall Wedding Reception, scheduled for November 13, 2026, from 5:00 p.m. until 11:00 p.m. The second application was for the Wallops Christmas Party, scheduled for November 20, 2026, from 5:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. The third application was for the Black Business Ball/Gala, scheduled for December 5, 2026, from 4:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m. The events were identified as being held at the Pocomoke Volunteer Fire Department. During the discussion, Council Member Marshall requested clarification regarding the Black Business Ball/Gala. It was explained that the event is a networking event for Black creatives, artists, and business owners and is held annually. The Mayor and Council reviewed the three Special One-Day Alcohol Permit applications together, including the event dates and requested hours of operation. Following discussion, the Mayor and Council indicated that they were in agreement with the applications and were prepared to proceed with the permits. A consensus was reached on all three special one day alcohol permits.

Discussion on Commercial Assessed Inventory

The Mayor and Council discussed the City's current treatment of commercial assessed inventory, with particular attention to motor vehicle inventory held by automobile dealers. Mayor Nock explained that, in 1991, the Mayor and Council reviewed the matter during an open session and discontinued charging automobile dealerships an inventory tax on vehicles held for sale. Mayor Nock noted that City staff had reviewed the historical information and that the reason for the exemption was not clear from the information currently available. Staff recommended that the matter be revisited. City Manager Brandy Matthews provided background information regarding the City's existing policy. She stated that, on November 18, 1991, the former Mayor and Council adopted Resolution No. 211, which excluded new and used motor vehicles held for sale by automobile dealers from the City's taxable commercial inventory. Ms. Matthews explained that, under Maryland law, unregistered and unlicensed motor vehicles held by dealers for sale are reportable as taxable personal property. She further explained that this includes vehicles with interchangeable registration and/or unregistered vehicles held as dealer inventory. Motor vehicles are generally assessed as Category C personal property, with depreciation applied annually subject to applicable minimum assessments. The Council was advised that municipalities have the authority to exempt commercial inventory from taxation in whole or in part. The City currently provides an exemption for the first \$100,000 of assessed commercial inventory and also currently exempts qualifying dealer motor vehicle inventory from taxation. Ms. Matthews

further explained that some automobile dealers have been reporting motor vehicles in their entirety as commercial inventory on the Form 1 Annual Report and Business Personal Property Return. This has made it difficult to determine the appropriate allocation between actual commercial inventory and motor vehicle inventory unless the Form 1 filings are amended or otherwise clarified. She stated that the Finance Department had not made adjustments to the reported inventory or to the personal property tax bills. The current commercial inventory tax rate was identified as \$2.00 per \$100 of assessed value. Because qualifying motor vehicle inventory is currently exempt, the City does not receive tax revenue from the assessed value of that inventory. By way of example, Ms. Matthews stated that if a dealership had \$5 million in assessed motor vehicle inventory, the City would currently receive no tax revenue from that inventory. If the entire amount were subject to the existing \$2.00 per \$100 commercial inventory rate, the potential annual revenue would be approximately \$100,000 from that dealership. Ms. Matthews presented a proposed change for Council consideration that would establish a separate tax rate for new and used motor vehicles held by dealers for sale rather than continuing to exempt the inventory in its entirety. She reviewed information from other municipalities that tax dealer vehicle inventory, including Salisbury, Fruitland, and Pittsville. The proposed approach discussed for Pocomoke City was to establish a rate of \$1.50 per \$100 of assessed value for qualifying motor vehicle inventory, rather than applying the existing \$2.00 per \$100 commercial inventory rate. During discussion, Council Members noted that the proposal would not apply the full \$2.00 rate to vehicle inventory. Discussion also addressed the fact that dealer inventory may include both vehicles and other commercial inventory, such as parts, and that accurately identifying and separating those categories would be necessary for proper taxation. The Council discussed the existing \$100,000 exemption and confirmed that the exemption applies to commercial inventory generally, including applicable commercial inventory such as parts. Questions were also raised regarding the Business Personal Property Return and the manner in which dealers currently report their inventory. Staff explained that the Form 1 includes a separate line for unlicensed or unregistered vehicles, identified as "Other Vehicles," and that the line was not currently being utilized for the dealer vehicle inventory being discussed. The Council discussed the importance of properly identifying motor vehicle inventory separately from other commercial inventory for assessment and taxation purposes. The Council also discussed the manner in which vehicle values would be determined. Staff explained that the same tax rate would apply to new and used vehicles under the proposed approach, while the assessed value of each vehicle would be affected by the depreciation methodology used by the State Department of Assessments and Taxation. Additional discussion addressed the treatment of dealer inventory in surrounding municipalities. The Council specifically discussed Preston, identified as a large automobile dealership, and noted that its location was outside the incorporated limits of Hurlock but that related operations were located within Pittsville. Staff explained that Pittsville taxes approximately 75 percent of applicable commercial inventory, which was identified as a significant source of tax revenue for that municipality. Following discussion, Mayor Nock recommended that City staff proceed with drafting legislation addressing the proposed treatment and taxation of motor vehicle inventory. The Council indicated agreement with moving forward with preparation of the legislation for further consideration at a future Work Session. The matter was expected to return to the Mayor and Council for review in October.

Discussion on City Drafting its own Liquor Permit and Cost

The Mayor and Council discussed the development of a City-specific process for reviewing and approving liquor permits and alcohol service applications. Mayor Nock requested that Community Outreach Coordinator Amanda Russell present the item and provide information regarding the proposed Alcohol Service Approval Application and the City's proposed process. Ms. Russell presented the proposed Alcohol Service Approval Application to the Mayor and Council and discussed the purpose of establishing a formal City approval process for alcohol-related events and activities. The discussion focused on concerns regarding the current process, the amount of administrative work required by City staff, the timing of applications, and the need for a consistent procedure for applicants seeking approval to serve or sell alcohol within the City. Mayor Nock explained that City staff had received a number of concerns regarding the current liquor permit process and that processing the applications requires significant staff time and administrative work. Although the City does not issue the County liquor license itself, applicants are required to obtain approvals from the City, including the necessary signatures and authorization from the Mayor and Council, before the documentation

can be forwarded to the County. Mayor Nock stated that City staff believed it would be beneficial to establish a formal City approval process that would allow the City to review and approve the required applications before forwarding the documentation to the County for consideration. The proposed process would provide a more structured and consistent method for handling alcohol-related applications and would establish clearer expectations for applicants. The Mayor and Council discussed the timing requirements associated with the County approval process. It was noted that applicants are required to have their liquor license and related approvals in place approximately one month before their scheduled event. The Mayor and Council discussed the importance of establishing a reasonable and uniform City submission timeline so that applications can be reviewed and processed before the County deadline. Mayor Nock emphasized that the City was not necessarily proposing that applicants be required to submit their applications two months in advance, but that a consistent deadline and procedure should be established. Council Members noted that applications sometimes are submitted only a short time before an event, creating difficulties for City staff and the Mayor and Council, particularly when there is no scheduled Council meeting between the time an application is submitted and the event date. Ms. Russell reviewed the proposed Alcohol Service Approval Application included in the meeting materials. The Council discussed the format and content of the proposed application and whether the form would be compatible with the County's requirements. Ms. Russell explained that the proposed City application was modeled after the County's existing application. Council Members reviewed the categories included on the proposed application, including whether alcohol would be provided without a direct charge, whether alcohol would be included with admission or a donation, and whether the event would involve beer, distilled spirits, alcohol sales, or sampling. Mayor Nock also discussed the potential administrative fee associated with the proposed City approval process. Ms. Matthews noted that Worcester County currently assesses a \$100 alcohol permit fee. She indicated that the City was considering establishing a fee that could potentially be approximately one-half of the County's fee to account for the administrative responsibilities associated with the City's review and approval process. Mayor Nock asked whether the proposed fee and application would apply only to special one-day alcohol permits or whether the process would also apply to alcohol sales occurring more broadly within the City. The question was raised for further clarification as the City develops the proposed process. The Mayor and Council discussed the need for the City's process to clearly identify the types of alcohol-related activities requiring City approval, the information applicants must provide, the required signatures and approvals, applicable fees, and the timeframe for submitting applications. The discussion was intended to establish a more organized and consistent City procedure for alcohol service approvals and to ensure that City approvals could be completed in a timely manner before applications are forwarded to the County. No final legislation or formal approval of the proposed application or fee was adopted during the discussion. The matter was referred for further consideration, including the proposed application fee, with staff directed to continue developing the application and bring the item back before the Mayor and Council for further review and consideration.

Discussion on In Home Business License

Council Member Marshall introduced a discussion regarding the City's requirements for businesses operated from residential properties. Mr. Marshall stated that he had recently spoken with several brick-and-mortar businesses within the City that expressed concerns regarding in-home businesses operating without a municipal business license. Mr. Marshall explained that, under the City's current Code, an in-home business is not presently required to obtain a City business license in the same manner as a traditional brick-and-mortar business. He stated that this creates an opportunity for businesses operating from residences to avoid the City's business licensing requirements. Mr. Marshall noted that, based on his research and discussions with other municipalities, requiring in-home businesses to register with the municipality is a common practice. Mr. Marshall proposed that any income-producing activity conducted within the City limits should be required to register for a municipal business license. He discussed the importance of establishing a clear standard for determining when an activity constitutes a business requiring registration. Discussion included the relationship between City business licensing and registration with the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation (SDAT). Mr. Marshall indicated that one potential indicator of an established business would be whether the business is required to maintain a business entity filing and submit annual filings with SDAT. He further explained that the proposed City requirement would be intended to identify

businesses operating within the City rather than to interfere with existing State requirements. Mr. Marshall noted that the proposed licensing requirement would not necessarily affect individuals who work for an established company, such as real estate agents working for a brokerage, where the individual is not independently operating a separate business from the residence. The Council discussed several potential purposes and benefits of establishing an in-home business licensing requirement. These included ensuring compliance with residential zoning requirements, protecting residential neighborhoods from excessive traffic, identifying situations that may require additional safety or occupational oversight, and maintaining a more equitable regulatory environment between home-based businesses and traditional commercial businesses. Mr. Marshall also emphasized the importance of maintaining accurate records of businesses operating within the City. He stated that having a better understanding of the types and locations of businesses operating from residences would assist the City with planning and emergency response by allowing the City to identify the nature of activities being conducted at particular locations. Examples of activities that could potentially constitute an in-home business were discussed, including online sales, consulting services, craft or hobby sales, remote professional services, charter businesses, childcare, salons, food preparation, equipment repair, and lawn-care equipment repair. The discussion emphasized that the primary consideration would be whether the activity generates income. The Council also discussed the possibility of establishing different categories or levels of in-home business activity based upon the potential impact on surrounding properties and neighborhoods. Mr. Marshall described a low-impact home business as one in which there are no customer visits, no employees working at the residence, no exterior signage, minimal deliveries, and the business is operated entirely indoors. The discussion recognized that other in-home businesses may have a greater impact when customers regularly visit the residence. It was noted that businesses involving customer traffic or other impacts may require additional review under the City's zoning or home occupation requirements, including potentially a home occupation or conditional use approval. The specific requirements and associated costs would need to be further developed. Mr. Marshall stated that the proposed municipal business license would not replace or supersede any State licensing requirements. Businesses would remain responsible for complying with applicable SDAT registration and filing requirements, trader's license requirements, and any applicable professional or occupational licensing requirements. The Council discussed the potential development of an application process that would make registration accessible and straightforward for residents. Mr. Marshall expressed support for an online application process that would be easy to complete and streamlined for applicants. He also recommended that applications remain available at City Hall for individuals who prefer to apply in person. Mr. Marshall further stated that the City should have a clear understanding of the businesses operating within its municipal boundaries and that improved information could assist the City in planning, emergency response, and other municipal functions. He emphasized that the purpose of the proposed licensing requirement was not to target individual businesses, but rather to establish a consistent system for identifying and registering income-producing activities operating within the City. The Mayor and Council discussed the proposal and the need for further consideration of the appropriate licensing requirements, application process, zoning implications, and potential fees. The item was presented for continued development as the City considers establishing a formal municipal business licensing requirement for in-home businesses.

Presentation on Community Impact Grant

Community Outreach Coordinator Amanda Russell provided an update on the City's Community Impact Grant Program and presented two additional grant applications.

The City had received 15 applications; Eight applications had been recommended for funding; Total funding requested was \$132,144.85; Total funding recommended was \$68,496.85; The total grant amount available was \$100,000; and approximately \$31,503.15 remained after the recommended awards. Ms. Russell also noted six projects were previously selected for funding through the City's competitive Community Impact Grant Program review process at the August 24, 2026, meeting. At the present meeting, Ms. Russell presented two additional applications for consideration by the Mayor and Council.

New Macedonia Baptist Church — Baskets of Love Food Pantry

New Macedonia Baptist Church requested \$10,000 for the Baskets of Love Food Pantry project.

Staff recommended the full \$10,000 award. The project was expected to begin in November 2026 and be completed by June 30, 2027. The project was identified as addressing food insecurity and public health and wellness. The anticipated community impact includes providing nutritious food and essential household items to individuals and families experiencing food insecurity; expanding access to fresh produce, dairy products, proteins, and other nutritious foods; providing emergency food assistance; strengthening partnerships with food banks, churches, businesses, community organizations, and volunteers; and potentially serving approximately 900 to 1,500 households annually depending upon donations, partnerships, and local demand. The applicant presented a funding request totaling \$10,000 to support the continued operation and delivery of services through the program. The requested funds would be allocated among several program-related expenses, including \$5,200 for food purchases, \$1,300 for pantry supplies, \$800 for equipment, \$1,450 for operations, \$550 for community outreach, and \$700 for emergency food reserves. The applicant explained that the funding would assist in maintaining adequate food supplies, supporting daily operations, and providing resources for community members in need. Expected outcomes include providing nutritious food assistance throughout the grant period, maintaining regular pantry distribution days, increasing access to fresh and nutritious food, tracking pantry visits and households served, tracking food distributed and volunteer participation, and strengthening community partnerships. Mayor Nock expressed support for the applicant's proposal to track pantry visits and stated that the resulting data could help the City better understand community need and determine how the City may assist in addressing those needs.

Pocomoke Boat Docking Association - Pocomoke Docking Challenge

Ms. Russell next presented the second Community Impact Grant application submitted by Pocomoke Boat Docking Association for the Pocomoke Docking Challenge. The applicant requested \$5,000, and the grant review recommendation was \$3,500. Ms. Russell explained that the Pocomoke Docking Challenge had already taken place in August 2026 and that the requested grant funding would therefore be provided as a reimbursement for eligible expenses associated with the completed event. The application was presented as aligning with the City's Community Impact Grant Program criteria of youth development, education and workforce readiness, and community economic impact. Ms. Russell explained that the Docking Challenge is a longstanding waterfront event that attracts residents and visitors to Pocomoke City and contributes to local economic activity by bringing visitors into the City and supporting local restaurants, shops, and other businesses. The application also identified the event as providing scholarship opportunities for graduating high school seniors pursuing education in skilled trades. The application further indicated that the organization intended to increase its existing scholarship support and establish an additional scholarship opportunity for a local young adult pursuing a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). The event is supported through partnerships involving local businesses, schools, the City, Worcester County Emergency Services, sponsors, and volunteers. Ms. Russell reported that the Docking Challenge had total expenses of \$33,159.77 and total income of approximately \$32,000. The application identified \$2,000 in scholarship expenses. Additional in-kind support was also provided for items associated with the event, including fencing and portable toilets. The Mayor and Council then engaged in an extended discussion regarding the proposed reimbursement and the financial information contained in the application. The Mayor and Council questioned why the application was requesting \$3,500 in grant funding when only \$2,000 was identified for scholarships, particularly because scholarships were identified as one of the primary community benefits of the project. Ms. Russell indicated that the information provided in the application showed \$2,000 designated for scholarships and that additional clarification would be necessary. The Council also questioned what expenses were considered eligible and ineligible expenses under the Community Impact Grant Program. Staff explained that general operating expenses were among the types of expenses that could be considered ineligible under the program guidelines. The Mayor and Council also expressed concern that the information presented raised additional questions regarding the overall financial structure of the event and the proposed use of City grant funds. The Mayor and Council discussed the size of the event and noted that the Boat Docking Challenge had attracted a substantial number of attendees. Questions were raised regarding the relationship between the event's attendance, its reported expenses, the amount allocated to scholarships, and the amount being requested from the City. The Mayor and Council further questioned whether awards or other payments were provided to the winners of the Boat Docking Challenge. Staff and Council discussed whether the event

winners received monetary awards or whether participants received appearance or participation fees. The discussion referenced payments to captains and other event-related expenses, but the information available to the Council at the meeting did not provide sufficient clarification. The Mayor and Council also discussed the distinction between the Boat Docking Challenge being a private or organizational event and the City providing financial and operational support. Mayor Nock stated that, if the City is going to provide significant financial and operational support to the event, there should be greater clarity regarding the City's role and the financial benefit to the community. Mayor Nock further stated that, if the City is going to continue providing substantial support for the Boat Docking Challenge, consideration should be given to whether the event should eventually become a City event, particularly given the City's involvement in areas such as cleanup and other event-related assistance. The Mayor and Council also discussed the importance of receiving appropriate financial documentation from organizations applying for Community Impact Grant funding. Council Member Marshall noted that other nonprofit applicants had provided financial statements and supporting documentation as part of the grant review process. Ms. Russell noted that they did receive financial statements from this applicant. Because several questions remained unanswered regarding the Boat Docking Challenge's financial information, scholarship expenditures, eligible expenses, awards or payments to participants, and the overall use of the requested grant funds, the Council determined that additional information was needed before making a decision. The Mayor and Council therefore agreed to hold the Pocomoke Boat Docking Challenge grant application and requested additional clarification and supporting financial information before taking further action on the recommended \$3,500 reimbursement. No final grant award was approved for the Pocomoke Docking Challenge during this meeting.

Presentation on Reimagine Pocomoke

Mayor Nock introduced the Reimagine Pocomoke presentation and provided an overview of the purpose of the initiative. Mayor Nock then turned the presentation over to Senior Planner Benjamin Zito to present the initiative to the Mayor and Council. Senior Planner Zito explained that Reimagine Pocomoke is intended to provide a coordinated approach to identifying, developing, prioritizing, and implementing infrastructure and beautification projects throughout the City. He explained that the initiative is intended to create a project pipeline so that projects can be identified, evaluated, and developed in advance, allowing the City to be prepared to move forward when funding becomes available. Mr. Zito explained that the initiative is intended to involve the Beautification Commission and the public in generating ideas and prioritizing potential projects. City staff would then work with the Commission and the community to develop those ideas into project concepts. Mr. Zito stated that the initiative is intended to encompass the entire City, rather than focusing solely on the downtown area. Potential projects could include improvements to Route 13 and other City gateways, parks, individual neighborhoods, local streets, and other areas throughout Pocomoke City. The types of projects that could be considered would vary in size and scope. Mr. Zito identified examples including minor landscaping improvements, sidewalk repairs or replacements, playground enhancements, and cleaning, repairing, or improving existing City facilities and infrastructure. He emphasized that the initiative was not intended to be limited to one particular type of project. Mr. Zito explained that projects would need to provide a public benefit while also being feasible and realistic to implement. He emphasized the importance of considering the City's ability to maintain a project over the long term so that improvements would remain beneficial and would not create maintenance obligations that the City could not reasonably sustain.

Roles and Responsibilities

Mr. Zito explained that clearly defining the roles of the Beautification Commission, the public, City staff, and the Mayor and Council would be important to the success of the initiative. The Beautification Commission and the public would be responsible for generating ideas and helping prioritize potential projects. City planning staff would serve as staff liaison to the Beautification Commission, assist with planning and design guidelines, develop project concepts, and review proposed projects for consistency with the City's zoning code and comprehensive plan. Capital Improvements staff would review the feasibility of proposed projects,

develop cost estimates, consider engineering requirements, and evaluate other implementation considerations. The Mayor and Council would provide overall policy direction, consider and approve funding, and make major project decisions through the City's established approval processes. Mr. Zito stated that the initiative would require cooperation among the Commission, residents, planning staff, capital improvements staff, and the Mayor and Council.

Project Selection and Implementation

Mr. Zito explained that projects would begin with ideas generated by residents and the community. Those ideas would then be developed into concepts with the Beautification Commission and planning staff. Capital Improvements staff would subsequently review the feasibility, design, engineering requirements, and estimated costs associated with the proposed projects. The presentation emphasized that projects should be evaluated based upon their public benefit, feasibility, realistic implementation, cost, and the City's ability to maintain the improvements over the long term.

The proposed process would generally move from:

1. Community-generated ideas;
2. Development of project concepts with the Beautification Commission and planning staff;
3. Feasibility, design, engineering, and cost review;
4. Identification of potential funding sources;
5. Presentation to the Mayor and Council for consideration; and
6. Implementation through the City's normal budget, procurement, and approval processes.

Funding and Public-Private Partnerships

The Council discussed how potential Reimagine Pocomoke projects could be funded. Mr. Zito identified potential funding sources including State grants, City funding, and public-private partnerships. He also discussed the possibility of community organizations, civic groups, and other partners participating in projects or assisting with maintenance. Mayor Nock asked about the potential use of public-private partnerships. Mr. Zito stated that such partnerships could be an option and that the appropriate structure would depend upon the particular partner and project. The discussion also included the possibility of community organizations or civic groups contributing toward projects or helping maintain improvements. Mayor Nock emphasized that public-private partnerships would need to be carefully structured and evaluated. Mr. Zito further explained that Reimagine Pocomoke was not intended to create a new tax. Rather, he described the initiative as a coordinated approach to identifying and pursuing infrastructure and beautification improvements.

Citywide Focus

Mr. Zito reiterated that the initiative would not be limited to downtown Pocomoke. He stated that the program could address improvements throughout the City, including Route 13, gateways and entrances to the City, parks, neighborhoods, and local streets. The Mayor and Council discussed the importance of considering the City's gateways and entrances as part of the initiative. Mayor Nock also discussed the importance of improving the appearance of the City while ensuring that improvements are designed in a manner that can be maintained by the City over time.

Proposed Funding Level

The Mayor and Council discussed the potential cost of the initiative and the City's ability to fund projects. Mayor Nock recommended that, during the next budget cycle, the City consider budgeting approximately **\$25,000 to \$50,000** for Reimagine Pocomoke projects. Mayor Nock emphasized that the purpose would be to make meaningful improvements throughout the City while also ensuring that the improvements could be maintained after completion.

Timeline

Mr. Zito presented a proposed timeline for getting the initiative underway. During the first 90 days, the focus would be on getting the Beautification Commission fully engaged, gathering initial project ideas, obtaining community input, and reviewing the Commission's procedures and structure to determine whether any changes were needed. During approximately the three- to six-month period, the focus would shift toward identifying and implementing potential "quick win" projects and evaluating the feasibility of additional projects. During the six- to twelve-month period, the goal would be to bring potential projects before the Mayor and Council for consideration and develop a funding roadmap addressing both smaller and larger projects.

Questions and Discussion

The Mayor and Council Members asked how projects would be selected and emphasized that projects should have a clear public benefit while also being feasible, realistic, and capable of being maintained over the long term. The Mayor and Council also discussed streetscape improvements and the City's gateways and entrances. The possibility of using an **adopt-a-block** concept and other community partnerships was discussed as another means of involving residents and organizations in maintaining improvements. Mr. Zito stated that public-private partnerships and State funding could be considered as potential funding sources.

Requested Direction from Mayor and Council

Mr. Zito presented a final summary of the direction requested from the Mayor and Council.

The requested support included:

- Supporting the overall **Reimagine Pocomoke** initiative;
- Directing staff to review and, if necessary, update the Beautification Commission's operating structure;
- Supporting City staff serving as the staff liaison to the Beautification Commission;
- Directing Planning and Capital Improvements staff to develop an initial **citywide project inventory**;
- Establishing criteria for evaluating and prioritizing potential projects;
- Developing a first-year action plan; and
- Requiring future projects and expenditures to return through the City's appropriate **budget, capital improvement, procurement, and approval processes**.

Mr. Zito clarified that the initiative would not involve taking private property and that not every idea submitted would necessarily be constructed. He also reiterated that the initiative was intended to be citywide and not limited to downtown. The Mayor and Council expressed support for moving forward with the Reimagine Pocomoke initiative and the proposed framework. Mayor Nock thanked Senior Planner Zito for the presentation and acknowledged that the Mayor and Council had been discussing the concept since August. Mayor Nock stated that the initiative was inspired, in part, by a photograph of Willow Street that had been shared publicly in August and that prompted further discussion regarding how Pocomoke City could be improved and reimaged. Mayor Nock thanked Mr. Zito for preparing and presenting the information to the Mayor and Council.

Mayor Nock stated the work session had concluded. Council Member Hall asked a question regarding the Hartley Hall property purchase. Mayor Nock indicated this item was not on the agenda and would not be discussed tonight. Motion to Adjourn to at 7:31pm made by Council Member Hall. Seconded by Council Member Downing. Mayor Nock called for any unreadiness or discussion. Mayor Nock called for a vote. Hall – aye, Marshall – aye, Tull – aye, Downing – aye.

Approved: _____



City Clerk