

Regular Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held in Council Chambers and via Zoom/Facebook livestream on Tuesday, September 8, 2020. The meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM.

Present: Mayor Susan Marshall Harrison

First Vice President: Todd J. Nock

Council Members: Esther Troast, R. Scott Holland, Diane Downing, Daniel J Tarr

City Manager: Jeremy Mason

City Attorney: Andrew Illuminati

City Clerk: Michelle Beckett-El Soloh

Pledge of Allegiance, Prayer by Councilmember Tarr

Review and Approval of Minutes from Meeting of August 18, 2020:

Motion to approve minutes from August 18, 2020 (Holland, Tarr passed) @ 6:39 PM

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Nock-aye, Troast-aye, Tarr-aye, Downing-aye; none opposed; motion carried

Review and Approval of Current Bill List:

Motion to approve current bill list (Troast, Tarr passed) @ 6:40 PM

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Nock-aye, Troast-aye, Tarr-aye, Downing-aye; none opposed; motion carried

Approve Hunting Permit for Roger Nelson:

Councilmember Holland said he and Mr. Major East III both hunt in that area. There were no incidents or issues. He should be approved this year also.

Motion to approve hunting permit for 2020-21 season in City limits (Holland, Nock passed) @ 6:42 PM

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Nock-aye, Troast-aye, Tarr-aye, Downing-aye; none opposed; motion carried

Discuss Request for Proposal for Privatized Trash Removal:

City Manager Mason said the City is planning on having a Public Hearing on the issue. He just wants public to be aware at this time that this is being checked into. This will reduce injuries and free up Public Works personnel to do other jobs. He has been verbally getting information from some companies but some companies don't handle our area or have been touch and go on the information. To issue an official Request for Bids would be useful. He is asking for a motion for Council to approve posting an RFP. After quotes come in and Public Hearing would be scheduled. Councilmember Troast clarified the process of an RFP as getting quotes and then bringing that information to the Public Hearing because it would be a big change for the citizens and they need time to approve and process the information. Councilmember Nock said the normal process is one Public Hearing but if there is call for 2 to get the information out, we can do that. After information is collected, the City can present the best options to the citizens but we haven't even gotten to that point yet. City Manager Mason said he thinks the City can save money and would also keep the current trash truck to use for events and other trash disposal needs. Councilmember Troast asked if the citizens would get a separate bill or would it still be on the water bill. Mr. Mason said he is checking that and is not sure yet. It has taken some time to communicate with several companies verbally. Councilmember Holland

asked if we ever used Snow Hill's trash truck. Mr. Mason said he is not aware of having to use Snow Hill's trash truck.

Motion to allow City Manager to advertise for RFP for City trash collection (Holland, Troast passed) @ 6:47 PM

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Nock-aye, Troast-aye, Tarr-aye, Downing-aye; none opposed; motion carried

Discuss Request for Engineering Study for Old Fire Station:

Councilmember Nock said he approached the City Manager about using the old fire station for a community center. The building is most likely repairable. He recommends that the City advertise for RFPs for an engineering study. Mr. Mason said he thinks one has already been done. He will check with the Planning Director, Dan Brandewie. If it is 5 years old or less it is usable.

Motion to advertise for RFPs for engineering study, if the last study is more than 5 years old, for old fire station (Nock, Tarr passed) 6:54 PM

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Nock-aye, Troast-aye, Tarr-aye, Downing-aye; none opposed; motion carried

Discuss Engineering Study for Force Main Sewer System:

Mr. Mason said this is a study for the main sewer line that goes to the Virginia state line welcome center and comes back into town. Future development, in several areas, will be dependent on that line. The lift stations of individual business will be marked and make them easier to identify when there is a problem. The study will be done by GMB in Salisbury, with whom the City has worked with for decades now. This will allow to budget for improvements to the system. There is money in the Water/Wastewater budget to do this study.

Motion to allow force main sewer system engineering study by GMB (Troast, Holland passed) @ 6:59 PM

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Nock-aye, Troast-aye, Tarr-aye, Downing-aye; none opposed; motion carried

Discuss RFP for Excavator:

Councilmember Troast said this has been brought to the table several times now. It has been discussed in length by the Council and by the public. She has also done her own investigating. Councilmember Troast doesn't spend money unless it's useful to the City. If the City is going to keep doing work on the infrastructure, this is a badly needed piece of equipment. The one that we have needs some repair and will still be in service as a backup and ditch digging. Councilmember asked what the final price was. (\$115,309.00 Caterpillar 308/DCA8, new). Councilmember Troast said it takes approximately 4 rentals of the same piece of equipment before it would pay for itself. The City has a lot of use for it. After the Heights is done, we will begin digging on 2nd St and Clarke Ave. The water project will be going on for years. Councilmember Holland said that Winter Quarters is at the end of the line and sediment ends up there. There was an engineering study done but wasn't sure if that study extended to other areas besides the Heights. Mr. Mason said he can look to see what areas Councilmember Nock said the City needs to still have a Public Hearing so the City can get information out. The water project is a City-wide project. He also wanted to know what the accumulated depreciation is on this piece of equipment. Mr. Mason and other Councilmember estimated that it should last at least 10 years with proper maintenance.

Motion to purchase Caterpillar mini excavator from Alban Tractor Company (Troast, Holland passed)
@ 7:09 PM

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Nock-aye, Troast-aye, Tarr-abstain, Downing-nay; 1 opposed, 1 abstain;
motion carried

Discuss Proposed EV Chargers by Delmarva Power:

Mr. Mason asked if everyone has had a chance to look at the site plans for the chargers. It is a service from Delmarva Power, free of charge to the City, for electric vehicle charging stations. This is the second time it's been discussed. It proposes 4 locations where the chargers would be located. The old gas station, the Farmers Market, Market St would be good locations. Councilmember Holland said it would be something that puts Pocomoke City on the map. If someone needs a charge, they would come into our town. Councilmember Nock said citizens should have a say where the locations are but he thinks the proposed locations are fine. He would like the Economic Development and Beautification Committees to have input on these issues. Councilmember Tarr asked if there is a timeframe for working with Delmarva Power. Mr. Mason said no and Delmarva Power has been great to work with. Councilmembers agreed that a public hearing would not be necessary. The public can comment on Facebook when it's posted or email councilmembers.

Discuss Completing the Design for 10th St Lift Station:

Mr. Mason said there has been a need to finish this lift station on 10th St for some time. It has also been discussed before. GMB also designed the other 3 lift stations on Dorchester Ave, Payne Ave and Cedar St. Market St was in process but was given to another engineer, who did fine but the design is a different design from the other lift stations. The GMB designs will all have project manuals. Last year, there was the problem with one of the lift stations that had to have generators and bypass pumps for several weeks. There are 4 lift stations that need to be replaced. We will have grant money for some repairs and possibly have enough in the budget to replace one on our own. When it is installed on 10th St instead on Market St, we won't need SHA permits to work on it. When SHA is involved, things are more difficult.

Motion to have GMB complete the design for 10th St lift station (Nock, Holland passed) @7:20 PM

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Nock-aye, Troast-aye, Tarr-aye, Downing-aye; none opposed; motion carried

Comments from Council

Councilmember Troast said she has not had any phone calls from citizens this week. She sent messages to the Revitalization/Beautification Committee but only received 2 responses. She needs citizens to join the committee. Email her at etroast@pocomokemd.gov or call. She has a project for the mini-park and will be talking to the City Manager for funding.

Councilmember Holland said the Recreation Committee has arranged a canoe event at Stevenson Pond at Winter Quarters. The company in Snow Hill will bring canoes, paddles, life jackets and other supplies. It is free of charge for all ages on October 3, 2020 at 3:00 PM. More information will be posted. He has not received any complaints from his district this week. He would like to commend the Pocomoke Volunteer Fire Department and all responding fire companies. There was a large fire and fire departments responded from as far away as Dagsboro, Delaware. Rufus Oil also refueled emergency vehicles. Mayor and other Councilmembers also thanked all who donated equipment, food and fuel to help fight the fire.

Councilmember Nock said he spoke with Lt. Craven regarding the Community Watch Program. There will be an interest meeting this Thursday at 6:00 PM via Zoom. There will be a sign-up link on the City's Facebook link. When you sign up on that link, you will receive a Zoom link to join the meeting. He recently spoke with Principal Wright at Pocomoke High School about creating a youth council. Hopefully, that will be something they can vote on at the next week.

Councilmember Tarr thanked Councilmembers, City Manager and citizens in his district who reached out to him and gave him comments and advice during the week.

Councilmember Downing thanked everyone who worked on the trees on 5th St. Mr. Mason said that the City is just waiting on a work order from Delmarva Power to finish that work.

Comments from Departments

None

Comments from Audience

William Sparrow, 1955 Orchard Dr, said that privatized trash collection had been discussed before. It was found not to be cost effective and public opinion did not want private trash collection. Something to consider is that even if the price is set now, it could change in the next several years. Not everyone can afford a high trash collection bill. Also, who would buy the trash cans? Also, how would the billing be? A separate bill or on the water bills like it is currently. He also commented that the audio was very difficult to hear at the beginning of the meeting.

The Mayor and Councilmember Nock reiterated to review what was discussed in item #5. All information regarding privatized trash collection will be made public and a Public Hearing will be held before any decision is made.

Ann Copeland, 907 Acorn Circle, asked if the City could look into mosquito control. Mosquitos have been bad this year. Councilmember Holland said he has had other complaints also. The County does the spraying. Mr. Mason will check and see if the amounts or the frequency of treatments can be adjusted to help alleviate the mosquito problem.

Motion to adjourn the meeting (Troast, Holland passed) @ 7:43 PM

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Nock-aye, Troast-aye, Tarr-aye, Downing-aye; none opposed; motion carried

Approved: K. Michelle Beckett-El Soloh
City Clerk