

Regular Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held in Council Chambers on Tuesday, January 16, 2024. The meeting was called to order at 6:31 pm.

Present: Mayor Todd J. Nock
First Vice President: Esther Troast
Council Members: R. Scott Holland,
Diane Downing and Monda Marsh
City Attorney: Andrew Illuminati
City Clerk: Michelle Beckett-EI Soloh

Pledge of Allegiance, Prayer by Councilmember Troast and Call to Order

Approval of Minutes from Meeting of December 4, 2024

Motion to approve minutes as written for December 4, 2024 (Holland, Downing passed)

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

Review and Approval Current Bill List

Motion to approve current bill list (Holland, Troast passed)

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

Mayor & Council Approval of Bid Award for CIPP Lining Project, Phase 1

Mayor Nock read the bid award statement provided by the project engineering firm, George, Miles and Buhr. A total of three bids were received by the deadline and publicly read on November 21, 2023. The three bid amounts submitted were \$1.99 million, \$3.17 million and \$2.16 million. The lowest bid by was submitted by Mainlining America, LLC. All necessary documentation was submitted and all reference checks were favorable.

Motion to award CIPP Lining Market Street, Phase 1 project to Mainlining America, LLC (Troast, Holland passed)

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

PKS Presentation of Finance Audit for FY 2022-23

In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects the respective financial position of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of Pocomoke City, Maryland as of June 30, 2023, and for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. Clean or unmodified opinion. Highest level of assurance that we can give.

Appointment & Swear in Planning & Zoning Commission Boardmember

The Boardmember was not able to attend and was rescheduled for the next Mayor & Council meeting on 2/5/2024 at 6:30 p.m.

Swearing in of Planning & Zoning Boardmember tabled until next meeting (Holland, Troast passed)

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

Appointment & Swear in Board of Election Supervisors

William Haynie was sworn in by Mayor Nock for a second term as a Board of Election Supervisor. Other Boardmembers who could not attend were rescheduled for the next Mayor & Council meeting on 2/5/2024 at 6:30 p.m.

Introduce Ordinance No. 463, Chapter 186, Rental Property Registration, 1st Reading

Mayor Nock asked the Council to table Ordinance No. 463 until changes are made and a Work Session is held.

Motion to table ordinance No. 463 to hold Work Session and add changes (Holland, Downing passed)

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

Introduce Resolution No. 585, Create an Arts Committee, 1st Reading

Mayor Nock read: **Resolution No. 585**
 Create an Arts Committee
 Pocomoke City, Maryland

Introduce Resolution No. 589, Cannabis Zoning Legislation, 1st Reading

Mayor Nock requested they Resolution No. 589 be tabled due to having a new city manager and Mayor & Council, after receiving information on the subject, needs more time to learn about the business and how to apply Planning & Zoning concepts. A Work Session also needs to be scheduled.

Motion to table (Troast, Holland passed)

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

Comments from Council

Councilmember Holland thanked city employees for working on the water projects and securing funding for the CIPP Lining project and having a good finance audit. Employees have done a great job with receiving grants and getting the city finances back into shape. We are on the road to made major improvements in the city.

Councilmember Troast thanked Public Works preparedness for dealing with the last two storms that passed through and working extra hours to make sure things were safe.

Councilmember Marsh thanked everyone who checked on her during her illness and even brought her chicken soup. She welcomed the new city manager and thanked him for the job he has done so far and his professionalism.

Comments from the Mayor

Mayor Nock said he wished to reflect the comments of Councilmember Marsh and welcome the new city manager and he also thanked the employees and the Finance Department for the wonderful audit

and this is the first year that the city has built its reserves. The city will begin to livestream on YouTube.com.

Comments from City Manager

The new City Manager, John Barkley, said it his privilege to hold the position and the Mayor & Council and employees have been a great help to get him acclimated and up to speed on all the projects going on in the city. He hopes to bring fresh perspective and build on the success that has already occurred in the city. He has been introduced to a great core of business owners and organizations that he will have the opportunity to serve. He hopes that he will bring stability and leadership as someone who cares. In order to lead you must follow first. He has a great appreciation for all the information he has received. When he interviewed beck in October, he realized that this city on the verge of a renaissance but after being here he said the city is in the midst of a renaissance and looks forward to bringing change. The future holds prosperity and looks forward to being part of the team.

Comments from Audience

Keri Ann Byrd-Foster voiced concerns about the proposed rental property inspections. She has sought legal counsel from a local attorney and a state judge when the city tried to impose the law before. She was advised that it was illegal and that it was in violation of the Fourth Amendment. People have fought and died for those rights and people need to stand together to ensure our rights are preserved. Towns that have enforced similar laws have had to pay back the citizens. She can give resources for the information that she has found.

Chief Hancock, Pocomoke City Police Chief, thanked The Finance Director, who has been amazing to work with. Something that he has worked on for two and a half years was able to be solved by her in four months. With Mayor and Council approval, they are now competitive with salaries. He would also like to announce that the police radios will be going to full encryption. False information gets put out on social media and causes public alarm and panic. This will eliminate that. In today's world of scams, full names and dates of birth are given out over the radio. Encryption will prevent people with bad intentions from accessing information. Also, when officers respond, their location is given out. This will prevent an officer from being ambushed. Mayor Nock said that Chief Hancock's opinion and knowledge is respected and valued. The Mayor & Council sees the work that he has done and the sacrifices that he has made and when he says that something is in the best interest of the city, it is true. A recruit that is in the academy has received a minor injury and was put on light duty. He has since received a clean bill of health and is back in training. A former officer that left is coming back and will be sworn in on Friday.

Motion to adjourn meeting (Holland, Downing passed)

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

Approved: K.M. Beckett-El Soloh
City Clerk