

Regular Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held in Council Chambers on Monday, May 1, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

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

Closed Session Summary

A Closed Session was held on Monday, May 8, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. and Thursday, April 27, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. Each Closed Session was voted to be held unanimously by the Council under the provisions of Sec. 3-305, (b) (1) ___ "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; any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals". The topic discussed was "Budget & Positions and Tax Rates FY 2023-24". Each current Councilmember was present and the following: Todd J. Nock-Mayor, Michelle Beckett-El Soloh-City Clerk and John Psota-Interim City Manager and Janet L. Wilson-Finance Director.

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

Approval of Minutes from Meeting of April 17, 2023:

Motion to approve minutes for April 17, 2023 as written (Troast, Marsh passed)

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

Review and Approval Current Bill List:

Motion to approve the bill list (Troast, Downing passed)

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

DockJam Update

Mrs. Evans said things are looking great. There was a productive meeting that the Interim City Manager, Fire Police and Chief of Police and Public Works attended at Dockside. Information was traded on things that departments have put in place. The current number of tickets sold is currently 1,600 and ticket sales will be cut off 2 days before the event so the number could reach 2,200.00. Mayor Nock said that he understands that the meeting was called by Pocomoke City and, in the future, the Councilmember in the District where the event is being held, should be notified. In this case, it is Councilmember Marsh. Mr. Psota thanked the Evans' for the updates and updates will continue to come in. Communication between all parties involved is very important.

Officer of the Quarter Awards

Chief Hancock asked everyone for prayers for the family of Deputy First Class Glenn Hilliard who was shot in the line of duty on June 12, 2022. Jury selection begins today. Chief lost a true friend, but it's heroes like him that inspire us all to take jobs like this and continue to believe in the system.

Pocomoke City Police Department continues to excel into the future and provide the community with top notch service and profession. During the first quarter of 2023, we focused on officer training and improvement. Patrol supervisors have attended as many as 5 training courses to improve their skills in effective communication and supervising. Some of these classes were up to 3 days long. While we continue to break barriers and progress, it should be noted that to achieve the goals of our department, it takes the heart of true volunteers to stand up and be willing to go the extra mile. Without receiving rank, promises or privileges, many stepped up and were willing to receive the training. While Pocomoke City Police Department has good working and professional relationships with our brother law enforcement agencies, it is of the utmost importance to us to be able to train and further educate our officers inhouse. PFC Gillespie has attended part 1 of a 2-part course to receive training as an accident reconstructionist. This will enable him to be able to investigate accidents, whether fatal or nonfatal, and accurately determine any factors that contributed to the accident.

Cpl. Anthony Rhode has completed a training course to become a MD certified munitions officer. This training allows hands on, shoot-don't shoot, deadly force-no deadly force decision making. Trainings are in a safe environment and this will allow other departments to join our training. Cpl. Rhodes is the first ever with this training in Pocomoke City.

PFC Lavery and Patrolman White have received training for "Desert Snow" a prestigious drug contraband training program. Both officers informed the Chief how intensive the training was and described the training as priceless. PFC Lavery will attend another training in July to become a "DRE" drug recognition expert. He will be certified in the State of MD and have approximately 4 to 6 months in this training.

Ptlmn Stoner will attend training in August as a Defense Tactics Instructor and be MD State certified.

Lastly, we are awarding the Officer of the Quarter Award. This award is given to officers to recognize stellar job performance, attitude and dependability. This time the officer led the department for total arrests, for conducting investigations for a shots-fired situation that led to an arrest. We are pleased to present PFC Rachael Northam, the first female to receive the award.

Chief stated that there are currently 5 grants open for the PD. He gave a shout out to Bernice Evans at Crisfield PD for her assistance with grant administration. Also, a shout out to Quinton Jones for Governor's Office of Crime control & Prevention. We are in compliance on all reporting and he can use his new knowledge for continuing to write grants that are needed.

Set Public Hearing Date for RZE#93-2023 (D. Claybaugh - owner): Zoning Map Amendment from B-2 to R-2, to Create Three Residential Lots Fronting Dorchester Avenue. (Recommended Date: June 5, 2023)

Mayor Nock opened discussion for Public Hearing dates. There was no discussion. Public Hearing for this item is set for June 5, 2023.

introduce Resolution No. A-03-23, 541 Ocean Highway Annexation

Mayor Nock read: **Resolution No. A-03-23**
 541 Ocean Highway Annexation
 Pocomoke City, Maryland

introduce Resolution No. A-04-23, 541 Ocean Highway Annexation Plan

Mayor Nock read: **Resolution No. A-04-23**
 541 Ocean Highway Annexation

Pocomoke City, Maryland

Appointments to Committees

Councilmember Holland recommended tabling this item to have time to revisit what is needed for each committee.

Motion to table for review committee information (Holland, Troast passed)

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

Discuss Resolution No. 578, Tax Rates

Mr. Psota stated that at the last mayor & Council meeting, Resolution No. 578 was introduced. It has been decided that more discussion is needed. A Work Session will be scheduled and it will have to be readvertised after discussion.

Comments from Council

Councilmember Marsh said she wants to believe that she was elected to Council to be able to clean up the town. She is pleased to announce that that has started. Thanks to Dr. Mona Margarita, who reported some things that need attention such as boards on the dock area at the restaurant and the interior of the Newberry building that has ceiling damage, mold and other structural issues, a citation has been issued by Code Enforcement. She also received complaints about 700 Clarke Ave, where a fire occurred and now debris is in the street. A demolition permit was issued in March, work need to be finished within 6 months. Caution tape has been put up around the property. We are looking into a way to report complaints, either by email or on website. She is serious about the cleanup. It is important to keep up with the expansions going on at NASA. There was a home on 8 2nd street owned by Fanny Mae with 2 bathtubs on the porch. The bathtubs have been removed after she contacted the seller.

Councilmember Holland congratulated PFC Northam on her award. He asked for an update on Market St. Mr. Psota said that per recommendation of the State, the detour has been moved from 12th to 11th Street. Councilmember Troast said that since the construction, she has noticed that tractor trailers are going down 11th and 12th Streets should be going down Old Virginia Rd directly to the Industrial Park via Dividing Creek Rd. Smaller streets cannot handle the weight of bigger trucks on narrow streets. With the warm weather coming up, we have a lot of events that will be starting. He thanked the Community Events Coordinator for creating a new event, Blue and Gold Day.

Comments from the Mayor

State of Maryland Public Works will hopefully be approving some funding for water projects. These projects are major priority of the Mayor & Council. He believes that there should be a way to report code violations either on the website or a dedicated email. Mayor Nock read the state proclamation for City Clerks and thanked our City Clerk for her work.

Comments from Interim City Manager

None

Comments from Audience

Dr. Mona Margarita, 407 2nd St, advises everyone that if you see something say something. She couldn't imagine being able to live with herself if she didn't report those things for the health and safety of the town. She asked if there was any information on the library. Mayor Nock said that there

is a statement drafted that will be released. The Mayor and Council recommends that people go to the Worcester County Commissioners meeting and watch it. He saw comments on Facebook that said it was the Pocomoke Council meeting but it was not. None of the City Council was there. Pocomoke was told that we wouldn't have to spend a cent but that's not what happened. It has not been discussed what will happen to the Armory. It cannot be sold as there is a reverter clause in the deed.

Caitlin Evans, 2 Riverside Drive, the former Mayor Morrison placed 2 rocks where the boards need repairs where his foot went through. She wanted the Mayor & Council to be aware.

Motion to adjourn meeting (Holland, Downing passed)

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

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