

Regular Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held in Council Chambers on Monday, June 19, 2023. 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
Interim City Manager: John Psota
City Attorney: Andrew Illuminati
City Clerk: Michelle Beckett-El Soloh

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

Approval of Minutes from Meeting of May 25, 2023

Motion to approve minutes from May 25, 2023 as written (Downing, Marsh 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

Sponsorships for the Great Pocomoke Fair

Maggie Ball said that she and Paula have just taken over the Great Pocomoke Fair and are here to ask for participation and sponsorship from the city. There is too much to do for just the two of them. They need support from the city. She's not sure if anyone has noticed the decrease in participation at the Fair. Last year was the first year that they managed it. They got 45 owners to participate. They also raised over \$15,000 in sponsorships and are ahead of that this year so far. They brought in live entertainment and are working on rides. They increased the showman from only two to over 15. The grounds are not in great shape and needs updating. It is a staple in the community. She doesn't understand why the city doesn't participate in the Fair. Mayor Nock said the Fair always falls in line with other events. He attends at least one night. She does see the city when they set up tables there but she would like to see more of a participation level. In Wicomico County, she ran the livestock division for over eight years as President and partnered with Wicomico County, since they are partners with the Worcester County Fair. She would like to have the same thing here where the city partners with the Fair. She feels like they operate as two separate entities. Mayor Nock said it is important to make sure that there are events that cater to and include everyone instead of just one demographic. The Fair has to do what Boat Docking and the Christmas Parade already does and include everyone. He will be happy to discuss any ideas. Ms. Ball said she has set up new events and even holds a church service on Sunday of the Fair. She doesn't know unless she asks. Mayor Nock said that we can involve the Events Coordinator, who is even here tonight. Councilmember Troast said she and the Council are involved with the Fair every year. Before making assumptions that the Mayor & Council are not or do not want to get involved, all she had to do was ask. Ms. Ball said that no information has been turned over to her and she didn't know who to contact. Someone finally pointed her in the direction of the City Clerk to make contact with the Mayor & Council. Mayor

Nock said that two years ago the City Clerk was appointed as an Ex Officio Fair Board Member but she has never gotten a call to attend a meeting. The City Clerk is the one who brings back information to mayor & Council. Mayor Nock instructed Ms. Ball to leave her information with the City Clerk so that discussions can be had,

Council Approval for Liquor Permit for Boat Docking Event on August 19, 2023

Mayor Nock said there was no need for Mike Shannon to come forward. The mayor & Council is in full support of the Boat Docking event and can't wait for the event. The paperwork has been reviewed. A motion just needs to be made.

Motion to allow Dockside to hold the Boat Docking event and approve the liquor permit application to be filed with the county (Marsh, Holland passed)

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

Tax Abatements FY 24

May Nock read the proposed list of tax abatement properties for fiscal year 2024. These properties meet the requirements of no use of city services and are tax-exempt. Every year the list shall be reviewed and adopted before July 1st.

Motion to adopt the tax abatement list as proposed for fiscal year 2024 (Holland, Downing passed)

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

Public Hearing & Adopt Resolution No. 579, Budget FY 2024, 2nd Reading

Mayor Nock read: **Resolution No. 579**
 Budget FY 2024
 Pocomoke City, Maryland

Public Hearing opened. There were no comments or objections from the public. Public Hearing closed.

Motion to adopt Resolution No. 579, Budget for FY 2024 as written (Marsh, Holland passed)

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

Public Hearing & Adopt Resolution No. 580, Fees, Fines Schedule FY 2024, 2nd Reading

Mayor Nock read: **Resolution No. 580**
 Amended Fees, Charges, Rates and Fines FY 2024
 Pocomoke City, Maryland

Public Hearing opened. There were no comments or objections from the public. Public Hearing closed.

Motion to adopt Resolution No. 580, Amended Fees, Fines Schedule for FY 2024 as written (Holland, Marsh passed)

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

Public Hearing & Adopt Resolution No. 581, Community Legacy Downtown Improvement Grant FY 2024, 2nd Reading

Mayor Nock read:

**Resolution No. 581
Community Legacy Downtown Improvement Grant FY 2024
Pocomoke City, Maryland**

Public Hearing opened. There were no comments or objections from the public. Public Hearing closed.

Motion to adopt Resolution No. 581, Community Legacy Downtown Improvement Grant FY 2024 as written (Downing, Troast passed)

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

Public Comment & Adopt Ordinance No. 461, Amendment to Zoning Boundaries & Zoning Map from B-2 to R-2, to Create Three Residential Lots Fronting Dorchester Avenue, (D. Clabaugh - owner), 2nd Reading

Planning Director, Dan Brandewie, read:

**Ordinance No. 461
Amendment to Zoning Boundaries & Zoning Map from B-2 to R-2, to Create
Three Residential Lots Fronting Dorchester Avenue, (D. Clabaugh - owner)
Pocomoke City, Maryland**

Second Public Hearing opened. There were no comments or objections from the public. Second Public Hearing closed.

Motion to adopt Ordinance No. 461, Amendment to Zoning Boundaries & Zoning Map from B-2 to R-2, to Create Three Residential Lots Fronting Dorchester Avenue, (D. Clabaugh - owner) as written (Troast, Downing passed)

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

Comments from Council

Councilmember Holland said be aware of high tides. They have been higher than usual. Information about what is going on in the community is posted on Facebook. He thanked Mike Wyatt and Dan Brandewie for the work done in their departments.

Councilmember Marsh reminded everyone of the reportconcerns@pocomokemd.gov that is monitored and information passed on to the appropriate personnel. Make sure that you have house numbers posted on your residence for 911 reasons. He thanked Mike Shannon for working with out departments and making Dockjam a success.

Councilmember Troast thanked the PD for the patrol on Cedar St. It seems to be more under control and kids are now safer. Mr. Wyatt and Mr. Brandewie have been working on department updates. Mr.

Wyatt also responded with Public Works for a sinkhole situation in Southern Fields. The Fair has separated the harness racing event from the other Fair events. The schedule was changed in order to accommodate other events in the area happening at the same time. She is happy to see for Councilmember Dan Tarr in the audience tonight.

Comments from the Mayor

He is also glad to see former Councilmember Tarr in the audience. He commended Mike Wyatt for his response to Southern Fields. When doing work, it is important to make sure that you aren't cutting, digging or chopping anything you aren't supposed to. That's what happened in Southern Fields. A water line was cut and created the sinkhole. This week he has spent a lot of time at City Hall and didn't realize the all the work that is being done by City employees. He wants to see the City get away from the old logo and have the new logo on everything to be uniform. He commended Council colleague members for supporting him through some personal issues at home.

Comments from City Manager

Mr. Psota said he also recognizes that hard work that City employees do.

Comments from Audience

Adam Howard, HOA President at Butler's Village, he has been involved in the community for 14 years now. the Tucker Homes portion went bankrupt and shutdown in 2006/2007. The HOA was left in shambles and had to pick up the pieces. The HOA is responsible for everything in the development such as streets, lighting, retention pond, trash removal, etc. HOA dues have been \$75.00 per month but they are feeling the pinch on that. Hard decision to be made. In October of 2022, they had \$400 in their account because of unsuccessful collection attempts. They sought legal-council to get back on track. They held elections and 5 board members were elected per bylaws. Those members were tasked with developing a budget. Based on expenses they were forced to stop all services except for the bare necessities. Maryland recently passed house bill 107. It requires all HOAs making more than \$10,000 per year to have a 3-year reserve study that has to be completed by 2025. HOA dues will have to double. They are looking to the city for some solutions. One of the costliest expenses is trash removal. They would like the city to take over trash and street maintenance. Seventy-two percent responded. Ninety percent responded in favor of the city taking over those tasks. Ten percent responded no. Most people are having problems paying the \$75.00 fee.

Shawn Fisher, Butler's Village resident, he said Adam Howard does not represent the HOA. They did not have an HOA for 2 years. Nothing was discussed publicly. After 2 years, there was finally a meeting. Mr. Brady agreed to step down but did not appoint anyone to take over as president. The meeting was adjourned. Mr. Howard and a few others, nominated and appointed themselves. It was not done publicly. The resident found out by receiving a letter a few weeks later. Mr. Howard, then went to the CPA and took residents personal information home on his personal computer. He has spent his own money and time cleaning up the retention pond area and cutting grass.

Mayor Nock suggested that the HOA redo the elections to make it official, which they did. He said the city cannot be a part of the HOA. The problems go deeper than trash and roads. The city does not pick up commercial trash. Mr. Fisher the bylaws state that if a resident is not in good standing, they can't vote. Mr. Howard admitted to not being in good standing but ran and voted. Mr. Fisher doesn't understand why it was okay to bend the rules.

John Brady, Butler's Village resident, he confirmed that he did the mayor and Council's advice and redo the election.

Two other residents from Butler's Village responded and said that trash is a major concern because trash is not making to the dumpster and they are not a clear path to the front of the residence that causes trash to be brought through the home.

Another resident said it's not a trash problem, it's an accountability issue why trash doesn't make it to the dumpster. She hopes that the city doesn't step in because they need to solve their own HOA issues.

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