

Regular Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held in the Council Chambers on Monday, August 17, 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 Council Member Tull led the prayer.

Reading of Closed Session Summary

Mayor Nock read the closed session summary in full. On July 20, 2026 at 7:44 p.m., the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council entered into Closed Session following the Open Session meeting at City Hall. The motion to enter into Closed Session was made by Councilmember Hall and Seconded by Councilmember Downing. Councilmembers Hall, Marshall, Tull, Downing, and Cottman all voted in favor of entering into Closed Session. The statutory authority for entering into Closed Session was Maryland General Provisions Article § 3-305(b)(4) "To consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State" There were two topics of discussion considered under this statutory authority during the Closed Session. The Mayor and Council arrived at a collective decision on both topics discussed.

Approval of July 20, 2026 Closed Session Minutes

Motion made by Council Member Cottman to approval closed session minutes from July 20, 2026. Seconded by Council Member Marshall. Hall- aye, Marshall – aye, Tull – aye, Downing – aye, Cottman – aye.

Approval of July 20, 2026 Open Session Minutes

Motion made by Council Member Hall to approve open session minutes from July 20, 2026. Seconded by Council Member Downing. Hall- aye, Marshall – aye, Tull – aye, Downing – aye, Cottman – aye.

Approval of Bill List

The bill list was presented for payment. Motion to approve the bill list as presented made by Council Member Cottman. Seconded by Council Member Hall. Hall- aye, Marshall – aye, Tull – aye, Downing – aye, Cottman – aye.

Approval of Lagoon Sludge Cleaning at 1634 Dun Swamp Road

City Manager Brandy Matthews presented a proposal for the annual removal of grit from the lagoon at 1634 Dun Swamp Road. The proposal from Miller's Land Services was presented in the amount of \$47,650, not to exceed. The proposal includes removal of up to 15 tri-axle loads of grit, drying the material on site, hauling the material to the Worcester County Landfill, and delivering and spreading five tri-axle loads of #57 stone. Excavator, loader, trucking, and landfill tipping fees are included. The proposal further provides that the final cost will be reduced if less material is ultimately removed. Ms. Matthews explained that this is an annual maintenance requirement associated with the area where sewage haulers discharge material. She stated that the City used Miller's Land Services previously and that the actual cost in the prior year was approximately \$33,501.60. Staff reviewed costs from the previous two fiscal years, which generally ranged from approximately \$33,000 to \$39,000. Council discussed the need for the work and the potential for costs to

increase if the lagoon is not cleaned regularly. Ms. Matthews explained that the work is necessary because the sewage-hauler discharge area must be cleaned annually and that this would be the third consecutive year the work has been required. The Council also discussed a prior arrangement involving the City of Fruitland and the hauling of sewage to Pocomoke City. Ms. Matthews confirmed that the City is no longer operating under that arrangement. She stated that she had spoken with the City Manager of Fruitland and that both agreed that any future arrangement involving the two municipalities should be brought before their respective Mayors and Councils rather than handled informally. The Council discussed the importance of ensuring that any future agreements involving sewage hauling, particularly arrangements crossing county lines, receive the appropriate municipal and county review and approval. Motion to approve the lagoon grit removal work by Miller's Land Services made by Council Member Marshall. Seconded by Council Member Downing.

Approval of Floor Repair at City Owned Property 2 Riverside Drive

The Mayor and Council considered proposals for floor repairs at the City-owned property located at 2 Riverside Drive. City staff presented two proposals. The first proposal, from Straight Edge Construction, totaled approximately \$26,330 and included removal of the existing flooring and installation of replacement flooring, insulation, waterproofing, and commercial LVP flooring for up to approximately 700 square feet. The proposal excluded floor joist repairs, foundation work, plumbing, electrical work, and repairs in the bar area. The second proposal, from Johnson's All-Scapes, totaled \$36,900 and provided a broader scope of work, including approximately 900 square feet of flooring and removal of the bar area. The proposal also addressed potential moisture concerns and underlying conditions. Ms. Matthews explained that the two proposals represented substantially different scopes of work. She noted that the bar area had previously presented concerns, including sagging and uneven conditions, and that portions of the flooring had previously been replaced by both the City and the tenants. The Mayor and Council discussed whether the bar should be removed so that the entire floor area could be properly repaired rather than leaving an area of concern beneath or around the bar. The Mayor and Council members also discussed the treatment of the floor joists if deterioration or other problems were discovered once the existing flooring was removed. Staff explained that the Straight Edge proposal did not include joist repairs and could result in additional costs or a change order if problems were discovered. The Johnson's proposal provided a more comprehensive scope of work. The Council questioned staff regarding the site inspections performed by the contractors and the City's review of the proposals. Staff confirmed that both contractors had visited the property and that staff's recommendation was to proceed with the Johnson proposal. City Attorney Andrew Illuminati discussed the importance of clearly distinguishing between the two proposals because they contemplated different scopes of work. The Council also discussed the City's due diligence, including the existing assessment and information used to develop the scope of work. Council members expressed support for completing the project correctly and avoiding repeated repairs or unnecessary change orders. Staff confirmed that funding was available in the City's budget. Motion to approve the Johnson's All-Scapes proposal 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.

Approval of Hunting Permits (3)

The Mayor and Council considered requests for hunting permits for designated City-owned property, including parcels located at Broad Street Industrial Park, Old Virginia Road, 1634 Dun Swamp Road and Sheephouse Road. The applicants appeared before the Mayor and Council and discussed their request. Motion to approve the hunting permits as presented, allowing the applicants to legally hunt on the designated City property 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.

Approval of the Sale of Property Tax ID 01-028464, Parcel 1487 to Vienna Properties, LLC.

City Manager Brandy Matthews presented a proposed sale of approximately 7,254 square feet of unimproved property identified as Tax ID 0102846, Parcel 1487. Vienna Properties, LLC, submitted an offer to purchase the property for \$30,000. Ms. Matthews explained that the property had previously been declared surplus by the City and that the City would need to complete the appropriate legal process, including a surplus resolution, to authorize the disposition of the property. The Council discussed the history of the property and prior discussions with the prospective purchaser. It was noted that the purchaser had initially been informed by a former City employee that the property might be conveyed without charge. The City subsequently clarified that the property would not be provided for free. The Council also discussed previous offers from neighboring property owners and the history of negotiations concerning the purchase price. It was noted that the City had previously sought a higher purchase price and ultimately negotiated with Vienna Properties, LLC, to arrive at the \$30,000 offer currently before the Council. Motion to approve the sale of Tax ID 0102846, Parcel 1487, to Vienna Properties, LLC was made 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.

Approval of Special One Day Alcohol Permit — Hometown Throwdown Concert - 9/24/26

Facilities Manager/Events Coordinator Mike Shannon presented a request for a Special One-Day Alcohol Permit associated with the Hometown Program Concert scheduled for September 24, 2026. Mr. Shannon explained that the event would serve as a makeup concert following a previously cancelled Concert in the Park event. The event was planned to include a performance by On the Edge and was proposed to take place on Market Street, utilizing the large stage located in the gravel lot. Attendees would be permitted to bring chairs and sit along Market Street. The Mayor and Council considered the request. Motion to approve the Special One-Day Alcohol Permit was made by Council Member Cottman. 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.

Approval of Special One Day Alcohol Permit — Music & Mud Fest – 09/26/26

The Mayor and Council considered a Special One-Day Alcohol Permit request for the Music & Mud Fest, scheduled for September 26, 2026, at the Great Pocomoke Fairgrounds. Gloria Smith the Fair representative appeared before the Council and explained that the event would include live music, a mud bog, and ATV-related activities. The event was expected to operate during the afternoon and evening hours, with alcohol service requested from approximately 1:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Council members raised concerns regarding the length of the alcohol-service period, the size and duration of the event, and the need for appropriate public safety planning. The Mayor and Council discussed the anticipated schedule, including ATV activities, the mud bog, and the concert. It was noted that the event could attract approximately 200 to 300 or more attendees. The Council emphasized the importance of ensuring that large-scale events have appropriate police and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) coverage and that the City should not be placed in a position where public safety services are provided without appropriate planning or reimbursement. The Mayor and Council members discussed concerns that some organizations may attempt to avoid fees associated with City services. The Mayor and Council emphasized that police and EMS resources are necessary not only to respond to emergencies but also to help prevent and manage potentially serious incidents. The Mayor and Council further discussed the need for an emergency plan and pre-event coordination with EMS and other public safety departments before large-scale events are presented for approval. The Council agreed that the City's process for large events and public safety requirements warrants further discussion. Motion to approve the Special One-Day Alcohol Permit was 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.

Approval of Special One Day Alcohol Permit – PHS Class Reunion (1955)– 10/03/26

The Mayor and Council considered a Special One-Day Alcohol Permit for the Pocomoke High School Class of 1955 Reunion. The applicant explained that the event would be smaller than other events and was expected to conclude at approximately 8:00 p.m. Approximately 50 attendees were anticipated. Motion to approve the Special One-Day Alcohol Permit was made by Council Member Marshall. Seconded by Council Member Tull. 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. Larry Fykes – Hartley Hall Property

Mr. Larry Fykes addressed the Mayor and Council regarding approximately 1.85 acres of property located adjacent to the Hartley Hall Senior Housing property. Mr. Fykes explained that, during a review of the property's history, it was determined that the City retained an option and right of first refusal concerning the property. Hartley Hall was offering the property to the City for \$15,000 as part of the organization's process of liquidating its assets. Mr. Fykes explained that proceeds from the liquidation would be distributed to nonprofit organizations selected by Hartley Hall's Board of Directors. The Mayor and Council discussed the property's location, zoning, and potential future use. Council members noted that the property is commercially zoned and expressed interest in using the property in a manner that could provide a public benefit. The Council discussed the possibility that the new owners of the adjacent senior housing property could potentially use the property for future expansion. The property was also described as being located near Cedar Street and the former high school baseball area. Mr. Fykes explained that the organization intended for the proceeds from the sale of its assets to benefit local nonprofit organizations, including the Discovery Center, Samaritan Shelter, and a local fire company. The Mayor and Council indicated support for moving forward with the City's purchase of the property for \$15,000, subject to completion of the necessary legal and settlement documents. Mr. Fykes stated that he would report the Council's position and coordinate with the City's attorney regarding preparation of the deed and settlement. Mr. Fykes provided the Council with a package containing photographs and information regarding the property.

2. Kim Jones – Sturgis One-Room Schoolhouse

Ms. Jones, addressed the Mayor and Council regarding the proposed community participation in the selection process for the City's next Chief of Police. Ms. Jones asked for clarification regarding how community members would be involved in the selection process and whether participation would include community partners, local business representatives, school representatives, or members of the general public. The Council explained that the details of the community participation process had not yet been finalized. Council members stated that additional information would be provided to the public through the City's social media platforms and other appropriate communication channels once the process had been established.

b. Comments from the City Manager

1. City Manager Brandy Matthews provided an update regarding the recruitment of a new Chief of Police. Ms. Matthews reported that Chief Handcock's final official day was expected to be August 27, 2026, and that the City would need to designate an interim Chief of Police before his departure to ensure continuity of operations and departmental leadership. Ms. Matthews reported that the City had received two internal applications and that the application period remained open. She explained that the City had begun advertising the position on July 31 and that she had hoped to receive additional applications before beginning the selection process. Ms. Matthews also reported that she had contacted neighboring municipalities regarding potential candidates for an interim Chief of Police. She stated that she would provide any names received to the Mayor and Council and would conduct discussions with potential candidates before making recommendations. Council members discussed the possibility of contacting the Maryland State Police regarding potential interim candidates. The Council also discussed the permanent Chief of Police selection process and the possibility of involving members of the community. Council members expressed the view that residents should have an opportunity to participate in the process, particularly if the City reaches a final group of candidates. A proposal was discussed to hold a public forum for the final three candidates. The Council discussed developing a standardized set of questions so that each candidate would be given the same opportunity to respond. The Council further discussed potentially collecting questions from residents in advance. After discussion, Ms. Matthews stated that she would extend the application period through September 30, 2026, and would distribute the position announcement through the Maryland Municipal League and other appropriate organizations and agencies. Ms. Matthews also provided the following upcoming meeting and community event dates:

- August 24, 2026: Mayor and Council Work Session – 6:30 p.m.
- August 27, 2026: Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting – 6:30 p.m.
- August 28, 2026: Fourth Friday – “Back to School Bash,” 5:00–8:00 p.m.
- September 2, 2026: Board of Zoning Appeals Meeting – 6:30 p.m.

Ms. Matthews also reported that Phase One of the Mayor's Safe Path Initiative had been completed and that the City was working with GMB on the remaining Phase Two items and completion of the Heights portion of the initiative.

c. Comments from the City Council Members

1. Council Member Hall – No Comment
2. Council Member Marshall – Council Member Marshall congratulated City staff, City employees, and the event organizers for their efforts in coordinating and hosting several successful community events. He specifically recognized the recent Boat Docking Event, commending Mike Shannon and City staff for their work in planning, coordinating, and supporting the event. Council Member Marshall noted that the event was very well attended and appeared to have a strong turnout, with the event operating smoothly throughout the day. He expressed his appreciation to everyone involved and acknowledged the significant amount of work required to coordinate the event and ensure that it was successful and enjoyable for the community. Council Member Marshall also recognized the recent concert held at the Mar-Va Theater, featuring Old State Line and Neil Hooks. He noted that the concert was very well attended and

commended the event organizers and those involved in bringing the performance to Pocomoke City. He expressed appreciation for the continued efforts to provide quality community events and entertainment for residents and visitors and congratulated everyone involved for contributing to the success of both events.

3. Council Member Tull – No comment
4. Council Member Downing – No comment
5. Council Member Cottman – Council Member Cottman presented a request received from Pocomoke High School Vice Principal Jeff Postell regarding the possibility of establishing a City of Pocomoke award recognizing high-achieving students. She explained that the proposed recognition could be directed toward students demonstrating high academic achievement, such as members of the National Honor Society. The Council discussed the concept and requested additional information regarding the proposed award, including eligibility criteria, grade levels, residency requirements, and the form the recognition would take. Council members also discussed coordinating the award criteria with the school's existing recognition standards and the possibility of providing a certificate, medal, monetary award, or other form of recognition. Council Member Cottman also echoed Council Member Marshall's comments regarding the success of the recent Boat Docking Event, noting that she and her family attended and had an enjoyable time. She thanked Mike Shannon and the City staff involved in organizing and coordinating the event.

d. Comments from the Mayor

Mayor Nock addressed several matters concerning City-owned property, downtown businesses, public transparency, and community engagement.

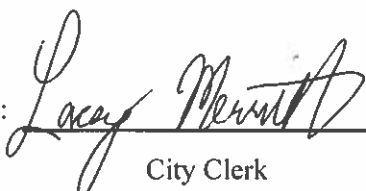
1. Mayor Nock provided historical context regarding the City's ownership and operation of the Dockside Restaurant property. He explained that in 2019 the City was informed that the prior restaurant operator, Mallards on the River, intended to leave Pocomoke City. Mayor Nock stated that the former operator had unpaid rent and that the City did not recover those outstanding amounts. He further discussed the condition of the restaurant and the equipment left behind. Mayor Nock stated that the City subsequently advertised the restaurant as a turnkey operation, although he expressed the view that the property was not actually turnkey because significant equipment had been damaged or removed after Mallards on the River had left. Mayor Nock discussed the process through which proposals were received when the City sought a new operator for the restaurant. He stated that he and Council Member Downing had not initially received all of the proposals being discussed and that the Council ultimately obtained the complete set of proposals before making a decision. Mayor Nock stated that Dockside was selected from the proposals provided to the Council and that the restaurant opened in June following the selection process. He emphasized that, based on the City's records, Dockside has consistently paid its rent and that the business continued making payments during the COVID-19 pandemic after the City temporarily waived rent for City tenants. Mayor Nock reviewed financial information provided by City Manager Matthews regarding Dockside's rental payments and City expenditures for repairs to the property. He stated that Dockside had paid approximately **\$332,442.85** in rent through August 2026 and was

projected to have paid approximately **\$377,638.45** by the end of 2026 if payments continued at the current rate. Mayor Nock further stated that the City had spent approximately **\$43,103** on repairs to the restaurant over the relevant period and discussed the remaining balances on loans associated with the property, including approximately \$83,200 remaining on one loan and approximately \$341,250 remaining under the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) financing. Mayor Nock emphasized that the purpose of his comments was to place the financial and historical information on the public record and clarify that the selection of Dockside was not the result of a backdoor arrangement or preferential treatment. He stated that the Evans family had paid rent consistently and that the Council had previously voted to extend the Dockside lease. Mayor Nock further stated that the Council had discussed, but had not formally voted on, the possibility of selling the restaurant property in the future.

2. Mayor Nock also discussed concerns regarding the planned closure of the downtown bridge and its potential impact on local businesses. He stated that he had attended a Maryland Department of Transportation meeting concerning the bridge and had expressed concerns about the effect of the closure on Pocomoke City's downtown businesses. Mayor Nock encouraged the City and community to support local businesses during the bridge closure and discussed using social media, local businesses, community members, and other public outreach efforts to promote downtown Pocomoke City. He emphasized that many downtown businesses are locally owned and that a prolonged interruption to access could have a significant economic impact on business owners and their employees.
3. Mayor Nock also discussed recent community outreach efforts, including the City's "Ask Me Anything" event and ongoing efforts related to the City's Comprehensive Plan. He noted that Planning Director Kristen Tremblay would be distributing a virtual questionnaire to obtain additional public input. Mayor Nock encouraged continued communication between City officials and residents and stated that the City should continue getting into the community and listening to residents. He concluded by emphasizing the importance of accurate and thorough meeting minutes so that future residents and officials will be able to understand the reasoning and history behind City decisions.

Motion to Adjourn to at 7:44pm made by Council Member Cottman. 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, Cottman – aye.

Approved:


City Clerk