

Regular Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held in Council Chambers on Monday, November 6, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 6:34 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-El Soloh

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

Approval of Minutes from Meeting of October 2, 2023:

Motion to approve minutes for October 2, 2023 as written (Holland, Downing passed)

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

Approval of Minutes from Meeting of October 16, 2023:

Motion to approve minutes for October 16, 2023 as written (Troast, Downing passed)

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

Appoint Jessmin Duryea to the Board of Planning & Zoning Commission

Councilmember Marsh nominated Jessmin Duryea to serve on the Planning & Zoning Commission Board. Mr. Duryea accepted the nomination.

Motion to appoint Jessmin Duryea to the Planning & Zoning Commission, for a 5-year term ending January of 2028 (Troast, Holland passed).

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

Mr. Duryea took the oath administered by Mayor Nock.

Council Approval for Team Sponsorship for Future Warriors Program

Mayor Nock said he received the donation letter request and forwarded it to the City Clerk immediately to add to the agenda to vote on. The letter is in the meeting packet. Councilmember Troast said she recommends sponsoring the \$250.00 amount instead of the \$75.00. The city then gets a banner to advertise.

Motion to approve a \$250.00 donation to Pocomoke Little League (Troast, Holland passed)

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

Chief Hancock Presentation of Speed Bump Pilot Program

Chief Hancock said to update Mayor & Council on a few things, he has had 4 interviews. Several applicants are from Virginia and already certified officers. The compliance class to convert to Maryland is simple and less expensive than having to go to the academy. He has selected two out of the four candidates. Halloween was busy. They bought \$450.00 worth of candy. It was all given out with nothing left over. The 3 new police vehicles have finally come in. The one with the mechanical issue has been replaced. The K9 vehicle should be on the road in January of 2024. As everyone knows, Chief made some changes to the design of the police vehicles. He passed out a sample of ghost graphics. It looks like an unmarked vehicle unless the light hits it a certain way.

He had a citizen complain about speeding near Pocomoke Landing and Bonneville Apartments. There is a dead-end cul-de-sac. If he puts an officer there, it will solve the problem for a few minutes. There needs to be a more permanent solution. He is suggesting a pilot program on Bonneville Avenue and Bank Street with speed bumps. Chief passed out pictures of two options. One rubber and one metal. He prefers the rubber because Public Works can install them fairly easily. They are held in by 12-inch galvanized metal spikes. A snow plow might pull it up, there would be no damage to the plow and it could easily be reinstalled. The estimate to cover both locations is \$3,700.00 to \$3,800.00 and funds from the speed cameras could be used so it won't cost the city or citizens any money. Complaints are anticipated about damage to vehicles but he contends that if someone is going the proper speed, there will be no damage done to vehicles.

Mayor Nock said he would like to see a speed study done. It might be useful to put an officer there to see what's really going on. Chief Hancock said there has been 2 shootings in that area this year. Speed bumps might have helped in the pursuit of someone fleeing the scene. Mayor Nock also said that area is not maintained by the city. Chief said the area to place speed bumps is not the entrance of the apartments but the city-maintained streets leading into the apartments. Red Speed does a study for different things such as speed bumps and would not place them where they weren't be a benefit.

Approval of Contract for Sale of Surplus Property 1947 Clarke Avenue, Pocomoke City, MD 21851 to Hardwire, LLC

The City Attorney said the city recently surplused this property. An assessment was also done on the property as well as Hardwire. The assessments were close. No other plans for development of sale offers have come in. Hardwire made an offer of \$50,000.00 and are ready to move forward. They have done their due diligence with title searches and such.

Motion to move forward with sale of 1947 Clarke Ave, known as the Fish Farm, to Hardwire (Troast, Holland passed).

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

Public Hearing & Adopt Ordinance No. 587, Dedication of Remaining Segment of Newtowne Blvd, 2nd Reading

Planning Director, Dan Brandewie, read:

**Ordinance No. 587
Dedication of Remaining Segment of Newtowne Blvd
Pocomoke City, Maryland**

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

Motion to adopt Ordinance No. 587, Dedication of remaining segment of Newtowne Blvd. (Marsh, Troast passed)

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

Introduce Resolution No. 588, Declare Police Cars as Surplus Property, 1st Reading

Mayor Nock read: **Resolution No. 588**
Declare Police Cars as Surplus Property
Pocomoke City, Maryland

Introduce Ordinance No. 462, Zoning Map Amendment for 823 Second Street for Be More Beautiful Properties, LLC, 1st Reading

Planning Director, Dan Brandewie read: **Ordinance No. 462**
Zoning Map Amendment for 823 Second Street
for Be More Beautiful Properties, LLC
Pocomoke City, Maryland

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

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

Comments from Council

Councilmember Holland thanked police officers for the patrol they did on a busy Halloween night. Councilmember Troast nominated Amy Meyers Copeland to the Planning & Zoning Commission and would like to bring her in at the next meeting.

Comments from the Mayor

Thanked the staff for getting the job done with taking Willow Street down. It was a major accomplishment for the Mayor & Council but couldn't have been done without the staff.

Comments from City Attorney

The State is reviewing the reverter clause for the Armory. They needed photos of the interior. He worked with Dan Brandewie to obtain those photos. The State should have an answer in December. At the last meeting, the council extended the credit line with Taylor Bank was extended. The Mayor has signed the last closing document for the lift station project. This is another win for Michelle, the City Clerk. She made sure this happened. He thanked the Mayor & Council for letting her concentrate on the closing. When the Government gives money for a project 98.5% done isn't good enough, it needs to be 100%. Minutes from 4 years ago were used to prove that the current Mayor & Council are in place legally. All documents can intertwine and be used for different legal purposes. Cannabis will be discussed at the Planning & Zoning meeting on Wednesday. It will be discussed further and anyone having input can attend.

The Mayor added that currently, the members of the Planning & Zoning Commission are working on extended terms. They have not been officially appointed by the Mayor.

The Director of Public Works, Bill East, is the backbone of the city. The way he and Dominic handled the emergency incident a couple weeks ago, proved that. He needs to come in and talk about the Water Meter project and give updates.

Comments from Audience

Planning Director, Dan Brandewie reminded everyone that there is a Planning & Zoning meeting on Wednesday. An important agenda item will be the preliminary plan for the new library, the draft for the cannabis zoning, the comprehensive plan RFP and Starbucks has a plan to reorient the building.

Nola Tullar said Commissioner Abbott was supposed to be here but her schedule went sideways. Todd Verbiage closed on the property a few days ago that will bring affordable workforce housing, which is not low-income housing. The intersection at Rt 366, Stockton Rd and Rt 13 will have a permanent light. Even with extra signage, there still have been accidents and fatalities outside of the study period. Hopefully, accidents will decrease with a permanent light. There is also a meeting for the flood and risk reduction. The Commissioner is requesting that the city posts that meeting notice. Mayor Nock said make sure to include the city clerk on all emails as she is the primary contact for Mayor & Council.

Dan Brandewie said Bel-Art is requesting no parking signs and possibly striping on the sides of the road. Chief Hancock said he has already met with the manager. It is a State law that no one can park within 50 feet of an intersection.

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