

Regular Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held in Council Chambers on Monday, December 4, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm.

Present: Mayor Todd J. Nock
First Vice President: Esther Troast
Council Members: R. Scott Holland,
Diane Downing and Monda Marsh-Not Present
City Attorney: Andrew Illuminati
City Clerk: Michelle Beckett-EI Soloh

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

Approval of Minutes from Meeting of November 20, 2023

Motion to approve minutes as written for November 20, 2023 (Holland, Troast passed)

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

Review and Approval Current Bill List

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

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

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. Proclamation

Mayor Nock read a proclamation to celebrate Alpha Phi Alpha and the December 4, 1906 anniversary of the founding of the fraternity 117 years ago to emphasize scholarship, fellowship, educational excellence and social leadership boasting members such as Thorogood Marshall, Martin Luther King, Andrew Young and others.

Several members from Alpha Phi Alpha UMES chapter were in attendance.

Comments from Council

Councilmember Holland said he was thankful for everyone who attended the Christmas parade. He also thanked Public Works for the quick clean up afterwards. He noticed trash up and down Market St and it was gone in the morning.

Councilmember Troast said she is pleased to announce that she has received several emails from people who are interested in the Arts Committee, As Councilmember Holland said, the Christmas parade was wonderful and enjoyed by all.

Councilmember Downing said she wished everyone a Merry Christmas!

Comments from the Mayor

Mayor Nock said he enjoyed the Christmas parade, and he thinks it's the coldest one that he has participated in. Remember that the Mayor's Old-Fashioned Christmas has been rescheduled to December 15, 2023. He commented on the crime in the city being high. The Mayor & Council are just the legislative body and do not always understand police policy, but they have to be able to understand and adapt. He would like to see the neighborhood watch reformed and there will have to be some meetings. The incidents seem to be in a certain part of town, but things are happening all

over. The Mayor & Council need to sit down with the county and come up with a solution. There was a time when everyone knew each other but it's not like that anymore. It is time for us to open our eyes. We have an influx of people moving in from out of town and we need to take a proactive approach to keep everyone safe.

Comments from City Manager
N/A

Comments from Audience

Caryn Abbott, County Commissioner, said that she is concerned for the elderly. There have been incidences of people knocking on doors after dark, late at night. Everyone does not have internet access and might not be aware of things going on. If this happens, they should call the police right away.

Nola Tullar reiterated what Mayor Nock said about being vigilant. She disagrees with Mayor Nock that his incident was not treated differently. Her two neighbors recently had an incident where there was a theft from their vehicles then windows broken the next night. She called the police chief and the lieutenant and there was no response. (She later clarified that the police did respond to the situation.) She agreed with Caryn Abbott that people need to be vigilant. She suggested that Pocomoke reach out to the county as there might be useful information or resources that Pocomoke does not have.

Sara Chapman, Eastern Shore Lanes, she is concerned about the landlord/tenant agreement. She isn't sure if the Mayor & Council are aware but if they are not an owner-occupied business or residence, the taxes will go up. She pays \$11,000 annually for business taxes. She thinks it will be a deterrent for ownership. Mayor Nock said they will be looking at residential properties, not businesses. The city has found that a lot of houses are registered as owner-occupied but are rentals. He asked that she send an email with all her suggestions to him. The issue will be brought up at the first meeting in January after the Work Session next Monday.

Travis Cowger, said there is someone near him renting rooms and even parking RVs in the driveway. According to the Pocomoke Code, that is a rental and the proof is on Facebook where he advertises rooms for rent. He and neighbors are concerned because they don't know who is going in and out of there.

Mayor Nock thanked his fraternity brother, AC Alrey, the Economic Development Coordinator in Crisfield. Mayor Nock also recognized the good job that all city employees do. The city has had a lot of transition this year but employees held it together.

Motion to adjourn (Troast, Holland passed)

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

Approved: K. Michelle Beckett-El Soloh
City Clerk