

Regular Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held in Council Chambers and via Zoom/Facebook livestream on Tuesday, September 7, 2021. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

Present: Mayor Susan Marshall Harrison
First Vice President: Esther Troast
Council Members: R. Scott Holland, Diane Downing, Daniel J. Tarr, Todd J. Nock
City Manager: Jeremy Mason
City Attorney: Michael Mathers

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

Approval of Minutes from Meeting of August 16, 2021:

Motion to approve minutes for August 16, 2021 as written (Holland, Tarr passed)

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

Review and Approval Current Bill List:

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

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

Approve Hunting Permit on City Property for Major East:

Councilmember Troast said that Major East has hunted on City property for years with no incidents. Mr. East said he is hunting with his neighbor, Adam Dingus, and they are applying for two properties.

Motion to approve hunting on City property, Parcel# 2401040332 & 2401040359, for Major East and Adam Dingus until 7/31/2022 (Troast, Nock).

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

Approve Hunting Permit on city property for Adam Dingus:

Motion to approve hunting on City property, Parcel# 2401040332 & 2401040359, for Major East and Adam Dingus until 7/31/2022 (Troast, Nock).

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

Public Hearing for Change from 2-Way Stop to 4-Way Stop at Intersection at Cedar Street and 7th Street:

City Manager Mason said he brought this up at the last Mayor & Council meeting at the request of several citizens. He has observed this intersection during the travel time to and from school and has seen traffic flying through the intersection even on weekends. He feels that it would be effective to make it a 4-way stop intersection. There are a lot of kids that walk in that area. Councilmember Nock said they need to do whatever it takes to make Pocomoke City a safe city and deter speeding.

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

Motion to change 7th and Cedar Streets from a 2-way stop to a 4-way stop intersection (Tarr, Nock)

Acclamation: Troast-aye, Holland-aye, Nock-aye, Tarr-aye, Downing-aye; none opposed; motion carried
A notice will be posted on the City website.

Introduce Resolution No. 545, To Amend Several Sections of the Charter, 1st Reading:

Mayor Marshall Harrison said this is the first reading of this resolution. To summarize, it only changes gender specific terms to nongender specific terms such as "Councilman" to "Councilmember". Councilmember Nock said these changes were previously discussed but not included in the final resolution. It is a matter of respect for Councilmembers. Mayor Marshall Harrison summarized:

**Resolution No. 545
Amend Several Sections of the Charter
To Non-Gender Specific Terms
Pocomoke City, MD**

Council Approval to Submit Application for Grant to Fund De-Escalation Tools to Improve Community Safety:

City Manager Mason said this is just a notice that our Grant Writer, Linda McNeil, will be submitting a grant application for this equipment. She is working on several grants. This is just one of them. It is a preventative to altercations using bolo-wraps and sprays such as capsaicin. Those are less lethal weapons. This through the Government Office of Crime Control Prevention (GOCCP) for \$32,687.00. As the Department grows and changes, this also includes covering training and policy modification.

Motion to submit grant application (Troast, Nock)

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

Approve Special Permit for Alcohol Beverages for MarVa Theater for October 29, 2021 from 9:00 pm to 12:00 am:

Rob Clark, Cedar St, Manager of the MarVa Theater, said the Theater has done the Rocky Horror Picture Show for several years as kind of a tradition. Alcohol has been served on several occasions. There have never been any incidents. The norm is 1-2 drinks per person and service stops well before the end of the show. The application needs to be submitted to the County soon. There is also a new manager, Hunter Cowger.

Motion to grant special liquor permit for October 29th, 2021 9pm-12am for MarVa Theater (Troast, Holland)

Acclamation: Troast-aye, Holland-aye, Nock-nay, Tarr-nay, Downing-aye; 2 opposed; motion carried

Recognition for Chief Hancock:

Fire Chief, Dick Gladding, on the 25th of June, 2021 Pocomoke VFD arrived on the scene of a fire. An elderly woman inside a residence was reluctant to leave the residence Chief Hancock entered the residence and assisted in making sure the lady left the endangered residence safely. Chief Gladding presented Chief of Police, Arthur Hancock, with a Distinguished Service Award. Travis Ayres also thanked Chief Hancock for helping his family. Mayor Marshall Harrison thanked Chief Hancock for going above and beyond the call of duty in this incident and rebuilding the police force.

Comments from Council

Councilmember Troast thanked the City Manager and the County for facilitating the mosquito control.

Councilmember Nock citizens have reached out to him about getting buildings torn down. Mr. Dan Brandewie or Mr. Mike Wyatt, both in Planning and Zoning, are the ones to contact. We are tearing down dilapidated buildings as we can. Mr. Nock said the Girls and Boys Club met last week. We are happy they will be coming to Pocomoke City and start in the High School. We need community participation.

Councilmember Downing thanked the community for the support regarding her mother.

Councilmember Tarr said anyone in District 3 who might need something can feel free to call him.

Comments from City Manager

Mr. Mason said he has seen negative posts on social media regarding the Mayor & Council, administration not being able to take care of things and not doing anything. A lot of comments have centered around the Sturgis One Room School House. That is not a city-owned building. They have their own Charter and Board. The City does support it and donates money out of the budget every year. Landscaping got a little out of hand. It wouldn't be fair to say that we were working on more important things because that is not true. We wished we would have noticed sooner but it has been corrected. The City Manager was personally called out by someone who is from Pocomoke City but doesn't live here anymore. Anyone is welcome to call and talk to him but he won't engage in mudslinging publicly. As far as downtown buildings, the armory, blight, 5th Street fire station takes time. There can be legal issues and real estate property process behind it. There are many projects in process and money to be invested but things take time. If anyone has negative comments, they are welcome to call Mr. Mason directly to have a discussion. Councilmember Nock said he invited the public to volunteer to keep the schoolhouse open but no one spoke up and volunteered. Now, a new Board has been formed and restoration has been planned. Anyone who hasn't been inside can stop by. He asks that negative comments stop. There is plenty to do to volunteer and be positive if we want a better Pocomoke. Mayor Marshall Harrison said that when Mr. Waters retires, he will be missed. His knowledge about the history is amazing. We hope that he will pass on his knowledge.

Comments from Chief Hancock

Chief Gladding is an excellent fire chief and has one of the best fire stations in Maryland. There have been 19 arrests, 10 of those were criminal arrests, 1 handgun arrest, 3 drug arrests, 62 traffic stops, 36 warrants, 57 foot-patrol checks, 26 citations, 196 business checks, 259 trouble checks. We were recently awarded a grant for recruitment and retention for \$23,500.00 of which \$10,000.00 must be used for recruitment advertising. We are planning to do radio and ads. A vehicle was added, a 2011 Chevy Capris with 89,000 miles. An unmarked vehicle has been assigned to Lt. Craven. Mobile cameras are running on old Virginia Rd. Warnings are issued until September 23, 2021, after that date they will be citations and a camera will move to 8th Street. Our first female K-9 handler, Sgt. Andrea Lewis, has started training and should be finished by the first week in October. Det. Stanley Harmon starts on September 20th. Interviews have been conducted and candidate selected for dispatch. Academy recruits in the academy are doing well, a scrimmage team with Pocomoke High School will get together at the end of October.

Comments from Audience

Karen, Walnut St, had questions on the neighborhood watch program. Councilmember Tarr said his fear is getting too much into the policing part but they can do meetings to talk about what can be done, like removing trees or cutting them back from certain areas. Councilmember Nock said the ideas was to be the eyes and ears of the community for the police.

Mayor Marshall Harrison asked the Council to approve executive session after open session to discuss items under General Provisions Annotated Code of Maryland, Sec. 3-305 (b) (3) and (7).

Motion to adjourn open session (Nock, Downing)

Acclamation: Troast-aye, Holland-aye, Nock-aye, Tarr-aye, Downing-aye; 0 opposed; motion carried

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