

Regular Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held in Council Chambers on Monday, January 14, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

Present:

Mayor: Todd Nock

Council Members: R. Scott Holland,
C.L. Marshall, Diane Downing, Brooke Cottman

City Manager: John Barkley

Attorney: Andrew Illuminati

City Clerk: Melinda Stafford

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

Approval of Minutes from Meetings of December 16th, December 30th, and December 31st, 2024

Motion to table the minutes by Councilman Holland and seconded by Councilman Marshall. Motion passes.

Review and Approval of Current List of Bills for Payment

The bill list was presented for payment. Motion to approve the bills as presented by Councilman Marshall, seconded by Councilwoman Downing. Motion passes.

Statement Regarding the Maryland Opens Meetings Act

Mayor Nock reads the Open Meetings Act statement from a complaint that was filed against the City.

Appointment of City Council First Vice-President and Selection of Second Vice-President

Mayor Nock explains that District 3 and Council Vice President, Monda Marsh has stepped down from her position and Councilwoman Downing will be moving up to Council First Vice President. He opens the floor for a motion. Councilwoman Cottman makes a motion to appoint Councilwoman Downing as First Vice President, seconded by Councilman Marshall. Motion passes. The floor is open for nominations for Second Vice President. Councilman Holland nominates Councilman Marshall for Second Vice President; Councilwoman seconds the nomination. Councilman Holland makes the motion to approve Councilman C.L. Marshall for Second Vice President for Pocomoke City Council and seconded by Councilwoman Cottman. Motion passes.

Designation of Bank Signatory

Mayor Nock informs all that since Councilman Carroll L. Marshall will be the incoming Second Vice President that he will become a signatory on all of the Pocomoke City bank accounts. Councilwoman Downing will remain as a signatory on the bank accounts.

Appointment to Board of Zoning Appeals: Marcus Collins

Mr. Collins approaches the bench and a family member participates in the swearing in. Mayor Nock reads the Oath of Office officially appointing Marcus Collins to the Board of Zoning Appeals. Applause is given.

Appointment to Planning and Zoning Commission: Chip Choquette

Mr. Choquette approaches the bench for the swearing in. Mayor Nock reads the Oath of Office officially appointing Richard "Chip" Choquette to the Planning and Zoning Commission. Applause is given.

Appointment to Worcester County Solid Waste Advisory Committee

Mayor Nock explains that this is a Worcester County Committee that a representative of Pocomoke City should attend. The prior City Clerk was the former representative and he is recommending Mike Wyatt to be the new representative on this committee. Mr. Wyatt states ok. Councilman Holland makes a motion to appoint Mike Wyatt to the Worcester County Solid Waste Advisory Committee. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Downing. Motion passes.

Resolution No. 2025-R-7: Charter Amendment, Section C18 Pocomoke City Charter, Authorizing the Mayors Vote to Break A Tie, First Reading

Mayor Nock explains and recites the Charter Amendment.

Contract Award: Pocomoke National Armory

Mayor Nock opens the floor for discussion. Councilman Marshall would like to hear Mr. Wyatt's recommendation on the 3 bids the City has received on the Armory demolition. Mr. Wyatt addresses the Council and states that he saw a Brownsfield study that the building should be demolished. He thanks Councilman Marshall, Mayor Nock for the ideas of keeping some bricks for making the property a Veteran's Memorial. His recommendation is for Millers Landscaping. He's the middle bid; however, they have done work in the City and is reliable, has professionalism. Councilman Marshall notes that there is a \$80,000 difference and asks for justification. Mr. Wyatt notes that he honestly believes that the job will be done in a timely and efficient manner. He then references a previous job that the company performed for the City. Councilman Marshall then asks what the coverage is. The response is Mr. Wyatt believes it is the equipment and the disposal; clean up. Councilman Marshall then makes a motion to proceed with the demolition of the Pocomoke National Armory utilizing Mr. Wyatt's recommendation of Miller's Construction. Motion seconded by Councilwoman Cottman. Motion passes; 3 yes and Councilman Holland abstains.

Contract Award: Cypress Park Lighting Project

Planning and Zoning Director Dan Brandewie comes to the podium. He notes that in a previous work session the Cypress Park Lighting project was discussed and he is asking the City Council to move forward with the awarding of the project. Councilman Marshall questions if this lighting job will reflect the new elevation. The response is yes there is a certain elevation that must be maintained 5 feet by 3 feet. Mayor Nock asks when can we expect the updated elevation. The response is the only elevation we can expect is the service panel from Delmarva Power. We are not elevating any ground. Elevating the courts is a \$500,000 job and that's not in the plan right now. The lighting poles will not be affected by the floodplain. Councilwoman Downing makes a motion to move forward with the project and seconded by Councilman Marshall. Motion passes.

Contract Award: Comprehensive Plan

Mayor Nock states that he asked for consensus to move forward with the Comprehensive Plan and the City received 2 bids. Peter Johnston from the Easton area authored the 2014 Comprehensive Plan and his bid was \$39,600. Wallace Johnson bid \$129,644.46. Council is asked to consider moving forward. Councilwoman Downing is asking why such a big difference. Dan Brandewie states that Mr. Johnston already has the information and has less overhead. Councilwoman Downing motions to accept bid from Peter Johnston, seconded by Councilwoman Cottman. Motion passes.

Contract Award: Department of Public Works Building

Mayor Nock states that it has been discovered that the current Public Works building is in desperate need of repair. Mr. Wyatt states that there are 3 bids for a new building. The new building will have 2 offices, meeting room/lunch room, adequate bathrooms. Kaywood Construction submitted a turn-key and most complete building. The other bids were a shell of a building. Councilman Marshall asks if the building will be enough for the department and the heating source. Mr. Wyatt explains the heating

and air conditioning source. Councilwoman Cottman make a motion to award to Kaywood Construction, seconded by Councilwoman Downing. Motion passes.

Discussion – District 3 Vacancy

Mayor Nock announces that there will be a special election and asks for thoughts from the Council. Councilman Marshall states that it would be a disservice to the voters of the district and it would be fair to have a special election. Councilman Holland is in favor of having an election. Councilwoman Downing states that she thinks we all agree that there should be a special election. Councilwoman Cottman agrees. Councilman Marshall asks will we be able to have it in April and the Mayor states yes because the advertisement needs to go out in January. It will be as close to April as possible. Councilman Holland motions to have the special election as soon as possible, seconded by Councilwoman Cottman. Motion passes.

Redistricting Update

City Manager John Barkley addresses the council stating after reaching out to Worcester County and Salisbury University. Mayor Nock makes a recommendation that after the initial meeting with Salisbury University, to keep this public, have public hearings to bring the possible redistricting maps out. Then bring back to the Council for the final vote. Councilman Marshall asks if the Council should undertake this or have someone do this for us. Mayor Nock states someone is doing this for us and Planning and Zoning should be included in the meeting.

Comments

a. Comments from the City Council Members

1. Councilman Holland – Thanks Public Works for their work during the snow event. Appreciation for Bill East for 25 years of Service. Thank you to Pocomoke Police Dept. and to the Chief for all of their work during the shooting in town. Appreciation for the response time and how the situation was handled.
2. Councilman Marshall – Same as Councilman Holland
3. Councilwoman Downing – Same as Councilman Holland and Councilman Marshall
4. Councilwoman Cottman – Thanks to Mr. Collins and Mr. Choquette for their willingness to serve. Thanks to everyone for their work on getting the contracts awarded. Wish all a Happy New year.

b. Comments from the Mayor

Thanks to Mike Wyatt about for helping residents that contacted him and working with the landlord registration. Excited about new positions being filled. Honored to attend the ceremony for Angela Alsobrooks. He believes that it is crucial to maintain relationship for the better of our City and our residents. We missed out on many grants and we have the team to make things happen. Looking for to redistricting. We have to not just fix our roads but create barriers. It's a solution that we need to come up with. Pocomoke needs a Recreation Center in town. The armory is not just coming down but we need something to replace it with. Pocomoke City has failed the youth of our city. It doesn't matter whether it's the Boys and Girls clubs or the Salvation Army but someone must be around to help teach life skills to our youth. We have the group at City Hall to make it happen. Due to the population influx of another city, the population of our city will grow so we better get ready.

c. Comments from the City Manager

Informs that the staff is preparing for a tour of all public buildings owned by the City. Need to make a list of all repairs and take inventory to make a report to keep as Pocomoke City is landlord to all of the buildings. Provided acknowledgement for the Public Works department for working to have the

streets of Pocomoke the best by far during the past snowstorm. Thank you to Mike Wyatt for all of his work and serving on the Solid Waste Advisory Committee.

d. Comments from the Audience

1. Stephanie Dubrell from the Horse Farm is requesting a work session to discuss having a lease agreement with the City. Mentions the farm is in need of repairs such as every stall is leaking. Notes that they could write grants and have the city apply for the funds.
2. Chip Choquette encourages the council to look at the big picture and the city as whole because the city owns a lot of stuff. There needs to have a work session on all city property maintenance. Councilman Holland states that we need to be better caring for our buildings. The Mayors response is that the City manager is really the landlord and the properties needs to be broken up, we need to come up with a strategy to do care for.
3. Nola Tullar thanks the City Manager for his weekly reports. She questions the item on the report that concerns the Fairgrounds and MDE. Dan Brandewie and explains that he was contacted by MDE and wetlands enforcement. He informed all that there was a complaint that the pond at the fairgrounds was filled in with filling. MDE walked it and the follow-up report stated that the wetland had been impacted and asked the City to restore the wetland. Mayor Nock asked when was Mayor and Council going to find out. We need to go back and find documentation on all of this. Mr. Brandewie is ready to prepare a mediation program. Mr. Barkley will prepare a report for council as the situation is fluid right now. Nola asked if the City pays for this? This is an example of pulling the range on the fairgrounds because something like this happens under the nose of the City. Councilman Holland states that there are 2 committees. Nola states we need to have this rectified. Councilman Marshall states we will be releasing more information when it becomes available. Mayor Nock is waiting for documentation on who is on the 2 committees appointed by past council so we can know who is supposed to be on the committees.
4. Chip Choquette reads that it is stated in the code.

Motion to adjourn at 7:55 pm by Councilman Holland, seconded by Councilwoman Cottman

Approved: _____

City Clerk

Agenda items may or may not be considered in sequence. This agenda is subject to change to include the addition or deletion of items, including executive/closed session.