

Regular Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held in Council Chambers on Monday, December 16, 2024. 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 Marshall and Call to Order

Approval of Minutes from Meeting of November 18, 2024

Motion to approve the minutes of November 18, 2024 by Councilwoman Downing and seconded by Councilman Marshall. Motion passes.

Review and Approval Current Bill List

Motion to approve current bill list made by Councilman Marshall, seconded by Councilwoman Cottman. Motion passes.

Special One-Day Liquor License Permits

A motion to approve both permits was made by Councilman Holland and seconded by Councilman Marshall. Motion passes.

Emergency Resolution No. 2025-ER-6: Allocation of ARPA Funds

Mayor Nock comments that it should be listed as Resolution 2025-R-6. Attorney Andrew Illuminati confirms that it takes 4 votes to agree to make it an Emergency Resolution. Motioned to make it an Emergency Resolution by Councilman Holland and seconded By Councilwoman Cottman. Motion passes. Mayor Nock reads the Resolution. He opens the floor to Public Comment. Hearing none, opens Council to discussion. The Mayor asks how much are we looking at for allocation to the Police Department, Public Works and EMS. City Manager, John Barkley responds that EMS was upwards of \$412,000, Police was \$175,00, and the Trash Truck was \$276,000. He also responds that he is looking for the commitment from the City Council to allow for purchase of the structure. The Public Works Director is thinking of a mobile structure that would have water and electric added in. This would not exceed \$20,000. Mayor Nock says that the Council has met twice in November and this is the second meeting in December and he has not heard of this. He explains that these are things that we need to start following as a municipality. Its not fair to council if someone asks them about this and the response would be "I don't know". It is his request that at the next Council meeting to have the bids for the structure. John is asking for a commitment and reassures the council that this would not be purchased without 3 quotes. He apologizes for trying to push this through at the last minute. It is explained that a commitment cannot be given if they do not have all of the information. Councilman Marshall asks what kind of structure are we looking into. Mr. Barkley states that it is conceptual like a shed. Councilman Marshall states we are looking for a building for operations that will last. Councilman Holland makes a motion to approve, seconded by Councilman Marshall. Motion passes.

Resolution No. 2025-R-7: Charter Amendment. First Reading

Mayor received an email from a citizen letting us know that since the agenda did not have specifics it could violate the Open Meetings Act. In a conversation with the City Attorney, he advised that it had been properly advertised. The Mayor stated that it was up to the Council if they wanted to table this item or move forward. On the other side of this, that would mean 5-6 hours of work that our staff and energy will have to do to respond to them. You do have the right to table this until January or move forward. Councilman Marshall said to table it to January. Mayor said if we table it until January and add "Mayors roles and duties to the title" Councilman Holland stated that we should take a deeper look into it. Councilman Marshall makes a motion to table until the January meeting, seconded by Councilwoman Cottman.

National Guard Armory Discussion

After the bids were put out and received the mayor received some communication that the state was interested in the revitalization of the Armory. The Mayor spoke with Mr. Barbara. The city manager informed the council that the bids were good for 30 days Councilman Marshall explains that years ago he was in favor of rehab of the building. He would like to have some state money to help a long time ago. He's in full favor of moving forward with the demolition. His fear is that this would be up for discussion again in 3 years. Councilwoman Downing asks him if he thinks this is going to take them a long time to give us the money. He says he doesn't know where he believes it could possibly be sold by March. She asks how long to we wait? The Mayor request that we let the state come and look at the building. Councilwoman Downing suggests 30 days to come and see the building. Councilman Holland states every time we push with back it cost more and more money. Staff uses more and more time to work on it. The state washed their hands of it so he is in favor of moving forward with the demolition. Councilman Marshall is looking for closure. He's like to see a veterans memorial put there in its place. Councilwoman Cottman would like to hear what the state is offering. Councilwoman Downing wanted to state for the record that there was a survey that was over a million dollars just to get started. What would the cost would be now? That's why she asked how long are we going to give them? The Mayor states that the inside of the building is a crime the way it was left and her was are all of these years later. There is too much need in this community to let a building go to waste. Its not fair to people who inherit this problem. Mayor Nock asks the City Manager to get ahold of the state agency. If there is no response in the next 30 days, we will take the bids and move forward. Councilman Marshal is in favor of awarding the bid tonight. If we push this thing to January 6th, can we award it? City manager states yes and defers to the city attorney. Motion to bypass the City Council, Mayor comments and go to audience comments made by Councilman Holland, seconded by Councilwoman Downing. Motion passes.

Comments

a. Comments from the City Council Members

1. Councilwoman Cottman –Merry Christmas
2. Councilwoman Downing – Merry Christmas
3. Councilman Marshall – Thanks to the City and Employees for the Mayor's Old-Fashioned Christmas. It is nice to come together and celebrate as a town. Wish all a happy Holiday and a Merry Christmas
4. Councilman Holland – Merry Christmas, Chamber did a Holiday Decorating Contest and thanks all of the business for participating.

b. Comments from the Mayor

Mayor's Old-Fashioned Christmas was a success. It was great to see so many faces out in the bitter cold. Thank you to family and friends for helping in the bicycle giveaway paying homage to his mother. There were 41 bikes given away. Happy Holidays, Happy Kwanzaa, Merry Christmas! There are projects being dropped. It is not the Mayor and Council's job to micromanage. He asks for an update on the Comprehensive Plan. CM Barkley explains it is in the hands of the Planning Commission. Update on the Boys and Girls Club is dependent on the CDBG process. The city has to go through the round of funding in 2025. The Mayor asks Councilwoman Cottman to be the project manager for the Boys and Girls club and the Comp Plan. A bill invoiced November 18th should not have taken until now to receive. The City looks like crap and debris is everywhere. We need everyone to come together. The department bickering needs to stop. Councilman Holland states he does not believe this is helping the situation. The Mayor says it is time to get on the stick.

c. Comments from the City Manager

Two items there was a reach out to the County to begin the conversation of pedestrian safety over by the schools. Hoping for a collaboration. Thank you to Councilwoman Cottman for the new shelter that is in use by the public and Shore Transit.

d. Comments from the Audience

1. Esther Troast states she approves that Councilman Holland and Councilman Marshall states. It has been a problem long before she was on council and she served for 9 years. Her dream was to demolish the building because it is a valuable piece a property. There are many opportunities for that property.
2. Ryan McCready from EMS points out that from a public safety standpoint that it is a safety issue. There are homeless people who live in there, start fires for warmth. He likes the veterans memorial as an idea for the property.
3. Chief Hancock introduced 3 new recruits for the Police Academy. Cole Bennett, Ashley Taylor, and Elizabeth Peasley

Motion to adjourn at 7:36 made by Councilman Marshall, seconded by Councilwoman Cottman.

Approved: 
City Clerk

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Regular Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held in Council Chambers on Monday, December 30, 2024. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

Present: Mayor Todd Nock
Council Members: R. Scott Holland,
Diane Downing, Brooke Cottman, C.L. Marshall
City Manager: John Barkley
Attorney: Andrew Illuminati
City Clerk: Melinda Stafford

Call to order

Mayor Nock opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

Resolution No. 2025-R-8: Allocation of ARPA Funds

Mayor Nock informs Council that the deadline to allocate the funds is on December 31st. He then entertains a motion to make this an emergency resolution. Motion made by Councilman Marshall and seconded by Councilwoman Downing.

Mayor Nock reads the resolution. He then opens the floor for the Public Hearing. City Clerk Melinda Stafford informs the Mayor and Council of the disruption of the livestream. At 6:37 pm the livestream resumed working. Worcester County Commissioner Caryn Abbott approaches the podium. She asks what processes have been taken to declare this an emergency resolution. Mayors response was that they wanted to see and need schematics for the building by the next meeting so there would be an accurate total. Commissioner Abbott stated that she did research and she doesn't want to see any money lost. It cannot be done by resolution. She asked if it was considered for revenue replacement. Mayors response is that 12/16 was first that this issue was heard about. Her response was that the steps of procurement cannot be skipped. Mayor nock repeated her comment for the record. The Commissioner would encourage contact with Candace from the State of Maryland for other possible options.

Janet from the Eastern Shore Post wanted to clarify her notes. She asked if the total amount of the ARPA funds were \$910,401.00. She was told it was correct. City Manager John Barkley clarified the breakdown for all in attendance. The total amount available based on the expenditures of the city has changed. Mr. Barkley stated that \$910,401 as of 12/16 meeting, of which the total spent is \$1,188,491.00, with a remaining obligation of \$270,890 to be used for the Public Works building. The reporter then asked Commissioner Abbott if Pocomoke City doesn't follow procurement procedures, could they lose the money? The reply from Ms. Abbott is the definition of procurement and advises that Pocomoke City should not skip the steps of procurement. It was asked of Ms Abbott if it had to be in writing. The reply was no.

Ms. Nola Tullar said that she agreed that everything should be in a contract. The wheels have got to get moving and that didn't happen in a couple of weeks. These monies have been pending for some time. Let's run over to Hertrich and get these estimates and call Backyard Escapes and get an estimate. Not lose this money.

The Mayor responds that it does not make sense not to have estimates in front of them. Ultimately what happens is the question. Ms. Nola references a small town outside of Baltimore that used their funds for a community center. It goes a lot wider than vehicles. The Mayor states that this is used for our residents and they deserve to see a piece of the pie. In working with Mr. Barkley, he know it has to be allocated by December 31st. He hopes to work ahead of time communicating what the needs of

the City departments are and balance that with the needs of the City. He knows that Public works needs a new building and this will be one less stressor on them going forward. Councilman Marshall has been to the Public Works building and stated that he would have liked to have this front of him earlier. It seems like we are always behind or playing catchup at the last minute. The employees will need to be proactive instead of reactive and hope that moving forward we do a better job and improve the immediate quality of life for our residents. Ms Abbott stated that it cannot be a city entity or a volunteer fire department that is awarded the remaining funds. Ms. Janet from the Eastern Shore Post asks the Commissioner if they cannot do it by tomorrow? She states that she is wondering about whether the application from this would be valid. The response from the Council is yes they are valid. The Mayor asks the Finance Director, Brandy Matthews to the podium. She explains that the funds left total \$278,090. If they are not obligated by December 31st, Pocomoke City will have to pay them back to the government. We not the only town but that's where we stand. Mayor Nock states his issue is that talks have actually started December of last year. He understands the turnover but someone needs to carry the torch. He states conversations were had and here we are at 6:53 on December 30th. We don't want to give that money back. We may need to consider a special meeting tomorrow. Commissioner Abbott asks if none of that money was placed into revenue replacement. Director Matthews replies that she cannot state what was done prior to her working here. she can say what has been obligated. Since she began, \$910,401 has been used with the remaining \$278,090 needing to be obligated. The Mayor requests a motion for a 15-minute recess. Councilman Marshall motions for a 15-minute recess, seconded by Councilwoman Downing. Motion passes. Return from recess 7:03pm. Mayor thanks everyone for their patience. In meeting with Mr. Barkley and Ms. Matthews, decides to work this out before moving forward. He encourages everyone to watch the live stream and look for more updates on social media pertaining to the Emergency Meeting taking place on December 31, 2024 at 10am. Motion to table this item until 12/31 at 10am made by Councilwoman Cottman, seconded by Councilman Marshall. Motion passes.

Comments

A. Comments from the City Council Members

1. Councilwoman Cottman –Happy Holidays.
2. Councilwoman Downing – Thank all for coming out and Happy Holidays
3. Councilman Marshall – Reiterates that we need to be proactive instead of reactive when it comes to problems, be ahead of the curve.
4. Councilman Holland –None

B. Comments from the Mayor

Appreciates Nola, Janet, and Commissioner Abbott for coming out. There will be a 2025 Priorities Meeting with Worcester County on January 2, 2025. All of our city department heads will be in attendance along with Commissioner Abbott, Commissioner Purnell, and Councilman Marshall. Wishes everyone a Happy New Year and believes we can do great things in 2025. Thanks everyone for their diligence throughout 2024. No more survival mode and glad to be here.

C. Comments from the City Manager

Congratulations to Stan Harmon on his retirement after 46 years in the Police profession. Wishes him the very best on his retirement.

D. Comments from the Audience

Nola wanted to clarify that they are still here and they have not done much on the Pocomoke City Comp Plan. They have not approved any surveys or anything to go out. Mr. Brandewie needs to bring

something or say they have it under control. She doesn't want to overstep her boundaries. The Mayor asked at Dec 16 mtg asked to bring to council, 3 bids or a copy of the unfinished comp plan.

Motion to adjourn by Councilman Marshall, seconded by Councilwoman Cottman.made at 7:11 pm

Approved:  _____

City Clerk

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Regular Meeting Minutes

The special meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held in Council Chambers on Tuesday, December 31, 2024. The meeting was called to order at 10:06 am.

Present: Mayor Todd J. Nock
Council Members: R. Scott Holland,
C.L. Marshall, Brooke Cottman
City Manager: John Barkley
City Clerk: Melinda Stafford

Call to Order

Roll Call is taken by Mayor Nock. Attendance is stated. Councilwomen Downing and Marsh were not in attendance. The Mayor also states that the Emergency meeting was posted on the website

Resolution No. 2025-ER-8 Allocation of ARPA Funds

Mayor Nock stated that today is the last day to commit the funds so he will entertain a motion to make the resolution and emergency resolution, and that Councilwoman Downing will be voting by proxy. Motion made by Councilman Holland, seconded by Councilman Cottman. Downing by vote from meeting the night before. Mayor then reads the resolution. He then opens the floor for public comment. Asking anyone to step to the microphone, state your name. Janet from The Post approaches. She asked what happened at the public meeting the night before concerning the Public Works building. Mayor Nock responds since there was not three (3) bids presented, council was not able to move forward and utilize ARPA funding. If it was presented with the bids, it could have moved forward. At the next meeting on January 6, the bids will be available. Finance Director Brandy Matthews will work on finding funds for that to happen. Our Police Department and City Departments have an open bid that was still valid for vehicles. Pocomoke City will not have to worry about vehicles in FY 2026. Sidewalks and a Community Center is all we will talk about. Chief Hancock approaches the podium. He begins to thank the Mayor and Council for the updating and turnaround of the department. He states he is proud to have worked with the Mayor, Council and the City Manager, Mr. Barkley. Mayor Nock asks how soon will see these vehicles on the road? Chief stated that the admin vehicles will be delivered on Friday. There is one place on the Eastern Shore that outfits police vehicles. They do a phenomenal job. Our police vehicles are scheduled for March. Otherwise, they are currently parked on police property inside the fencing. The Mayor has conversation about the possibility of council vehicles and what happens with older equipment. Chief states that the equipment is normally recycled. With the newer vehicles the officers are updated with the best equipment. Marshall asks about the new vehicles be purchased on the state contract. The response is the Dodge and the Fords are open on one contract. Councilman Marshall asks about the outfitting. Response is that the outfitting is separate. Chief explains how the state contracts work. Councilman Marshall states that he is asking to make sure that when then are questions are asked, we are ready to go. Chief explains with more clarity. Mayor Nock states that we have the ability to do and put out RFPs for service for different things like internet and so its not like problems with our Police Department. We don't let anyone else work on the electronics or anything electrical. It goes back to the dealer. Seeing no more public comments, the Mayor asks for a motion, Councilman Holland to approve Emergency Resolution 2025-ER-8, seconded by Councilman Marshall. Motion passes.

Comments

a. Comments from the City Council Members

1. Councilwoman Cottman –None.
2. Councilman Marshall – Hopes that we do not find ourselves in this situation again. We should not find ourselves on the last day of the year attempting to approve anything. Thanks us for our duty.
3. Councilman Holland – None

b. Comments from the Mayor

Agrees with Councilman Marshall, He appreciate everyone's effort that helped to brainstorm how to use the funds, so the City does not lose them. We need to be better and not be behind the wheel. Pocomoke City has always been behind and now its time to be ahead of things. Public Works, Planning and Zoning needs to be on the list. CBDG monies needs to be on the list, Comprehensive Plan and more needs to be on the list for January 6th meeting. It's time to be proactive.


c. Comments from the City Manager

He agrees with everything that is being said. Thank you on behalf of the staff for your help last night and for going above and beyond the call of duty. We as a staff will make a resolution to be better and in a few weeks you will see a difference.

d. Comments from the Audience

None

Motion to adjourn at 10:24 by Councilman Marshall and seconded by Councilman Holland to adjourn.

Approved: 
City Clerk

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