

## 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 31<sup>st</sup>. 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

*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.*