

Regular Meeting Minutes

The Pocomoke City Emergency Safety Meeting was held at Pocomoke Middle School on Tuesday, June 10, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

Present:

Mayor: Todd Nock
Council Members: S. Tull,
Brooke Cottman, C.L. Marshall
Interim City Manager: Brandy Matthews
City Clerk: Melinda Stafford

Pledge of Allegiance, Call to Order, Prayer

Everyone stands for the pledge, Mayor Todd Nock called the emergency safety meeting to order and welcomed attendees. He introduced elected officials and law enforcement representatives present.

They included: -

- Councilwoman Brooke Cottman, District 4
- Councilwoman Sharnell Tull., District 3
- Councilman C.L. Marshall, District 5
- Sheriff Matt Crisafulli
- Commissioner Diana Purnell, District 2
- Commissioner Eric Fiori, District 3
- Chief Rudy Hancock, Pocomoke City Police Department
- Chief Stern, Maryland State Police
- Adam Howard, Maryland State Police
- Shane Musgrave, Worcester County Sheriff's Office
- Nathaniel Passwaters, Worcester County Sheriff's Office
- Rob Price, Worcester County Sheriff's Office

Opening Remarks

Mayor Nock delivered opening remarks, emphasizing the meeting was called due to recent gun violence and safety concerns in the community. Everyone is here because our city is at a turning point, and we refuse to wait until a tragedy forces our hand. Everyone is here to act not out of fear, but out of responsibility. In the recent weeks, however, everyone has seen warning signs. Gun activity has shaken parts of our community. There's been fear, concern, and growing tension. The goal is to develop a community-based plan to prevent violence and restore safety. It's going to be shaped by every last person in this room. Parents, teachers, faith leaders, law enforcement, young people, and everyday citizens who care enough to show up and say, not on my watch. Everyone is not here tonight just to talk, but here to build a plan. There is a lot of work to do tonight. There needs to be input and ideas from all community members.

Pocomoke Police Chief R. Hancock

Chief Rudy Hancock thanks all of you for coming out tonight and attending. It truly warms my heart that so many people are taking notice of their community and wanting to help make it better in any way possible. He provided an update on crime statistics and police initiatives. There has been a 29% increase in shots fired and firearms incidents in past 18 months. In order to combat this problem, Pocomoke City Police Department is implementing the following protocols. Protocols such as implementing increased surveillance cameras throughout city. The ones that are up now that are

single purpose lenses, we're changing them all to quad lenses. That means each camera will actually have four views instead of one. Implementing stationary license plate reader program that will capture license plate information and they will also have live cameras affixed to them. Increasing police presence in north sector of town by putting more police presence on the north sector of town while minimizing our traffic efforts on Route 13 and minimizing patrol officer time at the office. With our implementations and our focus on the north end, the big thing that we need is involvement from our community. Emphasized need for community involvement in reporting suspicious activity If you see something, say something. If you're a witness, be a witness. If you're a victim, report that you are a victim. We have a link on our webpage that allows anyone to report anonymous information directly to me at any point in time. I've received a lot of anonymous emails, but the ones that. That I'm looking to receive, but it's very few and far between. Also, his office line is available 24/7. It rings directly to him personally, no matter where he's at, home, vacation. He's that vested in this community for you, the citizens and your property that every second of the day, every hour of the night, it matters.

Commissioners D. Purnell & E. Fiori

Expressed support for city's efforts encouraging citizens to listen to the Mayor, police officers and state troopers. Noted that everyone must work together to work on the problem. Emphasized need for community investment and involvement by making up one's mind and get something done. She is there to see what she can do. Commissioner Eric Fiori echoed support for providing county resources to city. Thanked mayor and council for their leadership.

Dr. Annette Wallace, Incoming Superintendent of Schools:

She believes in this community. Some of her former students are here. This is a wonderful community that everyone deserves. She expressed full support from school system for community safety efforts emphasized importance of partnerships between schools and community. She thanked all the law enforcement who's here, our county commissioners who are here because truly **this is a** wonderful community and we all can work together to make it even better than it is today.

Sheriff Matt Crisafulli

The Sheriff urged community members to report suspicious activity, anonymously if needed. He noted that there are a lot of communities where people are not speaking up. We have victims out here who are not coming forward out of fear. We have witnesses out here who are not coming forward out of fear. Highlighted Sheriff's Office app for anonymous reporting to help the citizens feel safer reporting crime and the alerts go right to the Chief Deputy and his phone. No name, no identifying information, just the information. He also noted increased patrols and resources being deployed to Pocomoke to help if needed.

Lieutenant Earl Star, Maryland State Police:

The Lieutenant shared his background with Chief Hancock. He outlined State Police's role in supporting local law enforcement by providing support to our local partners. It has to be specific and strategic, because, as the sheriff said, there's the rest of the county, they have the rest of the state, so that's sort of our role. They are here tonight for this community. Certainly, everything the sheriff said about having the community be active, an active part of helping us help everyone is important and relevant. They are happy to be here tonight and support the community and support the chief.

Commissioner Abbott

Noted she was the Commissioner for the District. She was happy to see so many people come out.

Question and Answer Forum

1. Brianna on Maple Street here in Pocomoke. My house was the one that got shot up and has not heard anything from police officers. So how can we feel as a community feel safe? She feels as though it's nothing is being done about it. How can we feel safe? There have been certain cops that come in your house and just basically tell you that you're a liar for something else that you call them for. She has questions about that. She is confused that how can you feel safe in a community with certain cops. It's not all the cops that's together. The Chiefs response is that if there is something she would like to discuss with him she may come to the police department anytime from 7-3:30 Monday through Friday and he will.
2. Jada Bailey Crider- Winter Quarters Drive have you noticed any recent patterns or trends with where these incidents are occurring? How they're occurring? Is it more juvenile, is it more adults, anything of that nature at the moment? The response is it seems like it's pretty consistent. It appears its more adult involvement. There does appear to be some juvenile. Have you noticed any patterns that is involving illegal firearms versus legal firearms? The response is that is unknown.
3. What are the plans to implement for our at risk youth, especially with this uptick in gun violence? Mayor's response, "The straightforward answer to your question is that's why we're here tonight. That's why I said at the beginning tonight we are going to find some sort of solution. We're not just going to ask questions and talk. We're going to come up with some things that are going to work (The county, the city, Pocomoke police, Worcester County Sheriffs). We're going to put a plan into action based on the things that we hear tonight."
4. Dr. Michael Luchin, work at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. What if we offered \$500 reward if what you turned in on your app actually came to fruition, there's a buy in and put it in the grant so that someone who actually makes a request and gets followed up, they actually. Get a bit of a reward.

Brainstorming Session

Attendees suggested ideas for improving community safety:

- Restarting neighborhood watch program
- Creating youth task force
- Developing community center and youth programs including the Arts Commission
- Improving communication between police and residents
- Gang recognition education for parents
- Workforce training programs for youth

The following commitments were made:

- Mayor will establish youth task force
- Police department will support restarting neighborhood watch program
- School system committed \$20,000 over 5 years for community center
- Sheriff's Office will designate staff to support youth programs
- City will pursue grants and funding for youth programs and community center

d. Comments from the Audience

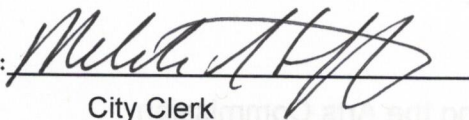
1. Reverend James Jones. I'm local here. I'm also the convener of caucus of African American leaders on Maryland's Eastern Shore. We appreciate, we show a gratification to our law enforcement and our educators for bringing you those warm welcomes. But the bottom line is this. No one can do this alone. We have parents, we have grandparents, we have uncles and aunts, we have cousins. We have community people sitting there, living folks who you do

nothing until something happens. It's a little bit late. Then we have a mayor that wants to do things. We have a cabinet behind him and the council that want to make things happen, that want to see change. They do this day in and day out for this community. All you have to do is show up to council meetings. I don't make them all, but show up to council meetings, show up to. The board of education meetings. If you want to have a voice on what goes on in your community, then you have to be a part of your community. You cannot sit home and wait until it's too late that something has happened to someone.

2. Danielle Westbrook, 610 Clarke - For the last few weeks there has been several incidents involving the gunfire. Her neighbor's house was shot up, her car was shot up, the house in the corner was shot up as well as her vehicle. She was actually the one that made the phone call again to report it. At 2am after I pulled my 11-year-old son out of his bed not knowing where the fire was coming. Maybe 30 minutes the police officer had come out to I'm guessing investigate. He left. There was no more communication to me. She left her phone number, her name and information with the lady. She saw a lot of activity on that corner. She had seen several men in mass drinking, partying it up, loud music. Really seen the police force down there during the night patrols. During the day she does see a lot more foot traffic, police officers on foot and believes that at night somebody needs to be stationed down there.
3. Councilwoman Tull - Art Commission. She needs 10 people, and this is the perfect time right now to ask for those 10 people. You had an idea. You want a person right now. She needs 10 people on this commission with me to bring this to life for our children, to bring this to life for us. We need the arts. We need the healing. We need that connection. Kids connect to arts. Kids connect to drawing and coloring and poetry. There are other ways to reach them. She is all for doing things in the community for our kids, bringing things to us and for us by us, because that is important, to see one another in those lead things.

Pastor Whittington closed the meeting with a prayer.
Meeting adjourned at 8:50 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.