

Regular Meeting Minutes and Closed Session

The meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held in Council Chambers on Monday, December 2, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

Present:

Mayor: Todd Nock

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

Deputy City Manager: Brandy Matthews

Attorney: Andrew Illuminati

City Clerk: Melinda Stafford

Pledge of Allegiance, Prayer by Councilwoman Cottman, Call to Order

Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of 10/15/2025 Work session by Councilwoman Downing and seconded by Councilman Marshall. Motion passes. Holland – aye Cottman – aye, Downing – aye, Tull – aye, Marshall – aye. Motion to approve the minutes of 11/03/2025 Work Session and meeting made by Councilman Marshall seconded by Councilwoman Downing. Motion passes. Holland – aye Cottman – aye, Downing – aye, Tull – aye, Marshall – aye.

REQUEST FOR CLOSED SESSION MINUTES

City Attorney Andrew Luminati explained that there was a public request for closed session minutes from September 15, 2025. He noted that closed session minutes remain closed unless the body votes to release them to the public. This was the first such request he had seen in five or six years as city attorney. Council members discussed the request, with some expressing they had nothing to hide while others questioned the purpose of the request without knowing the specific subject matter. The request came from Commissioner Caryn Abbott via email asking for both open and closed session minutes from the September 15, 2025 meeting. Motion made by Council member Holland, seconded by Councilman Marshall to approve the release of closed session minutes from September 15, 2025. Holland – aye Cottman – nay, Downing – nay, Tull – nay, Marshall – aye. Motion failed.

Approval of Bill List

The bill list was presented for payment. Motion to approve by Councilwoman Cottman, seconded by Councilwoman Downing. Motion passes. Holland – nay, Marshall – aye, Tull – aye, Downing – aye, Cottman – aye

PROCLAMATION FOR POCOMOKE CITY RETIREE

Mayor read a proclamation recognizing Captain Brian Scott Craven for his 30 years of service with the Pocomoke City Police Department. Captain Craven was promoted to captain in 2021 and served as Assistant Police Chief. The proclamation noted his exceptional accomplishments, loyalty, and commitment to the community, with no disciplinary actions during his 30-year career.

CONTRACT AWARDS FOR POCOMOKE FAMILY LIFE CENTER

Mayor requested that this item be tabled, explaining that they are still waiting for Dr. Annette Lawless to reach out about looking at alternative sites. The mayor suggested tabling until at least the first meeting in March if they move to a different site, as it would require completely new drawings.

City Manager Matthews noted that there is a grant award deadline of December 15th for DHCD funding, with 150 days required for contract award or engineering. She will need to determine if the grant is location-specific.

The mayor reported on conversations with Dr. Wallace about potentially moving the Family Life Center behind the middle school. Dr. Wallace expressed concerns about shared parking but agreed to schedule site visits with city representatives.

Motion made by Councilman Marshall and seconded by Councilwoman Cottman to table the contract awards. Motion passed unanimously. Holland – aye, Marshall – aye, Tull – aye, Downing – aye, Cottman – aye

APPROVAL OF FUNK AND BOLTON BOND COUNSEL

City Manager Matthews explained that the city had to switch bond counsel from McKinnon due to a conflict of interest, as McKinnon serves as bond counsel for MDE. Funk Alton Bond Counsel is needed for the second portion of funding for SIP Phase 2. Motion made by Councilman Holland and seconded by Councilwoman Cottman to approve Funk Alton Bond Counsel. Motion passed unanimously. Holland – aye, Marshall – aye, Tull – aye, Downing – aye, Cottman – aye

APPROVAL OF GMB FOR STREET SERVICES

City Manager Matthews presented plans for street and sidewalk improvements, explaining that GMB would complete sections rather than just streets or just sidewalks. The work is divided into phases:

Phase 1 includes:

- Completion of Winter Quarters section
- Portions of Bonneville, Bishop Isaac Jenkins Moore, and Fifth Street
- Core middle section of the Heights

Phase 2 would include the outside areas of the Heights, which require more extensive work including complete reconstruction of some areas.

Council members discussed the rationale for grouping areas together, with Matthews explaining that it is more cost-effective due to mobilization costs.

Regarding Margaret Street completion, Matthews reported that the contractor is behind schedule with a substantial completion date that was November 10th. There are daily penalties for delays, and the expected completion is now beyond December 10th. A progress meeting is scheduled for Thursday at 10:00 AM.

Motion made by Councilwoman Cottman and seconded Councilman Marshall to approve using GMB for the street improvement services outlined in Phase 1. Holland – aye, Marshall – aye, Tull – aye, Downing – aye, Cottman – aye
Motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF VEHICLE PURCHASE FROM FRUITLAND

Police Chief Hancock presented a request to purchase a 2021 Dodge Charger from the City of Fruitland for \$25,000. The vehicle has 47,000 miles and Kelly Blue Book value of \$28,307. It comes fully equipped with emergency equipment package and LPR system valued at over \$30,000.

The chief explained this would replace his current 11-year-old vehicle and allow the department to cycle vehicles more efficiently. The purchase would be funded by SAC grant funds and would save the city approximately \$100,000 compared to buying two new administrative vehicles.

Motion made BY Councilman Holland and seconded by Councilwoman Cottman to approve the vehicle purchase from Fruitland. Motion passed unanimously. Holland – aye, Marshall – aye, Tull – aye, Downing – aye, Cottman – aye

Second Reading of Resolution 2026-R-07; Resolution Supporting Participation in the sustainable Maryland Certified Municipal Certification Program, Public Hearing and Vote

City Manager Matthews read Resolution 2026-R-07 supporting participation in the Sustainable Maryland Certified Municipality Certification Program. The resolution authorizes the City Manager to

serve as the city's agent for the certification process. Public hearing was opened with no public comments received. Council discussed the need to establish a team of five people including a council liaison and city employee, plus community members. The mayor recommended posting information online to recruit community participants and providing education to council on the program requirements. Motion made by Councilwoman Downing and seconded by Councilwoman Cottman to approve Resolution 2026-R-07. Holland – aye, Marshall – aye, Tull – aye, Downing – aye, Cottman – aye. Motion passes.

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE 2026-0-3 Eliminate the Keeping of Lodgers, Roomers or Boarders by a Resident Family in Residential Zoning Districts.

City Manager Matthews read the summation of Ordinance 2026-03 to eliminate the keeping of lodgers, roomers, and boarders by resident families in residential zoning districts. The ordinance addresses complaints about property owners renting rooms for profit, disturbing residential neighborhoods. The Planning Commission conducted public hearings and recommended approval with amendments to add definitions and prohibit such activities in R1, R2, and R3 districts.

FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE 2026-0-7 - GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND

City Manager Matthews explained this ordinance authorizes issuance of a general obligation bond not to exceed \$463,000 for the water tank mixers project. This is a closeout of remaining funds for work completed in 2023 on both water tank mixers. The amount is now approximately \$300,000 due to contract reductions. Ms. Matthews read the summation of Ordinance 2026-0-7 authorizing the bond for financing the water tank mixers project at 604 Young Street and 1928 Pocomoke Beltway.

APPROVAL OF SPECIAL ONE DAY PERMITS

Two special one day permits were considered: Parks Retirement Party - December 13, 2025, 5-9 PM at Pocomoke Volunteer Fire Company Community Center. Motion made by Councilman Holland and seconded by Councilwoman Downing to approve. Motion passed unanimously. Holland – aye, Marshall – aye, Tull – aye, Downing – aye, Cottman – aye. Anderson Birthday Party - December 27, 2025, 4-9 PM with beer, wine, and liquor for \$100 fee. Motion made by Councilman Holland and seconded by Councilwoman Cottman to approve. Holland – aye, Marshall – aye, Tull – aye, Downing – aye, Cottman – aye. Motion passed unanimously. City Manager noted that the county no longer uses this permit process and now requires a submitted letter at least one month before events.

Comments

a. Comments from the City Council Members

1. Councilman Holland – Cotton raised several concerns about city operations Need for bank coordinator, finance director, and HR positions, Conflict of interest with one person handling multiple roles, Lack of communication and transparency regarding travel expenses, Questions about council pay increases and travel allowances, Request for better financial reporting. thanked public works for parade cleanup, volunteers, and the police department. He expressed support for Chief Hancock and discussed concerns about Senate Bill 422, which would automatically try juveniles aged 14-18 as children regardless of the crime.
2. Councilwoman Tull - thanked everyone involved in the Christmas parade and noted it was her first time participating as a council member. She mentioned attending the National League of Cities conference and learning valuable information to bring back to the community.
3. Councilwoman Downing – Thank you for coming out.
4. Councilwoman Cottman – thank you for coming out to the Christmas parade. It was magical.

5. Councilman Marshall – none

b. Comments from the Mayor

Mayor reported on attending the National League of Cities Summit in Salt Lake City as MML president. Key takeaways included:

Six pillars for effective crime suppression plan:

1. High visibility foot patrol presence
2. Technology, data, and intelligence
3. Focused deterrence and strong cases
4. Youth prevention and community healing
5. Neighborhood watch and resident partnerships
6. Environmental light and safe spaces

The mayor suggested working with Chief Hancock to develop a formal crime suppression plan. Mayor discussed the importance of identifying the city's culture, suggesting it centers around the river. He reported receiving calls from people wanting to help address crime issues and mentioned suggestions for police commissions. Mayor emphasized the need for better partnerships with businesses outside of downtown and proposed quarterly business roundtables including all city businesses.

c. Comments from the City Manager

None

d. Comments from the Audience

Esther Toast - congratulated Captain Craven and requested consideration of 11th Street repairs due to dangerous potholes. She reminded council of previous legislation restricting travel outside Maryland without council approval and questioned the value of National League of Cities conferences versus local training opportunities.

Tara Bourne - Director of Pocomoke Community Center, asked about missing permit applications and requested clarification on the application process. Council agreed she could submit applications further in advance and would not need to attend meetings unless there were questions.

Becky Jones and Raven Giddy - reported water quality issues at 1403 Market Street, describing brown water that stains clothing. City Manager agreed to flush the water lines and follow up on the issue.

Motion to adjourn to close session at 8:30 pm by Councilman Holland, seconded by Councilwoman Downing

Approved: 
City Clerk