

April 14, 2015

The regular meeting of the Pocomoke Mayor and Council was held in the Council Chambers at City Hall on Tuesday, April 14, 2015. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 P.M.

Present: Mayor Bruce Morrison
Council Members: Rob Clarke, Tracey Cottman
Diane Downing, George Tasker, Dale Trotter
City Manager Russell W. Blake
City Attorney Bill Hudson
City Clerk Carol L. Sullivan

Review Minutes:

In a motion (Tasker, Trotter passed), to approve the minutes of March 2, 2015.

Review Bills:

In a motion (Clarke, Cottman passed), the bills presented to be paid. (Copy of bill list attached to original minutes).

Special recognition of outgoing City Council members Tracey Cottman and Rob Clarke:

Mayor Morrison presented a plaque to Tracey Cottman and to Rob Clarke for nine (9) years of service on the council, and he stated that he had enjoyed working with both of them.

Councilman Clarke stated that it was an honor and pleasure to serve with each of the Councilmembers and the public.

Mayor to swear in Councilmembers Esther Troast (District 5) and Brian Hirshman District 4) for three –year terms as City Councilmembers:

Mayor Morrison swore in Esther L. Troast, as Councilwoman, for District 5, for a three-year term.

Mayor Morrison then swore in Brian Hirshman, as Councilman for District 4, for a three-year term.

Selection of First and Second Vice President of the City Council:

In a motion (Trotter, Hirshman passed) to appoint Councilman George Tasker as First Vice President. Vote was unanimous.

In a motion (Tasker, Troast passed) to appoint Councilman R. Dale Trotter as Second Vice President. Vote was unanimous.

Mr. Ricco DiMattia to present update on proposed grain elevator project on Clarke Avenue south of Railroad Avenue:

Mr. Ricco MiMattia was not present to give update.

City Attorney to present proposed new ordinance to allow raising of chickens in certain zoning districts with permission:

City Attorney Hudson discussed the proposed ordinance to allow raising chickens in the R-1 or R-2 Zones on single-family unit lots. There would be a permit required to keep, maintain, house, harbor or possess chickens, where it is determined that doing so will not create a nuisance, and subject to regulations and conditions. (Draft ordinance attached to original minutes).

First Reading of Ord. No. 419 to permit the raising of chickens in certain residential areas:

Mayor Morrison read a summary of Ordinance No. 419 for the record:

“An Ordinance enacted by the Mayor and Council of Pocomoke City to amend Section 89-8 of Article II of Chapter 89 of the Pocomoke City Code (“Animals”) relating to keeping, maintaining, housing, harboring or possessing chickens within the city.”

Finance Items:

- a. Consider recommendation to retain Bolton Partners, Inc. for annual OPEB-GASB 45 audit report. (estimated cost \$5,000):

City Manager Blake stated that this was other post-employment benefits that our auditors do not handle and that we need to hire an outside firm. Bolton was on a list that was supplied to us from our auditors and was recommended. The others listed had not done business in Maryland previously, he said.

In a motion (Tasker, Trotter passed) to accept the proposal of \$5,250 from Bolton Partners, Inc. to provide our OPEB-GASB 45 report each year.

- b. Consider recommendation for destruction of certain older documents currently in storage:

Mayor Morrison stated that there were older documents in the storage room upstairs that needed to be shredded, and a list was distributed. All were in agreement to proceed.

Discuss requests for assistance:

- a. S.A.D.D. Chapter at P.H.S.-After Prom Party (\$500.00):

Mayor Morrison stated that this was a budget item the City donates each year to S.A.D.D.

In a motion (Downing, Hirshman passed) to donate \$500 to S.A.D.D. Chapter at P.H.S.

- b. Assateague Peoples Tribe- Pow-Wow, May 16-17-Tent; Donation (\$500.00):
Councilwoman Downing stated that we donated the use of the Cypress Park and tent last year but no money was donated. She would like to donate the park and tent again this year.
Councilman Tasker made a motion to donate the use of Cypress Park and tent plus the \$500 donation because they do bring a lot of people to town during their Pow-Wow; Councilman Hirshman seconded the motion, which was approved on a vote of 4-1.
- c. Great Fair Committee One-Day Beer Permit for Truck and Tractor Pull event, June 27, 2015:
Mayor Morrison stated that last year and previous years there had not been any trouble at the Truck and Tractor Pull because of the beer permit.
Mr. John Smith stated that they have had the Truck & Tractor Pull event previously, and they had not had any problems.
In a motion (Trotter, Troast passed) to allow the Mayor to sign the Beer License for a One-day Beer Permit. (Passed 3-2).

Authorize Mayor to sign Proclamation for Fair Housing Month (April 2015):

In a motion (Downing, Tasker passed) to authorize Mayor to sign the proclamation.

Comments from Council:

Councilman Tasker stated that there were lots of potholes within the town and asked what the plan was to patch them.

City Manager Blake stated that they were constantly patching the potholes as they are popping up everywhere due to cold and wet weather recently.

Councilman Tasker asked if the City could repair the one on Market Street and replace with hot patch because the big stones were just popping out as cars run over them.

City Manager Blake stated that he will contact SHA.

Councilman Trotter asked about the status of the controlled burn of the houses on Second Street.

Mayor Morrison stated that it was on the Fire Chief's desk to do. The Fire Chief will try to burn two of them at one time in the near future.

Comments from the audience:

Rob Clarke stated that he and Councilwoman Troast may not have set the record for the closest election, but they did set a new record for the friendliest election ever.

Mr. Scott Mitchell of Cedar Street complained about the speeding on Cedar Street and stated that the Police Department needed to be out there as school was dismissing to enforce the

speed limit. He is afraid that there will be some kids getting hurt or killed because of the speeding on Cedar Street.

Ms. Debbie Evans, former employee of Pocomoke Police Department as a dispatcher said that she would just like to state that she was fired last May, and it was proven later that the reason for her firing was bogus. She stated that nobody would listen to her side of the story and that she would just like to clear her name of criminal activity. She stated that she is a good Christian woman and if anyone would like to hear her side of the story she would be glad to discuss it with them. She stated that she could file an action against the Police Department but she was able to get another job and move on with her life.

Following a motion by Councilwoman Downing and seconded by Councilwoman Troast the Council voted to meet in a closed session at 7:59 P.M. in the Council Chambers. Present were Mayor Morrison, Councilman Hirshman, Councilman Trotter, Councilman Tasker, Councilwoman Downing, Councilwoman Troast, City Manager Blake, City Attorney Hudson, and City Clerk Carol Sullivan. The Mayor and Council discussed legal and employee issues as permitted under the provisions of Section 10-508 (a), (1), (7) and (8) of the State of Maryland Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. With no further discussion the meeting adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Approved: _____

Carol L. Sullivan
City Clerk