

April 18, 2016

The regular meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held in the Council Chambers at City Hall on Monday, April 18, 2016. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M.

Present: Mayor Bruce Morrison
Council Members: Diane Downing, Brian Hirshman, Esther Troast, George Tasker, Dale Trotter
City Manager/City Attorney: Ernie Crofoot
Acting City Clerk: Deborah Tull

Review and approval of minutes from meeting of April 11, 2016

In a motion (Tasker, Trotter passed) to approve the minutes of the April 11, 2016 meeting.

Mayor Morrison stated that things will be done a little different tonight. We will have comments from the audience first. We are going into budget session tonight and you are more than welcome to stay. You cannot comment during the budget session.

City Manager Crofoot stated the council has approved the street paving. The bill from Bozman for the street paving came in at a little under \$48,000. He would like for the council to approve to pay the bill because it is over \$25,000. Tomorrow they will start paving the City Hall parking lot. The police department lot in the back which is dirt and gravel will also be paved. It's not CALEA standard. There will be no parking in City Hall parking lot from tomorrow until midday Friday. In a motion (Tasker, Hirschman passed) to pay the paving bill.

Comments from audience:

Jim Covington, 26 Greenway Avenue, stated that he is a lifelong resident of Pocomoke City. He has a few questions in regard to the golf course. Is it the wishes and desire of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council to close the Winter Quarters Golf Course? Responses from city council members. Why are people that are employed by you sharing in making these comments? Some of the former employees are informing that the golf course will be closed; comments made to former superintendent of golf course, who is probably one of the finest employees the city ever had in many ways; not just what he did at the golf course but what he did for the rest of the downtown. This man resigned his position. Did the Mayor and City Council sit down with him and find out why he was wishing to leave Pocomoke City?

Councilman Tasker stated that He did.

Jim Covington stated that he was disappointed that they didn't. They would have heard his concerns. His concerns had to do with comments about the golf course being closed. He was working on an application to have it designated as a historical site for historical funding and he was told to stop working on it because it would not be submitted. He realized his future here, his job was in jeopardy, so he started looking elsewhere. The golf course superintendent is the only person in Pocomoke City that's licensed to spray chemicals. If the chemicals are not sprayed,

the course is in trouble. You will have to close the course because you will lose the greens. It's helped the Lions' Club, Elks Club, Salem Church and other churches, the Discovery Center, and the Marva Theater because they have been able to hold tournaments to raise money. Also, when someone moves to the community they look at what the community has to offer. Golf courses are an attraction. We need this golf course; it is a real service. Many kids at Pocomoke High School have had the opportunity to play golf. I challenge you tonight to find an answer to the golf course immediately or we will lose it because the job is not being done. In a motion (Troast, Trotter passed) to have the Winter Quarters Golf Course remain open. Hirschman (nay)

Mayor Morrison stated that he had talked with a gentleman this afternoon from Ocean City, Mr. East knows about him, and he is coming to start spraying and taking care of the course.

City Manager Crofoot stated that short term, we have made arrangements for the spraying and we are hiring staff for the mowing. We are still looking for a golf course superintendent. Just so everyone knows the golf course is scheduled to lose \$111,000 this year and it's likely to lose that much in the subsequent years. City Manager Crofoot further stated that Doug Guns was never told by him that he is closing the golf course and Doug Guns was told by him that if the golf course ever closed he would still have a job here. He would have been kept on here at his current rate to do all those things this gentleman just mentioned that he does so well around the city. There is a lot of misinformation going around. The misinformation about Doug that's a personal insult to him. City Manager Crofoot stated that his job is to bring out the numbers and make recommendations based on what he sees are the ups and downs and the council votes on it. Half of the golf carts are not operable. That all didn't happen in the last two weeks. The only capital item he turned down for Doug was an aerator because he has two and he told me they were working fine.

Mr. Covington asked City Manager Crofoot about the historical application.

City Manager Crofoot stated that he did not tell Doug to stop the historical application.

Don Holdren stated that he appreciated City Manager Crofoot saying all that and clearing it up because there were a lot of rumors out there. Rotary Club has also benefited from the golf course tournaments. Mr. Holdren stated that he picked up a few years ago where the late Councilman Bob Hawkins left off with the kids. Kids look forward to it every year. The kids want to play golf and some are as young as 5 years old and up to 16 years old. Mr. Holdren stated that he noticed that Councilman Hirschman voted 'No'. The golf course has lost money ever since it was built.

Councilman Hirschman stated that he did not vote 'no' because it loses money; he voted 'no' because we have other problems in town that are much more important right now. Mr. Underhill brought us water last week that was brown. There are many more people in town that would much rather have water that their kids can drink than have a golf course. That's just my opinion.

Mr. Holdren stated that he understood. The young lady in the pro shop is one of the hardest working people he has seen. She cleans the toilets, vacuums, and whatever needs to be done. I hope you can give her a little more money.

City Manager Crofoot stated that the City has been working diligently to get staff out at the golf course. Regarding the water issues, he hasn't seen much activity over the last decade or so to fix the waste water treatment plant and fix this water system until he got here.

Keith Hornberger – Team Advocate for South Worcester County Relay For Life. His job is to get teams to be able to help raise funds for cancer awareness and cancer care. Team leaders are needed. Other towns, police departments, and health departments are participating. It's all about celebrating life and more birthdays. He left packets of information and schedules. The relay is at the Fairgrounds on June 11, 2016. His goal is to get 25 teams this year.

Don Holdren representing the Delmarva Discovery Center. He thanked the City for their past support, continued support and your cooperation with the Maryland State Bond Bill Program. Construction on the live otter exhibit will start in several weeks. They will have two live otters in the center by the end of June or first of July. The children's program is going well; about 3500 children came through in February. He stated that he owed Councilman Trotter an apology for not being able to help out with the fishing for the kids this past Saturday and he hopes it was a success.

Councilman Trotter stated there were 114 children; it was really nice. He told Don that he did help by having the fishing poles ready.

Monna VanEss stated that there are many citizens out there that do not want to continue having their tax dollars funding the deficit at the golf course. There are people here that want it; but a lot of them are not paying Pocomoke City taxes that support it. There are a lot of people out there that would rather see things such as clean water and a recreation director position that was discussed a few months ago. Publicize that there is an ordinance against grass clippings in the street which adds to the storm drainage problems and also an ordinance against flyers on the poles. Also reinforce it for people that just move here.

City Manager Crofoot stated that he will talk to Harvey and possibly shift some hours around to have someone here on Saturdays.

Eric Underhill, 1509 Princess Anne Lane, made a suggestion of having wells, because it could be cheaper than having to dig up everyone's pipes. People moving in the area did not know about the water. It's not bad water coming out, it's dirty. Are people being turned away from Pocomoke because of the water?

City Manager Crofoot stated that the city doesn't have a good hydraulic system knowledge of which direction comes their water. A water/sewer study is in the budget which costs \$65,000 to \$85,000. It is a location study for all water, sewer pipes, valves, hydrants and a hydraulic study to show us what's coming from where. To fix this problem it's going to be a major undertaking. We had to focus on the wastewater treatment plant first this year. A lot of capital work needs to be done. The study will be done in all of Pocomoke.

Budget Discussion

City Manager Crofoot stated that he wanted to give an overview of how we got to accumulate and prepare the numbers for you. The department heads are here to answer any questions. A lot of prep work is being done to fund future projects. The budget with no capital outlay showed that we were still short in funds in the \$185,000 range. He suggested to build the budget on the conservative areas and hold off items until you see that revenues are increasing. About \$69,000 of debt service would be disappearing at various times; three or four loans would be paid off this year. We need to spend a truckload of money to upgrade water treatment plant;

estimated at \$900,000. Clarke Avenue pumping station maintenance& upgrade is in the 1.4 million dollar range.

Mayor Morrison stated that the city has never been in this condition. There has always been money in the contingency fund.

City Manager stated that they had to spend a lot of money to take care of wastewater treatment plant issues. They still need \$50,000 to replace the curtain. The department heads have been cooperative in cutting back their budgets and listing only what is needed now.

Mayor Morrison asked if some of the equipment could be leased.

City Manager Crofoot stated yes. Higher payments are made through leasing long term.

Chief Hardin was asked about nine vehicles parked in the back. He stated that four of them were 2005's. In a motion (Trotter/Tasker, passed) to surplus the four 2005 police vehicles.

The ambulance lot will be paved with the remaining funds left over from the other paving projects.

The next budget work session will be Monday, April 25, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. It is a public meeting. The department heads need to be here.

Karah Lacey stated that she has a meeting scheduled here for Monday, April 25, 2016. Karah's meeting will be held upstairs.

There is a department head meeting tomorrow at 9:00 a.m.

In a motion (Downing, Troast passed) to adjourn at 7:25 p.m.

Approved: _____ 2016

Deborah Tull
Acting City Clerk