

October 6, 2014

The regular meeting of the Pocomoke Mayor and Council was held in the Council Chambers at City Hall on Monday, October 6, 2014. 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 Attorney William Hudson
City Manager Russell W. Blake
City Clerk Carol L. Sullivan

Review Minutes:

In a motion (Downing, Cottman passed), to approve the minutes of September 8, 2014.

Review Bills:

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

Chief Sewell and Officer Conner to introduce new K-9 unit, "Jet":

Chief Sewell introduced Officer Conner and K-9 Jet. They have just returned from Concord, North Carolina where they trained together for two weeks. K-9 Jet is drug and protection dog. K-9 Jet has been trained daily by Officer Conner and they both are an asset to the Police Department.

Mr. Ryan Hurley to request approval of lot consolidation plan at 613 Market Street:

Mayor Morrison stated that Mr. Hurley would like to consolidate the lot next to him with the lot his house is on so he can place a garage there.

Mr. Hurley stated that was correct.

In a motion (Cottman, Tasker passed) to approve the lot consolidation for 611 Market Street and 613 Market Street.

Ms. Monna VanEss to discuss neighborhood concerns:

Ms. VanEss thanked the Mayor and Council for allowing her to speak. She stated that her home had a recent break-in, on Friday, September 26 in broad day-light. Also, she stated that Hall Realty where she works was broken into four days prior. Some businesses have been broken into more than once. She asked that the Mayor and Council approve new police officers for our community, to make our community safe again.

Chief Sewell spoke briefly concerning the break-ins, and stated that they had made four arrests and they were released the same day. He stated that nobody could be more frustrated than the Police Department. They make arrests and the suspects are released and back on the streets. He stated it would be great to have more officers, but even with more officers they could not control the District Court Commissioners. They are looking to put up more portable cameras in the 1100 block of Market Street.

Mr. Kennis Austin, Chairman of the PZC, to present proposed draft of the CMP:

Mr. Austin gave a brief statement about the Comprehensive Plan, stating that it is to provide goals, objectives, and recommendations to manage and direct growth and development in Pocomoke City for the next six years. They have been working on this project with consultant Peter Johnston for the past several months.

Mayor Morrison thanked Chairman Austin and the Planning and Zoning Commissioners for the time and effort that they have put into revising the CMP.

Consider Res. No. 485 to adopt new Comprehensive Master Plan:

A RESOLUTION OF THE POCOMOKE CITY MAYOR AND COUNCIL TO ADOPT “THE COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN” AS PREPARED AND RECOMMENDED BY THE POCOMOKE CITY PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION.

In a motion (Tasker, Trotter passed) to adopt Res. No. 485, The Comprehensive Master Plan.

Consider request from Keith Merritt to refund a portion of annual golf membership pass fee due to illness:

Mayor Morrison read a letter from Keith Merritt requesting to be refunded his annual golf membership due to his health declining and he would not be able to play golf. Mr. Merritt stated that he has been unable to play since May of this year.

In a motion (Cottman, Downing passed) to refund Mr. Merritt’s annual golf membership and his cart shed rental.

City Attorney to review proposed electric reimbursement agreement form for non-profit agencies to be included in solar energy program:

City Attorney stated that there were just minor changes in the draft that was sent in the package earlier. He stated that he was asked to keep it simple since it is dealing with several non-profit agencies.

In a motion (Tasker, Clarke passed) to accept the draft agreement form for non-profit agencies to be included in the solar energy program.

City Manager to present list of proposed items to be declared surplus:

City Manager Blake presented a list of equipment no longer needed for City purposes which would be advertised as surplus for 20 days. (See list attached to original minutes).

In a motion (Trotter, Cottman passed) to advertise the equipment no longer needed for City purposes.

Consider request from Mr. Brian Julian for waiver of personal property taxes for the Upper Deck Restaurant property on Route 13:

Mayor Morrison read a letter from Mr. Brian Julian requesting a waiver for personal property taxes for the Upper Deck Restaurant for the fiscal year of 2014-2015.

Mr. Brian Julian stated that the restaurant closed on January 14, 2014, and he feels that since the restaurant has been closed there is no money to pay these taxes.

In a motion (Tasker, Clarke passed) to abate the personal property taxes for the Upper Deck Restaurant for the fiscal year 2014-2015.

City Manager to present three-month budget summary:

City Manager Blake presented a summary of revenues and expenses. General Fund Revenues for the first quarter are more than expected at 58%. Ambulance Fund revenues are low because we have not received the County funds yet. Sewage hauler fees are above 33%. With all three funds we have received about 44% of projected revenues. Total expenditures for the first quarter are at 27%. City Manager Blake stated that the City budget is about where we are expected to be after three months.

Authorize Mayor to sign proclamation for Ethan Hitch to commend him upon becoming an Eagle Scout:

Mayor Morrison stated that Ethan Hitch has completed all the requirements for his Eagle Scout service project. He stated that Ethan had repaired the concession stand, bleachers, and goal posts of the Wicomico County Pop Warner football field, and he would like to present Ethan Hitch a Proclamation on Saturday.

In a motion (Cottman, Clarke passed) to authorize Mayor Morrison to sign a proclamation for Ethan Hitch commending him on his accomplishments of becoming an Eagle Scout.

Comments from the Audience:

There were no comments from the audience.

Comments from Council:

Councilwoman Cottman stated that you have to attack things like drugs with more than one strategy. The police are one thing; but another thing that we need to look at is the youth in the community. There are several people in the community who are looking at a grant that will

be coming out in the Spring that will help us to provide prevention services to our young people. The grant requires twelve (12) sectors to come together to look at what can be done for the youth. She stated that she would bring more information as it becomes available to her.

Councilman Clarke stated that there is a problem of people running the 4-way stop signs on Cedar Street. He also stated that the City needs to try to avoid flushing fire hydrants as school is being dismissed, because the kids like splashing others and walking in the water on the street.

Councilman Trotter stated that the police needed to concentrate more on in-town areas to prevent some of these robberies and not on the highway. He added that he would like to see some bike racks in town. At this time there is no place to place your bike except the sidewalks.

City Manager Blake stated that he could have one placed in the mini park on Second Street this week.

Mr. Marc Scher stated that there used to be signs posted to prohibit bike riding on the sidewalks downtown, but they are now gone and need to be replaced.

Mayor Morrison stated that Councilman Tasker would be attending the Eastern Shore Mayors dinner on Thursday night October 23. If anyone else would like to go please let him know.

Councilwoman Cottman thanked the audience for coming out tonight.

Following a motion by Councilwoman Downing and seconded by Councilwoman Cottman the Council voted to meet in a closed session at 8:05 P.M. in the Council Chambers. Present were Mayor Morrison, Councilman Trotter, Councilman Clarke, Councilwoman Cottman, Councilwoman Downing, Councilman Tasker, City Manager Blake, City Attorney Hudson, and City Clerk Carol Sullivan. Items discussed were personnel issues. The Executive Session was adjourned at 8:29P.M.

Approved: _____

Carol L. Sullivan
City Clerk