

Regular Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held via Zoom and Facebook livestream on Monday, May 18, 2020. The meeting was called to order at 6:32 PM.

Present: Mayor Bruce Morrison
First Vice President: Todd J. Nock
Council Members: Diane Downing, Esther Troast
R. Scott Holland
City Manager on Interim Basis: Jeremy Mason
City Attorney: Andrew Illuminati
City Clerk: Michelle Beckett-EI Soloh

Pledge of Allegiance, Prayer by Jeremy Mason, Call to Order @ 6:32PM:

Review and Approval of Minutes from Meeting of May 4, 2020:

Motion to approve minutes from May 4, 2020 (Holland, Downing passed) @ 6:36PM

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Nock-aye, Troast-aye, Downing-aye; none opposed; motion carried

Review and Approval of Current Bill List:

Motion to approve current bill list (Downing, Holland passed) @ 6:40PM

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Nock-aye, Troast-aye, Downing-aye; none opposed; motion carried

2nd Reading and Approval for Resolution for Grant Writer Proposal:

Councilmember Nock requested to table 2nd reading of Circuit Rider Application until next Council meeting on June 1, 2020.

Motion to table Grant Writer Proposal, Resolution 2nd reading, until June 1, 2020 Council meeting (Nock, Troast passed) @ 6:51PM

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Nock-aye, Troast-aye, Downing-aye; none opposed; motion carried

Resolution for Sale of Dock Fuel Tanks, 1st Reading:

Interim City Manager read: **Emergency Resolution No. 530**
Declare Surplus Property
Fuel Tanks

Motion to accept Emergency Resolution to declare 2 fuel tanks as surplus property (Troast, Holland passed) @ 7:08PM

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Nock-aye, Troast-aye, Downing-aye; none opposed; motion carried

Authorization to Seek Additional Building Inspection Services:

Mr. Mason explained that Planning Director, Dan Brandewie will be speaking about the Middle Department of Inspection Agency (MDIA) company. They do the plumbing and electrical inspections for building permits. Mr. Brandewie said MDIA will terminate their contract with the City. The City entered into that contract in 2018. Effective June 23, 2020 the contract will terminate. This leaves us with a decision to do an RFP and hire another company, hire an inhouse inspector or cooperation from the County. An RFP can be done very soon and requires very few changes.

Motion to move forward with RFP for plumbing and electrical services for building permits (Downing, Holland passed) @ 7:15PM

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Nock-aye, Troast-aye, Downing-aye; none opposed; motion carried

Set Public Hearing Date for Demolition of the Following Structures:

A. 411 Maple St. Already had a public hearing in November 2018. Since it has been an extended period of time, it is appropriate to conduct another public hearing and give the property owner another chance to perform repairs. The owner has not been cooperative.

B. 706 Fifth St. The property owner approached the City to ask for help. The building is incurring structural failure. He is aware that the City might place a lien on the property. The City should move forward with demolition.

Mr. Brandewie recommends the second Council meeting in June to allow him to get required notices out.

Motion to set date of June 15, 2020 for public hearing date (Nock, Troast passed) @ 7:20PM

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Nock-aye, Troast-aye, Downing-aye; none opposed; motion carried

Comments from Council

Councilmember Holland said Mr. Cowger had placed rocks and benches at the pond by Winter Quarters. He has been out there frequently. It needs to be cleaned up when Public Works has a chance. That area is being used and there are frequently people fishing. There has been a lot of canoes lately. Is there anything to make it easier for canoe access at Stevenson's Pond at hole #4. That is a good activity to promote. "Children at Play" signs need to be installed at all 4 entrances at the Heights community. Public need to be aware that children are there and speeding has been a big issue and has not gotten any better. Residents have reached out to the Police Department and to him. Traffic seems to be a through area to McDonalds on the service road. He is also requesting a speed limit change to 15 MPH because there are at least 3 daycares and no sidewalks. There is no safe way for children to travel in the area. A lot of residents have reached out to him and said they do not feel safe anymore. The Heights is a good area and has been there a long time. His mother grew up there. He has had his car broken into twice and something stolen from his garage during an afternoon. Recently, there was a robbery at gunpoint. The police have increased presence in the area and also do foot patrol. When issues happen in the City, citizens need to be made aware. He also thinks that Mr. Mason is doing a good job since he has been Interim City Manager. He has completed a few long-standing projects. Councilmember Nock said we need to have a public hearing for the speed limit change signs. Councilmember Holland continued to say that new stop signs are serving their purpose. When he was younger, he used to speed through Cedar St instead of going on market St. The City might want to look into closing the access road to keep traffic on Market St. The City has to do something if speeding doesn't improve.

Councilmember Troast said she agrees with councilmember Holland and that Mr. Mason is doing a good job. She sees a lot of speeding on Cedar St. She has requested more patrol on Cedar St. She has noticed 3 vehicles, in particular, that go through 4th, 10th, 11th and 14th Streets at high speed. There has been a lot of foot traffic, even more during the pandemic, All of Cedar St needs to be patrolled. Mr. Mason can speak to the Chief about that to see what can be done. White Oaks and Homewood has a lot of speeders and a lot of complaints have come from there. She thanked, Mr.

Brandewie, for issuing citations to help clean up her district. Councilmember Nock said there needs to be more officers on duty at once. Last year there were more fights, etc. It's nice to see officers on foot but patrol covers more area. What happened in the Heights was bad that it was hard to get information about what was going on. Mr. Mason said he will have a conversation with the Chief.

Councilmember Nock said the other traffic issue that he has gotten complaints about is parking on the streets. Cars are being blocked in their driveways.

Comment from The City Attorney

Regarding elections, the election was postponed due to the State of Emergency. That postponement is in effect in accordance with Governor Hogan's March 12, 2020 Executive Order through the 30th day after the date by which the State of Emergency is terminated and the catastrophic health emergency is rescinded. The Governor has yet to take this action. Once the Governor takes this action, the Board of Supervisors of Elections, not the Mayor & Council, will select an election date 4 weeks from the date that the Governor's State of Emergency is lifted.

Audience Comments

George Glovier, 332 Winter Quarters Dr, would like to discuss 2 issues. The first is the fuel tanks to be sold. He wanted to know why they are surplus property? Mr. Mason said they are surplus property as a mutual agreement with council and Public Works. They have not brought in revenue. They are in the way. We can clear the road and settle some complaints with property owners. There may be a perspective buyer. The shed will be donated to the City Community Garden and the jersey walls moved. Mr. Glovier asked how much will they be sold for. Mr. Mason said there is an offer for \$4,000.00 each. We paid \$6,700.00 for both tanks. Mr. Glovier said the project was more than that. Councilmember Holland said the way the tanks were not set up according to legal requirements. The City was getting ready to be hit with fines for improper placement. Mr. Glovier asked if the permit process was not done to put them there? Mr. Mason and Councilmember Holland said they were not with the City when they were installed and cannot answer that. Mr. Glovier said the river is one of the greatest assets. The restaurant isn't doing well right now but when things are back to normal, boaters will come to the restaurant. It's a long river, boats, especially big boats, need to refuel if they come to the restaurant. A lot of fuel is sold during boat docking, that would be the biggest day. Gas is mainly sold in the summer. Looking at the future of the river and of Pocomoke that having gas on the river a large asset and it's shortsighted to take it out. A lot of money was spent for that project, over \$30,000.00.

Mr. Mason agreed that a lot of money was spent on the project but that doesn't mean it was money well spent. The reason to get the tanks out is that the City is not in compliance. The permitting process was not done correctly. We can have the profit reports available if anyone wants to see it. Mr. Glovier said when were they installed? Mr. Mason said in 2018, he believes. He would be willing to have a conversation about it in his office with other City officials. It has tied up a City employee that could have been used more efficiently somewhere else. Mr. Glovier said the City is also waiting on bids for a new excavator. What will that one do that the other one won't? Mr. Mason said the new one is slightly bigger with a longer reach. It has more capacity and ability. The old one has to have a lot of repairs. Having 2 for a while would enable us to complete more work. It is not a budgeted item. It comes out of the loan money for the Heights. The Council asked that a second RFP, which, Ms. Beckett-El Soloh can attest to, has been redone. That's not typically how things are done, but the Mayor & Council asked that a second one be put out so that's what we did. The City checked into Volvo and John Deere. With those, there were issues with parts and equipment size. We are waiting

for bids and nothing has been purchased yet. Mr. Glovier wanted to know what year is the current one? Mr. Mason wasn't sure but can find out. Mr. Glovier wanted to know if we had looked into buying a used one? Mr. Mason said no, we generally try to buy new equipment but that's a good concept. Mr. Glovier found a used one, a 2015 Cat 308, 2,407 hours \$62,500.00. That's a big savings. He can't imagine that Pocomoke has that \$116,000.00 to spend on a new excavator. He found a 2018 Kubota KXO80, equal to the Cat, for 1,114 hours for \$59,900.00. He has found other John Deere for similar prices. Mr. Mason asked if they were the same capability and reach as the RFP asked for. Mr. Glovier said, yes. Mr. Mason said he was welcome to bring ads by and that it is up to the Mayor & Council to decide if we want bids for used equipment. He is not opposed to that. Mr. Glovier said you can buy a 2018 or 19 with 300 hours for a little more money. Except for the Heights project, he wonders how much the City actually uses an excavator. Another option is to rent equipment also. Mr. Mason said, again, he is welcome to bring quotes in. Councilmember Troast said, the City will continue to do infrastructure updates. It won't stop with just the Heights. She does a lot of research on infrastructure and Pocomoke is in dire need of the same thing that was done in the Heights. She is interested in getting another excavator. She is also interested in seeing other quotes also. Councilmember Holland said, if the City continues to put in piping, as is the plan. An excavator will get a lot of use. He looking into prices for what the cost is to contract the job out, the City saved a lot of money by doing it in house. That said, it is worth having another excavator. The one we have is needing a lot of repair and is costing a lot of time and money on repairs. If it weren't for doing it inhouse, he wouldn't think another excavator would be necessary. He agrees that the City might not need a brand-new excavator. Councilmember Nock said, he is looking forward to seeing quotes and thanked him for calling in.

Eric LeMay, 7 2nd St, asked about representation for District 3. Mr. Trotter's last meeting was back in January. Upon listening to the discussions, he feels like a golf ball in tall grass, no one to sit at the table and speak for District 3. Is there a plan for interim representation? Re realizes an election is coming up but is postponed because of COVID-19. Councilmember Nock said, after Councilmember Trotter resigned, the Councilmembers took it upon themselves to represent District 3. The parking in front of driveway complaints were out of District 3. They are all committed to the City as well as all districts. This is not a district thing, it's a Pocomoke City thing and when Pocomoke fails, we all fail. They hope that soon there is a representative. Discussion opportunities have been limited and not much opportunity to meet. Councilmember Holland said he is sorry he feels like there is no representation in District 3, in hindsight, they would have appointed an interim for District 3. Councilmember Troast said she is available at anytime for District 3. Don't hesitate to call any Councilmember or the City Manager for any issues. Mr. LeMay said, his family is available for conversation too. His biggest concern now is speeding. From Market St to Linden Ave seems like drag racing at times. Speed humps are something to consider. He understands that it can be a concern for first responders. They are throughout the development in Captains Cove. Councilmember Troast said that was looked into several years ago. It wasn't cost effective. It was approximately \$4,000.00 per speed hump. Mr. Mason said he can look into it again and get up to date quotes. Mr. LeMay will look into fundraisers for District 3 to support speed humps.

Laurie Kamps, 1306 Dorchester Ave, she realizes there is a skeleton crew right now. In front of her house the sink holes are getting bad. They are near a manhole. Every day gravel is put in but it doesn't stay there. Councilmember Nock said he has addressed the situation. He is concerned for cars getting damaged. Ms. Kamps said it looks like the area around the manhole could cave in. Mr. Mason said the City has received a lot of complaints about that road, he didn't know about the

manhole and will involve Public Works. The crew is back together full staff, a couple have been out due to injuries. Councilmember Nock said bottom line is that street needs to be fixed. Councilmember Holland said he just got a text suggesting that CR6 holds up better than millings to fill in holes. Mr. Mason will bring it to the attention of Public Works.

Motion to adjourn meeting (Nock, Troast passed) @ 7:44PM

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Nock-aye, Troast-aye, Downing-aye; none opposed; motion carried

Approved: *K. Michelle Beckett-El Soloh*
City Clerk