

Regular Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held in Council Chambers and via Zoom/Facebook livestream on Monday, April 18, 2022. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

Present: Mayor Susan Marshall Harrison
First Vice President: Esther Troast
Council Members: R. Scott Holland, Daniel J. Tarr,
Todd J. Nock, Diane Downing
City Manager: Jeremy Mason
City Attorney: Andrew Illuminati
City Clerk: Michelle Beckett-EI Soloh

Pledge of Allegiance, Prayer by Mayor Marshall Harrison and Call to Order:

Approval of Minutes from Meeting of April 12, 2022:

Motion to approve minutes for April 12, 2022 as written (Downing, Holland passed)

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

Review and Approval Current Bill List:

Motion to approve the bill list (Tarr, Holland passed)

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

Swearing in of Board of Elections Supervisor

Grace Holland took oath and was sworn in for a 2-year term, January 2022-January 2024, to the Board of Elections Supervisors.

Update on Sustainable Communities and Workshop

Grants Administrator, Linda McNeil, said the Sustainable Communities Grant is a plan that reviews what the City has accomplished over the last 5 years and plan for the future. It is a priority funding area through the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) through Stable Communities. The City needs to expand the area. There are businesses still looking to complete building façades but aren't in the designated area. The City would like to also install a bikeway and a walkway that is safe for pedestrians that will go down to the water area. The document is near completion and will be placed on the City's website. Councilmember Holland said that he has some ideas for improvements that might be good to consider. Ms. McNeil said issues with the docks, nature trails are being considered and any other suggestions will be welcomed. Councilmember Tarr said that a safe walkway across the highway would be helpful considering the accidents that have happened there. This program works with the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) but the CIP takes into account all the assets that the City owns.

Introduce Resolution No. 547, Tax Rates, 1st Reading

Mr. Mason said the City tax rates are not changing. Every year a resolution must be introduced and read to formally accept the tax rates.

City Manager Mason read: **Resolution No. 547**
 City Tax Rates FY 2022-23
 Pocomoke City, Maryland

Introduce Resolution No. 548, Fees, Charges, Rates, Fines and Penalties Schedule, 1st Reading

Mr. Mason explained that there were a few changes made to the City fee schedule. The credit card convenience fee was raised from \$1.45 to \$3.00. It had not been raised in 5-years and the City needed to raise the fee to help cover costs. The log cabin rental was closed for the January, February and March but there is no longer a need to winterize it and it can be rented year-round. Some local businesses have had grease trap issues. When Public Works has to pump out a grease trap and clear a blockage, it pulls Public Works away from other duties. \$500.00 is a cost to cover that time. The grease trap inspection fee was lowered from \$500.00 to \$250.00. Inspections are not done that frequently. Councilmember Tarr asked how much the rental fee is for Cypress Park. Cypress Park is a rental fee for \$100.00 and a refundable deposit for \$50.00. Councilmember Troast said she would like to see the fee reduced for residents for Cypress Park. The stall rental fee is \$90.00 and the renters take care of most of the care and upkeep. Public Works provides some services such as weed killing, trimming, pushing manure under the shed, etc. The City Manager said that the fee will be raised for the upcoming fiscal year.

Mr. Mason read:

Transfer of Funds for Police Department

Janet Wilson, Finance director, said when Chief, City Manager and she reviewed the budget, being short staffed actually caused funds not to be used. They are asking for a 2022 Ford Interceptor with graphics and outfitting, the 2 current Interceptors to be outfitted and graphics applied, 1 Dodge Charger to be outfitted and graphics applied and visual optic equipment. \$79,683.64 from salaries to capital outlay to be used for that equipment.

Motion to approve transfer of funds from Police Department Salaries to Capital Outlay to be used for purchase of new 2022 Ford Interceptor with outfitting and graphics, 1 Dodge Charger (existing) with outfitting and graphics and visual optic equipment for \$79,683.64 (Troast, Holland)

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

Comments from Council

Councilmember Troast said the Council had a busy week last week. Newtowne Park was the opening ceremonies. The kids and the crowds were phenomenal. Councilmember Troast and Holland hid Easter eggs at the Fairgrounds. Thanks to all the Fair Boardmembers and volunteers. The Fire Department had a 100-year commemoration of the 1922 fire that destroyed the Pocomoke downtown area. The same fire departments that responded to the fire also participated in the commemoration.

Councilmember Holland said the 4th Friday first event is this week. The Delmarva Discovery Museum golf tournament is this weekend.

Councilmember Tarr participated in a blood drive that was held downtown. Other businesses could maybe also hold a drive.

Comments from City Manager

None

Comments from Chief of Police

He thanked the Council, Mayor and City Manager for the support and transfer of funds. Ms. Wilson, the Finance Director, worked hard on that. The Police webpage is up and running. The Grants Administrator, Ms. McNeil can't be thanked enough for her efforts. On April 8, 2022, there was a bomb threat to the high school. The entire building was searched and no material that was dangerous was discovered. There were also 2 other calls to schools in the county. There is an ongoing investigation. On October 13, 2021, an officer and K-9 responded to the area and a handgun was recovered. Recently, this event went public on social media as being an "active shooter" in progress. It did not meet the definition of active shooter. Councilmember Troast asked if there is anyway City Hall can be contacted to make sure that correct information is received. Chief said he can add a step for safety and have a dispatcher call City Hall. He was asked to throw out the first pitch for Little League opening.

Officer Conner Bauer began his law enforcement with Pocomoke City in May of 2021 and graduated the Eastern Shore Criminal Justice Academy in December 2021. In the first quarter of 2022 he had 31 criminal arrests, 11 that involved illegal possession of handguns or drugs and several DUI arrests. He has been named officer of the quarter of 2022 and is a true asset to the department.

Sgt. Robert Horseman, Cpl Anthony Rhodes and Patrolwoman Rachael Northam over the past several weeks these 3 have set the mark for what community policing and community interaction should be. Police need to reach out to the youth so that they look at police as the protectors. Each of the officers received an award.

He created some shirts for the dispatchers to identify them as city employees. He had some extra shirts made for Council and City Manager.

Comments from Audience

Planning Director, Dan Brandewie, said that the Planning Board of Appeals approved the conditional use for new business. There were some Zoning Codes that did not exactly fit the type of business but the Board of Appeals decided that the business fit the spirit of the definition. The Planning Commission is scheduled to meet on Wednesday to discuss concept plans for Blades Development. A 39-unit complex is being proposed. Butler Village will also introduce a replat of 26 lots. Additional Zoning text amendments will be proposed to clarify usage for certain districts. Councilmember Holland asked what the opposition issue is with the new brewery business. Mr. Brandewie explained that a neighbor has a concern that her parking lot will be used as overflow for parking because of a shared driveway cut.

Motion to adjourn meeting (Troast, Holland)

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

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