

November 3, 2014

The regular meeting of the Pocomoke Mayor and Council was held in the Council Chambers at City Hall on Monday, November 3, 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 (Clarke, Downing passed), to approve the minutes of October 6, 2014.

Review Bills:

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

Mr. Jeremy Mason, President of Pocomoke Chamber of Commerce, to introduce new Executive Director Debbie Brown:

Mr. Mason thanked the Mayor and Council for the opportunity to introduce Ms. Brown. He also thanked them for all the help and support they provide for the events that they hold during the year. He stated that without the City's help, they could not do the festivals and other events.

Ms. Brown thanked the Mayor and Council; she stated that she is doing a lot of listening and learning at this time. She invited the Mayor and Council to the Arts and Crafts Festival on November 15 from 9am to 3pm. One of her first goals is to go to each business and deliver the membership renewal applications so that she will be able to put a face with a name.

Mayor Morrison welcomed her to the Chamber of Commerce.

Councilman Tasker asked if she knew when the annual dinner would be held.

Ms. Brown stated January 17, 2014.

Authorize Mayor to sign proclamation for Native American Heritage Month:

Mayor Morrison read the Proclamation declaring November as Native American Month and November 28, 2014 as Native American Heritage Day. He presented it to Ms. Valerie Miller, of the Assateague Peoples Tribe.

Ms. Mary Bellis to request use of Cypress Park for Relay for Life event. (June 2015):

Ms. Bellis stated that she is the Relay Specialist for American Cancer Society, and that the coaches are Karen Purnell and Laura Morrison, who are attending a fundraiser event this evening. She thanked the City for their support in past years. They are looking for a more visible location in the hope for more participation this year. They would like to use the entire Cypress Park area on June 6, 2015 to hold their event this year, as well as the concession stand, bathrooms and the tent.

In a motion (Downing, Cottman passed) to allow Relay for Life to hold their event in Cypress Park on June 6, 2015, with the use of the tent, concession stand and restrooms included.

Representatives of P.K.S., Inc. to present annual audit report for fiscal year 2014:

Mr. Mike Klegler stated that the purpose of their attendance was to make a formal presentation to highlight the annual audit findings. He added that the firm's audit opinion was "a clean or unqualified opinion", which is the highest opinion that they can render regarding the City's audit.

Ms. Leslie Michalik discussed the General Fund Revenues by source, stating that total revenues were \$4,494,292. Property taxes accounted for 70% of the total revenue, followed by intergovernmental revenues of 20%. She stated that there was a decrease in general fund revenues of \$382,681, because there were not as many state grants this past year and there was not any FEMA money. The largest expense category was Public Safety at 35%, followed by Public Works at 17%. Total expenditures were down by 20%, because of lower debt service, capital outlay, and employee benefits. The worker's comp and health insurance were also down this past year. The largest expenditures were for salaries and employee benefits with a total of 50%. Water and Sewer had a net loss for the year due to several reasons, with a decrease in net position of \$152,814. The total water and sewer net position at year end was \$9,136,497. The Ambulance fund had a decrease of \$63,064 in net position with a net position at end of year of seems low \$160,141. She stated that the decrease is because funds were cut from Worcester County by \$50,000. She stated that the City is in compliance with the long term debt policy of \$5M.

Mr. Klegler stated that at the end of year cash on hand was \$174,000 which is a relatively low balance. He stated that we need to work on increasing the surplus to at least \$750,000 or better on hand at year end. Mr. Klegler stated that usually when there is staff turnover they have several findings but he was glad to report that there were no findings this year.

Mayor Morrison thanked them for coming and going over the financial report. Mayor Morrison also thanked Finance Director Janet Wilson and her staff for a job well done.

Discuss proposed donation and challenge to benefit "Bless our Children" non-profit group:

Mayor Morrison stated that he received a call from Friendly's asking for a donation for the "Bless Our Children" campaign. He stated that he would like the City to donate \$100 and he would challenge other Mayors to meet his donation.

In a motion (Cottman, Tasker passed) to donate \$100 to “Bless Our Children”.

Authorize Mayor to sign agreement with Pocomoke Volunteer Fire Company to burn vacant houses at 708, 710, and 712 Second Street:

In a motion (Trotter, Downing passed) to authorize Mayor Morrison to sign agreement with Pocomoke Volunteer Fire Company to burn vacant houses at 708, 710, and 712 Second Street.

Councilman Clarke asked if the City be taking these lots.

City Manager Blake stated that the owners walked away from the property. At some point the City will be putting a lien on the property for maintenance, demolition and other fees. Eventually, there would be an auction at which time the City may own them.

City Attorney to discuss proposed new lease with Bloosurf Broadband Company for City water towers, to include upgrade of equipment:

Mr. Neil Stegman, of Bloosurf requested approval of a new lease with the City to have their broadband equipment on the City’s water towers. He stated that they would like to have a five year lease, which would be similar to the existing lease. This will help them in seeking new federal grant funds.

City Attorney Hudson stated that he made a few minor modifications to the proposed lease to better protect the interests of the City. Bloosurf is not the only broadband company leasing space on the water towers; it is not an exclusive use lease.

Mr. Stegman stated that they have similar leases with Somerset and Worcester Counties, and it is in their interest to work well with other agencies and providers.

Mayor Morrison asked Mr. Stegman if he had a chance to review the City Attorney’s changes.

Mr. Stegman stated he had not received them yet.

Mayor Morrison asked if City Attorney Hudson could review and approve the changes for the interest of the City so as not to hold up Bloosurf on submitting their budget to USDA Department.

In a motion (Cottman, Downing passed) to allow City Attorney Hudson to review and make changes to benefit the City and review the final lease agreement with City Manager Blake so Bloosurf could submit their application to USDA.

Councilman Clarke asked if the technology might become outdated over a five-year lease.

Mr. Stegman stated it probably would be, and they would be upgrading the equipment in the middle of the lease.

Councilman Tasker asked if they could provide WIFI in the downtown location.

Mr. Stegman stated that he met with City Manager Blake and Downtown Coordinator Karah Lacey. He presented a proposal to Ms. Lacey and she said it was out of the budget.

Councilman Tasker stated that Berlin offered it to visitors in their town. He is not suggesting it would be available to all downtown businesses and locations, but if somebody was visiting the downtown area they could get on the City's Wi-Fi.

Mr. Stegman stated that he would look to see what they could do.

Representatives of Butler's Village Homeowners Association to discuss street maintenance and trash collection in their development:

Mr. Adam Howard, President of the HOA for Butler's Village, stated that they would like the City to start taking care of the streets and picking up trash in their development. They now have three locations in their development for trash pick-up. They would have the containers removed and provide trash cans so that the City could easily pick up the trash. They currently pay \$8,000 a year for that service. They would like to have this service billed monthly with the water and sewer so that each homeowner pays for it. Also, they are interested in the City taking over the streets in their development.

Councilman Clarke asked if the top coat of pavement was installed on the roads.

Mr. Howard stated that Haley's Way and Carson's Court has the top coat, but Morgan's Court does not. He stated that at this time the streets are not cracking nor do they have any pot holes.

Councilman Clarke stated that all the streets would need to be completed before the City would take them over.

Mayor Morrison stated that it would be more revenue for the City to pick up their trash.

City Attorney Hudson asked if Tucker Homes had transferred the roads ownership to the H.O.A. if not the bankruptcy trustee would have the authority to approve anything that you would want to approve.

Mayor Morrison asked Mr. Howard to go back to the H.O.A to clarify the ownership of the roadways.

Mayor Morrison asked City Attorney Hudson to check on the H.O.A. and the bankruptcy trustee to see who has the ownership of the roadways.

Mayor to request purchase of advertisement in 2015 P.H.S. yearbook:

Mayor Morrison stated that he would like to purchase the same size ad for the 2015 P.H.S. yearbook as they purchased last year at a cost of \$150.00.

Councilman Tasker stated that he would like a new picture of the Mayor and Council taken this year.

Councilwoman Cottman stated that she would like to see their names listed in the ad.

In a motion (Cottman, Clarke passed) to purchase the same full page ad as last year's, at a cost of \$150.00

Review letter from Maryland D.H.C.D. regarding proposed refinancing and sale of Sunshine Village Apartments on Bank Street and Bonneville Avenue to Homes for America, Inc. of Annapolis, MD:

City Manager Blake stated that the two properties of Sunshine Village are located on Bank Street and Bonneville Avenue, including a total of 52 apartments. D.H.C.D. has received an application from Homes for America, Inc., for financing to purchase the property through the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, Multifamily Housing Revenue Bond program. They are proposing to renovate the apartments and build new multi-purpose center. They will continue to be low-income housing. Mr. Blake said that the City originally received a block grant in the early 1980's to purchase the two properties, demolish the existing dilapidated and substandard housing units, relocate the occupants temporarily, and clean-up the sites. The City then advertised for developers to purchase the properties and create new housing in town. A Baltimore area developer was selected by the Mayor and Council to build the 52 units of Section 8 housing. The Council has a right to provide comments to D.H.C.D. to review while considering the application.

In a motion (Tasker, Trotter passed) to approve the application for refinancing the property for Homes for America, Inc., to purchase the Sunshine Village Apartments.

Discuss recommendation that (8) eight conference table chairs be declared as surplus property:

Mayor Morrison stated that he would like to remove this item from the agenda.

Consider proposed purchases of capital equipment:

A. Used dump truck with snow plow from S.H.A. (\$6,000):

Public Works Superintendent Bill East provided a memo requesting approval to purchase a 1997 International Single Cab Dump Truck with a snowplow attached from Maryland State Highway Administration in the amount of \$6,000.

In a motion (Tasker, Trotter passed) to purchase a 1997 International Single Cab Dump Truck with a snow plow from Maryland State Highway Administration in the amount of \$6,000.

B. Used pickup truck for Wastewater Treatment Plant (\$7,000) (Private seller, 2004 Dodge Ram) (Budget amount \$8,000):

Water and Wastewater Superintendent, Michael Phillips provided pictures and memo to request purchase of a 2004 Dodge Ram pickup truck from a private owner from Virginia in the amount of \$7,000.

In a motion (Cottman, Trotter passed) to purchase the 2004 Dodge Ram pickup truck in the amount of \$7,000 once the truck was inspected by Maryland Inspection Station and it shows no signs of flooding.

- C. Used car for use by Ambulance Department Director from Ocean Pines Association E.M.S. (\$2,500)

E.M.S. Director Michael Thornton provided a memo requesting purchase of a 2009 Ford Crown Victoria from Ocean Pines Fire Department in the amount of \$2,500. This price includes the LED light bar and all the emergency signaling devices. The City would only need to remove the Ocean Pines name and replace it with Pocomoke's name. Mr. Thornton stated that this was an excellent opportunity to replace the existing car.

In a motion (Trotter, Downing passed) to authorize the purchase of 2009 Ford Crown Victoria in the amount of \$2,500 from Ocean Pines Fire Department.

Discuss renewal of consulting contract with Maryland Environmental Services for water and wastewater treatment programs:

City Manager Blake stated that MES helps our staff with wastewater treatment plant issues. He stated that MES will visit the plant each month and provide an annual checklist to make sure that all procedures are being followed. MES will provide support and will help with minor and major repairs if needed.

In a motion (Cottman, Downing passed) to renew the contract with Maryland Environmental Services for water and wastewater treatment program.

Mayor and Council Items:

Councilman Clarke stated that there is a water valve near Winter Quarters and Linden Drive that is leaking.

Councilman Trotter stated that while he was patrolling in the Dunn Swamp area near the solar plant, it was very dark and he suggested that maybe the City could ask the contractor to install security lights for the area.

Councilman Clarke suggested cameras could be installed as well.

Mayor Morrison asked about the electricity for the pond in Jenkins Orchard.

Mayor Morrison stated that Fire Chief Gladding called him regarding the free LED lights that were to be installed. He said that he had been told that there was not any money left and the fire station would not be getting the lights. Mayor Morrison asked City Manager Blake to follow-up with the company regarding the status of the lights. The City was also on the list for the lights.

Councilman Tasker reminded everyone about Samaritan Shelter's Sixth Annual Rev. Tom Wall Pancake dinner on November 15, at Lynnhaven Baptist Church, at 6:00pm.

Comments from Audience:

Ms. Shelly Daniels, Director of the Samaritan Shelter, thanked the Mayor and Council for their support and for allowing her to speak tonight regarding the rezoning of 501 Market Street. Currently it is zoned for B-1 business district; she would like it to be rezoned multi-family residential. She stated that the shelter would like to lease the seven units for transitional housing for residents at the Samaritan Shelter. The Shelter would oversee and manage the units. She stated that she has received letters of support from the community.

Mayor Morrison stated that she would need to go before the Planning and Zoning Commission to make her request and that she would need to prove that a mistake was made in the zoning or the neighborhood has changed since the zoning was changed. The Planning and Zoning Commission would need to hold a public hearing, and then they would make a recommendation to the Mayor and Council if they found that a mistake or a change had occurred in the zoning.

Councilwoman Cottman stated that there is a need for transitional housing.

Mayor Morrison told Ms. Daniels to call City Hall to speak with City Manager Blake or City Clerk to see when the next Planning and Zoning Commission would be scheduled.

With no further business, Councilman Clarke made a motion to adjourn at 8:38 P.M. The motion was seconded by Councilman Trotter and approved.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

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Carol L. Sullivan  
City Clerk