



For Immediate Release

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Talbot County Council Meeting Highlights, June 13, 2023

The Talbot County Council held their regular meeting on Tuesday, June 13 at 6:00 p.m.; all Council members were present.

Proclamation: 340th Anniversary of the Oxford-Bellevue Ferry – Captain Judy Bixler, joined by Director of Economic Development and Tourism Cassandra Vanhooser, received a proclamation to honor a significant anniversary for the Oxford-Bellevue Ferry.

The ferry, established in 1683, is the nation's oldest privately owned ferry service. Captains Tom and Judy Bixler took over ownership of the ferry service in January 2002. "Whenever people come into town, we take the ferry. Thank you for all that you do, serving on the State Tourism Board as well as Talbot County Tourism Board," mentioned Council Member Keasha Haythe,

This past weekend, Tour de Talbot used the ferry as part of their bicyclist route. "I believe you have a record of 18 Mini Coopers crossing...I am curious, how many bicyclists can you fit on the ferry?" asked Council Vice President Pete Leshner.

"We can have a limit of 99, so we had to leave some on the dock," said Capt. Bixler. They had several crossings packed full of cyclists as part of the Tour de Talbot event on June 10th.

For more information on the ferry service and its history, visit the website at www.oxfordferry.com

Request from Talbot County Public Schools for FY23 Categorical Budget Transfers

Sarah Jones, CPA, Chief Financial Officer for Talbot County Public Schools, outlined the request for Council's approval for categorical budget transfers from the FY23 budget to pre-pay for anticipated needs in FY24. The transfer request is a result of available funds in the Instructional Salaries category to cover unanticipated increases in costs in specific categories in the FY23 budget including legal fees and fuel, and increased costs in the FY24 budget.

The request was approved by Council Members Callahan, Leshner, Haythe, and Stepp. Council Member Mielke abstained.

Legislative Sessions to start at 5 p.m.

Patrick Thomas, County Attorney, provided context for an administrative resolution to adjust council legislative meeting start times from the current start time of 6 p.m. to one hour earlier, at 5 p.m.

“The goal of the change is to allow staff and Council members to have more time in the evening on Tuesday to enjoy time with their family,” said Council President Chuck Callahan. “By moving the meeting start time to 5 p.m., we are hoping we can get everyone out a little bit earlier, barring any lengthy meetings of course.”

The Council introduced, and subsequently voted and approved the resolution 4-1. The new 5 p.m. start time will be used for all regularly scheduled legislative meetings throughout the summer. Council will consider readjusting their meeting time back to 6:00 p.m. in the fall.

Countywide Social Media Accounts and Social Media Policy

The County Manager introduced Sarah Kilmon, Talbot Communications Manager, explaining the presentation and request is part of a comprehensive initiative to enhance communication with the public and add transparency.

Kilmon presented updates on the Countywide social media launch and expressed support for the adoption of a social media policy for the County’s accounts. She informed the Council that 16 out of the 23 Maryland counties maintain at least one social media account; various County departments already have social media accounts.

“In order to achieve our [communication] objectives, we need to be able to reach residents effectively,” said Kilmon. “Launching these social media accounts, specifically Facebook and LinkedIn, will allow our County to expand its reach to more residents, and provide timely updates on important issues.”

The Council introduced, and subsequently unanimously approved, an administrative resolution adopting a Social Media Policy for the County. The policy will be used for all County managed social media accounts moving forward.

For more information on County Communications, please contact Sarah Kilmon at SKilmon@talbotcountymd.gov.

Other Business:

- A Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan amendment proposing to reclassify and remap certain real properties located at 24679 Yacht Club Road and 24781 Yacht Club Road from unprogrammed to “S-1” Immediate Priority Status, was introduced as Resolution No. 343. A public hearing was scheduled for Tuesday, July 11, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.
- A resolution to establish a temporary moratorium on the processing, review, and approval of applications related to growing, processing, and/or selling cannabis for a period of nine months was introduced by as Resolution No. 344. “As a county, we are not alone in proceeding with this,” said Councilmember Lynn Mielke. “St. Michaels, Oxford, and Trappe have considered a moratorium as well. We all need to be on the same page, and make sure we are doing this the correct and safe way for the public.” The public hearing on Resolution No. 344 is scheduled for Tuesday, July 11, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

- Capital Enabling legislation was also introduced. The legislation authorizes certain capital projects included in the FY24 Budget. Budget authorization requests included:
 - Bill No. 1531, Development of Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe, 13213 Lewistown Road, Queen Anne
 - Bill No. 1532, Expansion of St. Michaels Branch of the Talbot County Free Library
 - Bill No. 1533, Improvements to the Talbot County Detention Center
 - Bill No. 1534, Purchase of improved or unimproved real property for future County purposes
 - Bill No. 1535, Upgrade or replacement of the wastewater treatment plant at The Preserve at Wye Mills
 - Bill No. 1536, Extension of water and sewer lines to the proposed regional medical center hospital site located between Longwoods Road and U.S. Route 50 in Easton
 - Bill No. 1537, Construction of Emergency Medical Services Stations
 - Bill No. 1538, Improvement and Expansion to Chapel District Elementary School
 - Bill No. 1539, Construction and Improvements to Driving Range Complex at Hog Neck Golf Course
 - Bill No. 1540, Gymnasium addition to the Talbot County Community Center
 - Bill No. 1541, Improvements to County roads
 - Bill No. 1542, Replacement of the 911 Division Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system
 - Bill No. 1543, Replacement of roof at White Marsh Elementary School

The public hearings on Bill Nos. 1531-1543 will be held on Tuesday, July 11, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

- A bill to amend Chapter 190 of the Talbot County Code regarding Historic Inns was introduced by Council as Bill No. 1544. The bill would permit inns operating in historic structures to apply for special exceptions. The public hearing will be held on July 11, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.
- Council unanimously approved [Bill No. 1530](#), which addresses remaining comments and conditions of approval imposed by Maryland Critical Area Commission for [Bill No. 1525](#), enacted by the previous Council on September 27, 2022.
- The County Manager presented several board and committee nominations for the Council's consideration as follows:
 - Airport Board – Council unanimously approved the reappointment of Rudy Strickland to the Airport Board.
 - Commission on Aging – Council unanimously approved the appointment of Carrie Ottey, Community Health Nurse Supervisor, Talbot County Health Department, to serve on the Commission on Aging to replace Kate Stinton who is retiring at the end of June.
 - Economic Development Commission – Council unanimously approved the reappointment of Ted Bautz and Ken Kozel to the Economic Development Commission.

- Golf Board – Council unanimously approved the reappointment of Benny Manager to the Golf Board.
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Board – Council unanimously approved the Town of Oxford's request for the appointment of Tim Kearns to complete the unexpired term of his wife, Kim Kearns and the reappointment of David Adams (at-large member) to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.
- Public Works Advisory Board – Council unanimously approved the reappointment of Dan Billingsley (4th Election District).
- Preston Peper, Director for Talbot County Parks and Recreation, outlined the request to award the change order for Bid No. 22-15 Talbot County Community Center Gymnasium Addition – 10028 Ocean Gateway, Easton – Talbot County, Maryland. The change order in the amount of \$89,099.46 is necessary to comply with the Life Safety Code as required by the State Fire Marshal. The request was unanimously approved.
- Parks and Recreation requested support to extend the contract with ATC Corp for additional construction needs at the pickleball courts at the Community Center. The contract extension in the amount of \$109,880 was unanimously approved.
- Matt Watkins, Division Chief, Department of Emergency Services, outlined a request to utilize FY23 budgeted funds for the purchase of 36 Life Pak CRS2 semi-automatic Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in the sum of \$56,736 utilizing Maryland State contract pricing. The purchase will be in partnership with the Talbot Paramedic Foundation who will contribute 1/3 of the cost and the public access defibrillation pad site will contribute 1/3. The request was unanimously approved.
- Rich Setter, General Manager for Hog Neck Golf Course, requested support to utilize FY24 funds to enter into a 4-year lease agreement for 70 new golf carts with Capital Golf Cars in the amount of \$442,000. Capital Golf Carts provided the lowest bid, and the company is also the current supplier and has provided good service to the County in the past. The request was unanimously approved.
- Dr. Dennis De Shields, representative of the Bellevue Passage Museum, requested a letter of support from the Council for the Museum's grant application to the Maryland Historic Trust African American Heritage Preservation Program in the amount of \$250,000; no County funding is required. The request was unanimously approved.

The next legislative meeting of the County Council will be held on June 27, 2023 at 5 p.m. The meeting is open to the public.

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PHOTOS/CAPTIONS



Oxford-Bellevue Ferry Owner and Operator Captain Judy Bixler accepts proclamation for the 340th Anniversary of the Ferry. Captain Tom Bixler was unable to attend but offered his thanks to the Council for the proclamation. From left front: Council Member Lynn Mielke, Judy Bixler, Captain of Oxford-Bellevue Ferry