



For Immediate Release

Easton, MD – April 20, 2022

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Talbot County Council Meeting Highlights, Tuesday, April 19, 2022

These highlights only reflect the business items covered from the Council's approved agenda. To view the complete County Council meeting, please visit: Talbot County Meeting Videos - Talbot County, Maryland (www.talbotcountymd.gov).

The Talbot County Council held a Special Legislative Day on Tuesday, April 19, 2022. Council member Laura Price was absent due to a commitment with her duties as President of the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) Board of Directors.

Introduction of Legislation

Clay Stamp, County Manager and Joye Nagle, Finance Director presented AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE 2022-2023 ANNUAL BUDGET AND APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE for Council's consideration. The FY23 proposed General Fund budget is \$112,607,000. Mr. Stamp stated that the FY23 proposed budget continues to support the operational strategy of investing in personnel, processes and projects which are key elements in effectively providing public safety and general services. County Manager Stamp noted, "The budget was developed to maintain core services, to provide for workforce stability, investment in capital projects addressing infrastructure and in the improvement of public safety, education and other general services. The FY23 budget is essentially flat as compared to the FY22 budget of \$112,816,000 and maintains a healthy fund balance in order to be optimally positioned for future economic uncertainties such as being seen with current inflationary pressures."

Ms. Nagle noted the FY23 budget for operating expenses is increasing by 7.7% which is less than the most recent evaluation of the inflation rate of 8.5%. The budget includes over \$3 million in transfers for the Capital Projects fund and \$3 million for capital outlay (equipment) purchases. The FY23 budget is funded, in part, with revenues of \$14.3 million from prior year fund balance and includes a 1 cent increase to the property tax rate above what is allowed under the Real Property Tax Cap as authorized by the voters. The budget also includes a 1 cent Education Supplement to support the Talbot County Public Schools budget initiative.

FY23 budget highlights include:

- Public safety is a top priority
- Graduated expansion of 24/7 Paramedic Unit in the northern end of the County which will improve response times
- Funding for increased retirement expense associated with joining the Law Enforcement Officers Pension System (LEOPS) for paramedics which will help with recruitment and retention efforts
- Funding enhancements to the volunteer fire departments to address operational costs and to support training and personnel retention and recruitment
- Enhanced support for the Sheriff's Office including three new deputies
- Property acquisition or construction to house the Sheriff's Office and the Health Department
- Fully funding the State mandated educational commitment and additional supplemental and capital requests from Talbot County Public Schools. The mandate increases the budget from last year by \$2.2 million. In addition, the budget funds \$1.4 million in supplemental and capital requests.
- Investment in roadway enhancements, culvert replacements and the extension of sewer services
- Investments in information technology for greater efficiency, transparency and data security
- Cost of living and step increases for all eligible employees to address inflationary and recruitment and retention issues

Ms. Nagle noted a breakdown of County improvement projects of \$20 million related public safety and health; \$1.8 million to expand broadband to unserved and underserved areas of the County; \$7.1 million in highways and street projects and approximately \$500,000 in capital projects for the school system.

“The discretionary portion of the fund balance from prior years is projected to be \$31.6 million which is a healthy level. The availability of a strong funds balance will help the County maintain services if we encounter increased costs or loss of revenues during these uncertain times,” noted Ms. Nagle.

Council members expressed their appreciation to Ms. Nagle, Ken Davis, Assistant Finance Director, and County Manager Stamp for their work on the FY23 budget.

Vice President Leshar commented, “I want to thank my fellow Council members. This is a modest, flat and fiscally conservative budget that keeps the County in good financial shape while funding some important priorities. It rewards our employees and helps us to recruit and retain our staff where hiring has been especially challenging. This is a Council that has kept our commitment to the voters who allowed for the extra penny to support public safety and that's where the funding is going and it's an important step forward.”

President Callahan noted, “There are so many things included in the budget that are beneficial to the public and that's what we tried to achieve in the development of this year's budget.”

Bill No. 1498 was introduced by Mr. Callahan, Mr. Divilio, Mr. Leshar and Mr. Pack. Public hearings will be held on Tuesday, May 3, 2022 at 2:00 p.m. in the Bradley Meeting Room, Talbot County Courthouse, South Wing, 11 North Washington Street in Easton and at 7:00 p.m. at the Easton Elementary School Cafeteria, 307 Glenwood Avenue in Easton. The public is invited to submit written public comments by Monday, May 2, 2022 to publiccomment@talbotcountymd.gov.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m. The next Council meeting will be held in person on April 26 at 6:00 p.m. in the Bradley Meeting Room.