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COUNTY COUNCIL OF TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

Council Meeting

April 16, 6:00 p.m.

Council Chambers, Easton, Maryland

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Chuck F. Callahan

Pete Leshner

Keasha N. Haythe

Lynn L. Mielke

Dave Stepp

Reported by

Diane Houlihan

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1 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

2

3 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. So let's go ahead

4 and get started here. So we got a special

5 legislation evening with the budget.

6 So first, let's go ahead and stand up and

7 say the Pledge of Allegiance of the Flag.

8 (Pledge of Allegiance.)

9 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. This is the evening

10 that everybody has been looking forward to for

11 three months, right?

12 MR. STAMP: Yeah.

13 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. So all right,

14 Council. Let's let Mr. Stamp introduce our

15 budget. And if you guys want to come up, too.

16 MR. STAMP: Yeah. Kaitlin, you want to

17 come up? Oh, please. Oh, yes, yes.

18 MS. MIELKE: She's all set up there. You

19 can see.

20 MR. LESHER: We have disbursements to

21 approve.

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1 MR. CALLAHAN: Do we?

2 MS. HAYTHE: And the agenda.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: There we go. Where's Jess

4 when I need her? Okay.

5 MR. STAMP: She seems to be pretty firm in

6 her present seat.

7 MS. FOSTER-CLARK: I got a front row.

8 MS. SPARKS: You want to sit here?

9 MS. FOSTER-CLARK: No.

10 MR. CALLAHAN: Let's start off with the

11 agenda. The agenda is before us. Is there any

12 changes or...

13 MS. HAYTHE: Additions or deletions?

14 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah. Delicious.

15 Delicious. It's been a long day.

16 MS. HAYTHE: No additions or deletions.

17 MR. STAMP: It would be phenomenal.

18 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. That would be

19 phenomenal. Everybody good? Okay. Hearing

20 none, the chair moves that this be accepted as

21 unanimous consent. Okay.

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1 Disbursements. Same thing. Any

2 deletions, corrections? Okay. Hearing none,

3 the disbursements be accepted as unanimous

4 consent. Okay.

5 Now we can go ahead and get started on

6 tonight's legislation. Madam Secretary, you

7 want to go ahead and start us off? Do we need

8 to read anything?

9 SECRETARY: Well, I can first.

10 Are you going to do the Powerpoint first?

11 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah, we can.

12 MR. STAMP: We can do that.

13 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We'll do that.

14 MR. STAMP: Council, thank you. There was

15 a lot of hard work that went into drafting the

16 2025 proposed balanced budget.

17 We're here tonight. Want to thank the

18 Council for your cooperation and support over

19 the last number of months.

20 I also want to thank Martha Sparks and

21 Kaitlin and Jessica Morris for their help. It

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1 was a team effort.

2 I just want to take a couple of minutes to

3 say a few things and then I'll hand it off to

4 Martha.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Sure.

6 MR. STAMP: The proposed FY25 general fund

7 budget amount will be \$163,970,000.

8 And I thought maybe the first thing to do

9 is to talk a little bit about where we are in

10 the FY24 budget as we move into the '25 budget.

11 I'm happy to tell you, and Martha will

12 reiterate it possibly, we are on course to meet

13 the target of the FY24 budget, which we'll wrap

14 up June 30th of this year.

15 That budget that we're currently in

16 focused on a three-point strategy. The

17 three-piece strategy addressing personnel,

18 processes, and projects, as we plan on

19 continuing that in FY25. And so it's been a

20 success so far.

21 Some of the capital projects that we have

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1 completed and are near completion is the
 2 commencement of the airport modernization
 3 project, the completion of the gymnasium and
 4 pickleball courts at the Community Center.
 5 Soon to be, soon we'll see the completion of
 6 the Talbot County Health Department at
 7 Achievement Park. We're looking forward to a
 8 ribbon cutting at that facility in June.
 9 Capital improvements to the wastewater
 10 treatment plant in St. Michael's and sanitary
 11 district through extension of sewer services to
 12 reduce reliance on septic systems, enhancements
 13 to the Department of Corrections and
 14 courthouse, road repairs, upgrades, and
 15 resurfacing across 370 miles of county
 16 roadways.
 17 On average, our superintendent of roads
 18 and the team out there directly and through
 19 contracting is addressing about 40 to 50 miles
 20 a year. That's a combination of paving and tar
 21 and chipping.

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1 This is after a few years where road
 2 projects held stagnant for a while after the
 3 cutoff of the State Highway user fees. And so
 4 we're playing catch-up. But I'm happy to
 5 report with our superintendent, they're making
 6 great progress on that.
 7 Additionally, we've updated our emergency
 8 operations plan from lessons learned from the
 9 pandemic and are conducting certain classes for
 10 the public.
 11 So all this is just I guess an expression
 12 to you and the public that we created a budget
 13 in FY24. We're living to that budget, we're
 14 within the budget, and we are on course to meet
 15 the target. And so as we get ready to talk
 16 about '25, I think that's an important point to
 17 make.
 18 As we look at the FY25 budget, again,
 19 we're using this strategy of personnel,
 20 processes, and projects. And I think those
 21 three issues are very important, and for

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1 reasons that we've discussed before.
 2 We find ourselves in a very
 3 highly-competitive workforce environment right
 4 now. Not just Talbot County, but across the
 5 United States, and particularly here.
 6 Especially for certain job functions like our
 7 dispatchers, paramedics, correctional officers,
 8 and others.
 9 So it's important that, first, we retain
 10 our staff and, secondly, be able to recruit.
 11 And so Council has put money in the budget to
 12 be able to address those issues.
 13 Process is centered around customer
 14 service. That's how can we work better to
 15 achieve customer service and leverage
 16 technology to better do that. And the budget
 17 does contain items to be able to do that.
 18 And then, finally capital projects. In
 19 this next upcoming budget, we're looking at
 20 embarking on an expansion of the Talbot County
 21 Free Library, the renovation of the Chapel

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1 District Elementary School in Cordova,
 2 construction of an EMS station in the northern
 3 part of the county, completion of the Public
 4 Safety Complex in Easton, upgrade to our 911
 5 computer-aided dispatch system, and addressing
 6 ongoing efforts to extend sewer service to the
 7 Bay Hundred area, as well as repair and
 8 construction of roads across the county, as we
 9 just talked about. So it's ambitious.
 10 It addresses that three-point strategy,
 11 which I think was successful in '24 and will be
 12 in '25 as well.
 13 And then finally, overarchingly, our
 14 budget strategy. What's the magic behind our
 15 budget strategy.
 16 The first point is is that Talbot County
 17 has been successful in using conservative
 18 budgeting. And what does that mean? That
 19 means underestimating revenues and
 20 overestimating expenses and making sure we stay
 21 within that lane. And that has served us well.

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1 We continue to do that in crafting the '25
 2 budget.
 3 Additionally, we maintain a significant
 4 fund balance and low taxes. And Martha will
 5 talk about this in detail, but it's
 6 significant.
 7 I mean as you know, the global economy is
 8 in flux. There's a lot of moving parts.
 9 Talbot County is positioned well with a good
 10 fund balance. The fund balance is in place for
 11 the uncertainties, but it's also in place to
 12 address certain liabilities or risks that we
 13 have that will grow in the future around issues
 14 of enterprise zones and economic development
 15 incentives to address property taxes, to
 16 attract businesses to the area.
 17 And we don't know about emergencies;
 18 pandemics, other things that we might have to
 19 address.
 20 Low taxes. Talbot County is obviously a
 21 beautiful place to live. You buy property

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1 here. You pay the second lowest property tax
 2 in the State of Maryland. And if you happen to
 3 live here, your income tax, you pay the second
 4 lowest income tax in the State of Maryland.
 5 And that's something that I should say three
 6 times because it's pretty amazing that we're
 7 able to do the things that we do with the money
 8 that we have and the support you give us.
 9 The budget does prioritize public safety
 10 and education. That's certainly a directive
 11 that's come through loud and clear. And this
 12 Council supported that and the budget reflects
 13 that.
 14 I'm happy to report that we are completing
 15 a multiple-year effort to ensure that we
 16 achieve staffing as outlined by our sheriff,
 17 our director of emergency services, our fire
 18 companies. And the budget -- so over the last
 19 several years, we've increased staffing, we've
 20 upgraded facilities and equipment.
 21 And so this year brings us to a plateau.

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1 And we hope that we level off now for a couple
 2 of years. But it has prioritized public
 3 safety.
 4 And then finally, education. This budget
 5 adds, as in the previous budget, addresses the
 6 State-funded mandate for our public schools.
 7 And it exceeds it, significantly exceeds the
 8 required formula funding.
 9 So with that, that just gives us an
 10 overview of how we got where we got today. And
 11 I want to hand it off to Martha, who has done
 12 and incredible job with Kaitlin's support.
 13 So Martha.
 14 MS. SPARKS: Absolutely.
 15 Good evening, Council.
 16 MS. HAYTHE: Good evening.
 17 MS. SPARKS: Staff is presenting Council a
 18 balanced general fund budget of 1 million,
 19 600 -- one million -- \$163,970,000, which
 20 includes property tax revenues at two percent
 21 over FY24 revenues in accordance with the

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1 county charter, one cent to the property tax
 2 rate, as authorized by the voters of Talbot
 3 County in November 2020, and a 4-cent
 4 educational supplement to support Talbot County
 5 Public Schools's budget initiatives.
 6 The funding to Talbot County Schools of
 7 54.6 million is an increase of 3.65 million
 8 from their FY24 funding and is 2.6 million
 9 above the local share funding, which is
 10 required by the State of Maryland.
 11 Capital improvement project funding, also
 12 identified as CIP funding, for Talbot County
 13 Public Schools includes 16.9 million for a
 14 capital project request for the Chapel District
 15 Elementary School renovations, and 1.5 million
 16 in additional CIP funding that Council has
 17 appropriated for TCPS to determine the priority
 18 of its use against their CIP requests.
 19 For county operations in this budget, we
 20 have included three percent cost of living
 21 adjustment and one step for county employees.

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1 In this budget, the county has continued
 2 its investment in public safety by adding four
 3 public safety communications specialists, which
 4 the public will know as 911 operators, and one
 5 student resource officer supervisor.
 6 The county has also increased its
 7 appropriations to outside agencies by
 8 1.2 million.
 9 Fund balance reserves will be used to make
 10 a significant investment in county
 11 infrastructure. Capital improvement projects
 12 in the FY25 budget total 27.5 million.
 13 Fund balance reserves will also be used to
 14 invest 2.98 million for the purchase of
 15 vehicles and equipment recognized in this
 16 budget as capital outlay.
 17 In our FY25 budget, we have a projected
 18 12.3 increase in property tax revenues. A
 19 19.3 percent increase in income tax revenues
 20 reflect a slight modification to budgeting our
 21 income tax revenues to align with the revenues

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1 realized over the last five years.
 2 These revenues are historically volatile
 3 for the county and must be carefully projected
 4 and monitored.
 5 These increases, combined with the
 6 projected increases of other local taxes,
 7 government revenues, and the non-recurring
 8 transfers of impact fees, along with the
 9 non-recurring transfers of fund balance
 10 reserves, bring us to an overall increase in
 11 revenues of 27.26 percent.
 12 Talbot County receives most of its
 13 revenues from property and income taxes.
 14 Together they make up 81.1 percent of the
 15 county's operating revenues and 61.5 percent of
 16 the total FY25 budgeted revenues.
 17 The chart that you see in front of you is
 18 the total revenues for the county. It does not
 19 split out operating, but I think that that's
 20 significant to point out because those
 21 operating revenues are considered recurring

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1 revenues at various levels during the year for
 2 each year.
 3 Recordation and transfer taxes are the
 4 next largest group of county revenues,
 5 contributing approximately 8.6 of the county's
 6 operating revenues.
 7 In FY21 and FY22, Talbot County
 8 experienced its highest levels of recordation
 9 and transfer tax revenues. But in FY23 and
 10 FY24, these revenues moved to more normal
 11 levels. And our FY25 budget projections are in
 12 alignment with those levels.
 13 These revenues, the recordation and
 14 transfer taxes, are heavily tied to activity in
 15 the real estate market in Talbot County.
 16 The county has historically made very
 17 conservative projections of its revenues due to
 18 the volatility of its income, recordation, and
 19 transfer tax revenues. This strategy of
 20 underbudgeting our revenues has enabled us to
 21 build healthy reserves.

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1 In this budget cycle we've modified our
 2 approach by more accurately projecting revenues
 3 to be in alignment with the revenues the county
 4 has received over the last five years. This
 5 realignment shifts us away from building
 6 reserves and shifts us to supporting our
 7 general fund operating expenditures with those
 8 recurring operating revenues.
 9 In November 2020, the voters in Talbot
 10 County supported an amendment to our charter
 11 that enabled one cent to be added to our
 12 property tax rate for the support of the
 13 county's expenditures related to public safety.
 14 This began in FY22 and will end with the FY26
 15 budget.
 16 Council has an opportunity to create a
 17 ballot initiative to be included on the ballot
 18 in November 2024 if it chooses to ask citizens
 19 to vote to continue this valuable support to
 20 the county's public safety, which includes our
 21 Sheriff's Office, Detention Center, and

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1 Department of Emergency Services.
 2 The county has used the revenues from the
 3 one cent for enhancing public safety for 26
 4 positions that include deputies, paramedics,
 5 EMTs, 911 operators, and a career ladder for
 6 the Department of Emergency Services and the
 7 inclusion of the Sheriff's Office, paramedics,
 8 and EMTs into the LEOPS retirement program and
 9 the Department of Correction officers's
 10 inclusion in the CORS retirement program.
 11 LEOPS and CORS are enhanced retirement
 12 programs through the Maryland State retirement
 13 and pension system for public safety employees.
 14 As you can see from the slide, each year
 15 the county has used more than the revenues
 16 generated from the one cent to enhance public
 17 safety personnel, serving the citizen and
 18 visitors of Talbot County.
 19 For our property taxes, our property tax
 20 rate, our projected property tax rate of .7910
 21 for county-owned properties was calculated

Page 19

1 using property tax revenues, two percent over
 2 FY24 revenues, in accordance with our charter
 3 and with prior year revenue levels certified by
 4 the State Department of Assessments and
 5 Taxation.
 6 It also includes an additional one cent to
 7 support the public safety, and it also includes
 8 a 4-cent educational supplement to support
 9 Talbot County Schools's budget initiative.
 10 Our overall property tax rate will
 11 increase 4.76 cents over FY24, which amounts to
 12 a 6.4 percent increase.
 13 The county tax bill for a home with a
 14 property assessment of 300,000 will increase
 15 from \$2,230.20 to \$2,373, which is a \$142.80
 16 increase, \$120 which is attributable to the
 17 education supplement.
 18 And here we have an example of a tax bill
 19 with those rates.
 20 Okay. Let me try this again.
 21 MR. STAMP: There you go.

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1 MS. SPARKS: Okay. I have just such a
 2 hard time because my pointer on my laptop is
 3 huge and this one is tiny. Old people
 4 problems.
 5 MR. STAMP: We'll get you a bigger
 6 pointer.
 7 MS. SPARKS: I know, I know. It's just
 8 tiny. I'm trying to chase it around.
 9 Okay. Here you can see the property tax
 10 rates of Baltimore City and the 23 counties in
 11 the State of Maryland. This information came
 12 from the Maryland State Department of
 13 Assessments and Taxation website.
 14 As you can see, Talbot County, when I
 15 prepared this with the schedule from SDAT,
 16 Talbot County has the second lowest property
 17 tax rate in Maryland.
 18 And since I put this slide together, I've
 19 gone into Montgomery County's website to
 20 investigate because they actually dropped. And
 21 I knew they had made a significant investment

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1 in their school system in last year's budget.
 2 And I found that they don't call their
 3 education supplement part of their property tax
 4 rate. They have a bunch of different rates
 5 that they charge against their property tax
 6 rate.
 7 So actually, when you add just their
 8 property tax rate and their educational
 9 supplement, which I think they started for the
 10 first time last year, when you add those
 11 together, they are actually the third highest
 12 property tax rate in the State of Maryland.
 13 And even more than that, if you add all of
 14 those other little rates that they have on
 15 there, depending on what area of the county you
 16 live in.
 17 In comparison to other counties, Talbot
 18 County has the second lowest income tax rate in
 19 2024.
 20 Fitch Ratings best describes Talbot
 21 County's income tax rate revenues when it said

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1 income taxes are a higher percentage of
 2 revenues than is true for most Maryland
 3 counties. This is particularly due to the very
 4 low tax environment compared with the rest of
 5 the State, which provides incentive for a small
 6 number of high income earners with second homes
 7 to declare their income in the county.
 8 This is why Talbot County's income tax
 9 revenues are volatile and difficult to predict.
 10 And that is due to the small percentage of high
 11 wage earners that claim Talbot County as their
 12 home.
 13 Our FY25 budget represents an increase in
 14 projections at 37 million, which is in
 15 alignment with levels that we've received for
 16 income tax revenues for the last several years.
 17 So for our general fund expenditures,
 18 we'll start with education expenditures.
 19 Education expenditures for Talbot County
 20 represent 37.7 of its total budget. This
 21 includes expenses for Talbot County Public

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1 Schools, Chesapeake College, and the Talbot
 2 County Free Library.
 3 Talbot County Public Schools alone
 4 represent 56 percent of the county's operating
 5 expenditures.
 6 Again, these are total general fund
 7 expenditures. And when you break it down to
 8 those are recurring operating expenditures
 9 every year, that's a significant portion of our
 10 budget.
 11 Maryland Blueprint, required local share
 12 funding, was increased by 1.53 -- 1.053 million
 13 in FY25. In addition to the mandated funding,
 14 the county has included an additional
 15 appropriation of 2.6 million. Funding to
 16 support Talbot County Schools increased overall
 17 by 3.65 million above FY24 levels.
 18 By moving the increase in school funding
 19 to the educational supplement, the county is
 20 providing a more structurally-balanced budget.
 21 Included in the CIP budget is 16.9 million

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1 in the capital project request for Chapel
 2 District -- boy, there's a lot of Cs in all of
 3 these -- Chapel District Elementary School
 4 renovations and an additional funding of
 5 1.5 million for other capital improvement
 6 projects to be prioritized by TCPS.
 7 And while none of the appropriations to
 8 the schools, the county has included a new
 9 position this year for a school officer -- a
 10 school resource officer supervisor in our
 11 budget, in our Sheriff's Office budget, which
 12 will enable the Sheriff's Office to ensure that
 13 each school always has proper coverage and a
 14 deputy is on site during school hours.
 15 As you can see, public safety represents
 16 22.7 percent of the total budget, along with
 17 general government at 10.7 percent.
 18 There are 2.9 million in capital outlay
 19 expenditures included in this budget. These
 20 are non-recurring expenditures, and the level
 21 of funding required for these types of

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1 expenditures can fluctuate based upon equipment
 2 and vehicles needed, as well as funding
 3 availability.
 4 The FY25 budget also includes an
 5 investment in county infrastructure of
 6 27.5 million to be paid for with fund balance
 7 reserves.
 8 Personnel actions. Let me bounce back one
 9 more. Personnel actions that were taken in
 10 this budget include a 3 percent cost of living
 11 adjustment and one step for employees. Also,
 12 as I mentioned, five new public safety
 13 positions and other benefit actions for public
 14 safety were taken.
 15 These will provide recruitment and
 16 retention opportunities for our public safety
 17 departments.
 18 Our total fund balance and rainy day funds
 19 of the fund balance at the end of June 30,
 20 2023, was \$90.7 million, which grew
 21 \$22.4 million from the end of FY22.

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1 At the end of FY23, Talbot County had
 2 15.9 million designated as rainy day reserves.
 3 These reserves give the county less exposure to
 4 the risks associated with revenue and
 5 expenditure volatility, particularly in times
 6 of inflation or recession. And we are still
 7 experiencing elevated levels of inflation, and
 8 those increases are included in this budget.
 9 This strong fund balance is a result of
 10 the county's conservative budgeting methods.
 11 And those conservative budgeting methods were
 12 the guidance for staff in the formation of the
 13 budget that you have before you.
 14 And I think it's always good to end with
 15 this assessments. Moody's, when Moody's and
 16 Fitch reviewed the county's finances during the
 17 bond issuance that we had in 2022, it's kind of
 18 like they're rating us on our budgeting
 19 methods. And I think it applies to this. I
 20 believe it applies to this budget as well.
 21 Moody's said financially the county is

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1 very strong and the management team is
 2 generally conservative in its budgeting. The
 3 credit strengths were low, long-term
 4 liabilities and a manageable long-term capital
 5 plan, along with very strong reserve position.
 6 And with Fitch, Fitch's assessment of the
 7 county's financial resilience as being in the
 8 highest category is based on the combined
 9 strength of its fund balance position, its
 10 ample expenditure flexibility, and its strong
 11 ability to adjust revenues through policy
 12 action to counterbalance its historically
 13 volatile revenues.
 14 The county typically increases its
 15 property tax levy by the full amount allowed
 16 annually under the county charter. Both the
 17 property and the income tax rates remain the
 18 lowest in the State.
 19 And as our county manager stated in his
 20 opening comments, I think that it really speaks
 21 to how well we do with the amount that we have.

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1 So while we have these increases this year, we
 2 still are managing well with what we have. And
 3 I think that that's something for us to be
 4 proud of.
 5 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.
 6 MR. STAMP: That concludes your staff's
 7 presentation and request your consideration to
 8 introduce the proposed balanced FY25 general
 9 budget, Mr. Council President, Members of the
 10 Council.
 11 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Any questions?
 12 MS. HAYTHE: No questions.
 13 I just want to thank Martha and her team
 14 and the staff that worked hard on the budget.
 15 It did seem a little grueling this year to get
 16 through it and get to this point. But thank
 17 you and your staff for all that you did to give
 18 us this budget for consideration today. Thank
 19 you.
 20 MS. SPARKS: Thank you.
 21 MS. MIELKE: And also for making it so

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1 clear and transparent.
 2 MS. SPARKS: Thank you.
 3 MR. CALLAHAN: Sound good.
 4 MR. LESHER: I'll echo those thanks and
 5 extend it to really all the department heads
 6 with whom you've worked in getting us to this
 7 and the outside agencies as well.
 8 I think that you've clearly put a good
 9 system in place to lead them through this to
 10 provide transparent input for all these things.
 11 I'm glad, too, at the process by which
 12 this Council's worked in full public view in
 13 going through these deliberations with your
 14 advice all through this process. This has
 15 been, this has been I think the best process
 16 we've seen yet to date. And a large part of
 17 that is because of the way you've led us
 18 through this. So thank you very much.
 19 MS. SPARKS: Thank you.
 20 MR. STEPP: Job well done. Everything
 21 everyone else has said and just job well done.

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1 MS. SPARKS: Thank you so much.
 2 I will say I have to give Kaitlin, she has
 3 been a phenomenal, phenomenal partner through
 4 all of this. With the two of us, we've been
 5 able to conquer and divide. We just, we not
 6 only have an excellent team at the top of
 7 finance, it trickles down to all of finance
 8 because when we were gruelingly pushing this
 9 budget out, we have, you know, finance goes on
 10 in Talbot County. And we have an excellent
 11 staff that takes care of business there so we
 12 don't have to worry about it. So we're very
 13 grateful.
 14 And the department heads, they -- I just
 15 can't say how awesome a team that we have here
 16 in Talbot County. Everyone gets along and they
 17 like each other and they're -- they respond so
 18 quickly. It was just very -- I just have to
 19 pinch myself sometimes it's so good.
 20 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup. And I would agree,
 21 too, with my colleagues and what you said about

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1 Kaitlin and the whole staff and everything.
 2 We're going to try to put her on a pedestal a
 3 little bit. You know what I mean. That's
 4 okay.
 5 MS. SPARKS: She deserves it.
 6 MR. CALLAHAN: But no. You know, week in,
 7 week out the last several months, you guys have
 8 been hard at it. And we really appreciate it.
 9 I know it's been hard on family, too. So
 10 let's not forget them. We appreciate the
 11 husbands and the kids and all that stuff that
 12 you have to deal with, you know, to get through
 13 these several months. We really appreciate
 14 them, too.
 15 So Mr. Stamp, I appreciate you in the
 16 trenches with them day in and day out, too, you
 17 and Jessica and Susan. So we really appreciate
 18 you guys, too, with all your hard work and
 19 stuff.
 20 MR. STAMP: Yeah. It's an honor to work
 21 with such a great team.

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1 We have a great Council. You give so much
 2 support to our employees, our staff, our
 3 department heads.
 4 And Martha and Kaitlin did step up.
 5 And our department heads are tremendous.
 6 I mean there's over 50 different folks that are
 7 involved in the budgeting process. And they
 8 work with us. They know that y'all can't give
 9 everything to everybody they ask for.
 10 MR. CALLAHAN: Sure.
 11 MR. STAMP: So they work with us to try to
 12 whittle it down.
 13 But yeah. We have a great organization.
 14 It's great to serve the community of Talbot
 15 County.
 16 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah. Thank you. So okay.
 17 At this time, do we need to make a motion to
 18 move forward or show of hands for introduction?
 19 MS. HAYTHE: Show of hands.
 20 SECRETARY: I need to read it.
 21 MR. LESHAR: Start by reading the title.

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1 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Yeah.
 2 SECRETARY: An act to establish the
 3 2024-2025 annual budget and appropriation
 4 ordinance.
 5 MR. LESHAR: And then a show of hands to
 6 introduce.
 7 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup.
 8 MR. LESHAR: Introduced by Council.
 9 SECRETARY: And this will be known as Bill
 10 Number 1553. The public hearing will be held
 11 on Tuesday, May 7th, at two p.m. in this room
 12 and at seven p.m. in the Easton Elementary
 13 School cafeteria located at 307 Glenwood Avenue
 14 in Easton.
 15 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Sounds good,
 16 Council. Okay.
 17 MS. HAYTHE: That's good.
 18 MR. CALLAHAN: So next, public comment.
 19 Anybody want to come on up?
 20 I don't think we had a list out there or
 21 anything.

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1 MS. KILMON: There is one.
 2 MR. CALLAHAN: Would you mind, Sarah, see
 3 if anybody. No? Okay. All right, then.
 4 So I guess we'll move on to Council
 5 comments. I'll start with Dave.
 6 MR. STEPP: I'll just give one more round
 7 of thanks to all our staff, all our department
 8 heads, Council. It's been another great year
 9 to get through this process. Job well done by
 10 everyone, and looking forward to serving our
 11 county well with those funds allotted.
 12 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup.
 13 MR. LESHHER: Nothing further from me.
 14 MS. HAYTHE: Nothing.
 15 MS. MIELKE: Same thing except I'd like to
 16 thank the staff for keeping Talbot County great
 17 and operating at a reasonable cost.
 18 MR. CALLAHAN: I would agree. Yup. I
 19 would agree with all of my colleagues that I
 20 really appreciate everything you've done.
 21 And that's about it tonight. Yeah. You


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1 want --
 2 MR. LESHHER: Council's next meeting will
 3 be Tuesday, April 23rd, at six o'clock p.m.
 4 Council will be meeting beforehand at 4:30 and
 5 going in open session and immediately going
 6 into closed session to discuss matters as
 7 related to the statement for closing that
 8 meeting.
 9 Council will be meeting tomorrow night.
 10 I'm sorry. Thursday night, April 18th, at
 11 Chesapeake College jointly with the councils of
 12 Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, and Queen Anne's in
 13 the Dorchester Room at Chesapeake College to
 14 discuss the Chesapeake College budget.
 15 With that said, if there's no other
 16 further business to be brought before us, a
 17 motion to adjourn would be in order.
 18 MS. HAYTHE: So moved.
 19 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We got a motion and
 20 second.
 21 MR. STEPP: Second.

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1 MS. HAYTHE: Madam Secretary, could you
 2 call the vote.
 3 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.
 4 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.
 5 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.
 6 MR. STEPP: Aye.
 7 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshher.
 8 MR. LESHHER: Aye.
 9 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.
 10 MS. MIELKE: Aye.
 11 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.
 12 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.
 13 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thanks a lot.
 14 (Meeting concluded at: 6:36 p.m.)
 15
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1 STATE OF MARYLAND
 2 I, Diane Houlihan, a Notary Public in and
 3 for the State of Maryland, County of Baltimore City,
 4 do hereby certify that the within named, Talbot
 5 County Council Audio, personally appeared before me
 6 at the time and place herein set according to law,
 7 was interrogated by counsel.
 8
 9 I further certify that the examination was
 10 recorded stenographically by me and then transcribed
 11 from my stenographic notes to the within printed
 12 matter by means of computer-assisted transcription
 13 in a true and accurate manner.
 14
 15 I further certify that the stipulations
 16 contained herein were entered into by counsel in my
 17 presence.
 18
 19 I further certify that I am not of counsel
 20 to any of the parties, not an employee of counsel,
 21 nor related to any of the parties, nor in any way
 interested in the outcome of this action.
 AS WITNESS my hand Notarial Seal this 22nd
 day of April, 2024 at Easton MD

 Diane Houlihan
 Notary Public
 My commission expires September 16, 2025

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