TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

County Council **MINUTES** April 8, 2025

Present – President Chuck Callahan, Keasha N. Haythe, Lynn L. Mielke, Dave Stepp, County Manager Clay Stamp, and County Attorney, Patrick Thomas. Council member Pete Lesher joined the meeting via telephone.

I. Agenda – Mr. Callahan requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Agenda of Tuesday, April 8, 2025.

II. Minutes – Mr. Callahan requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Minutes of Tuesday, March 11, 2025.

III. Disbursements – Mr. Callahan requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Disbursements of Tuesday, April 1, 2025, and Tuesday, April 8, 2025.

IV. Proclamation for Talbot Day – April 25, 2025 – The Clerk read a proclamation into the record which recognized April 25th as the official birthday of Talbot County and encouraged citizens, the business community, arts community, faith community, school community, and community leaders to celebrate the beauty, history, culture and traditions of Talbot County by joining with the County in the festivities planned for that day. Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved the proclamation by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye
Mr. Stepp – Aye
Mr. Lesher – Aye (via telephone)
Ms. Mielke – Aye
Ms. Haythe – Aye

Sarah Kilmon, Talbot County Communications Manager, briefed the Council on the history of April 25, 2025 as Talbot Day, which was established as the official birthday of Talbot County by the County Council in 1983, and reestablished in 2023. Ms. Kilmon outlined the various activities planned for April 2025, culminating with the Talbot Day Ceremony and presentation of citizen and service awards on Friday, April 25, 2025. She stated that more information may be found on the County website at talbotcountymd.gov/talbotday.

Mr. Stepp invited anyone who wished to do so to join the Council in front of the dais to have their photograph taken to accept the proclamation.

V. Proclamation for National Public Safety Telecommunicator Week – April 13 – 19, 2025 – The Clerk read a proclamation into the record which recognized the men and women who answer 9-1-1 calls 24 hours a day, 365 days a year in a calm, professional, compassionate manner to dispatch law enforcement, firefighters, and medical personnel to various situations and are responsible for facilitating emergency communications between numerous parties to help ensure the safety of emergency personnel and those to whom they are responding. Prior to presentation of the

proclamation, Brian LeCates, Director, Talbot County Department of Emergency Services, expressed the appreciation of his department for recognizing Talbot County telecommunicators. Council members commended the emergency services personnel in Talbot County for the outstanding service they provide. Clay Stamp, County Manager and former Director, Talbot County Department of Emergency Services, stated that the 9-1-1 dispatchers provide a vital link between those calling for assistance and emergency responders, gathering information critical to the situation while emergency resources are on the way. Mr. LeCates updated the Council on the status of the new 9-1-1 Center on Marys Court which is located in the new Talbot County Public Safety Complex. He stated that although the 9-1-1 Center is currently still operating out of its Port Street facility, work continues on the 9-1-1 Center on Marys Court; the furniture has been built, and technology purchases will be submitted for Council's consideration of approval. He stated that once staff has transitioned to the new 9-1-1 Center, the Port Street facility will continue to operate as a live back-up center to ensure there is coverage for county citizens.

Ms. Mielke presented the Proclamation to Mr. LeCates, Ms. Guschke, Lt. Heather Jones and Communication Specialist, Josh Willis who accepted on behalf of the 9-1-1 Center dispatchers.

VI. Presentation of Certificates for Talbot Works Business Academy Graduates – Cassandra Vanhooser, Director, Department of Department of Economic Development and Tourism – Ms. Vanhooser expressed her appreciation to the Council for their encouragement and financial commitment to the Talbot County business community. She stated that the Council's allocation of grant funding from the American Rescue Plan Act made the Talbot Works Academy program possible. She expressed her appreciation to Scott Warner and the Mid-Shore Regional Council, which, through the Rural Maryland Investment Fund, provided the financial resources for this cohort of the program, an eight-week entrepreneurship training program. The program offers entrepreneurs who are looking to start or expand their business an opportunity to learn about cash flow projections, sales and marketing, taxes and insurance, human resources, and how to obtain access to capital. Several participants of the class briefed the Council on what the class had meant to them. Ms. Vanhooser stated that since the inception of the Talbot Works Business Academy, those who participated in the program have already hired 11 new employees; three businesses have expanded by opening another location, and at least two participants have opened a second business.

Ms. Haythe presented the Certificates of Completion to the 15 Talbot Works Business Academy graduates.

VII. Update on Talbot County Police Accountability Board – Mitchell "Mitch" Ettinger, Chairman, Talbot County Police Accountability Board and Administrative Charging Committee – Mr. Ettinger utilized a PowerPoint presentation to outline the duties of the Talbot County Police Accountability Board, established by Maryland law in 2022 (Maryland Public Safety Code, Ann. § 3-102) and established by Talbot County Bill No. 1497, the purpose of which is to review outcomes of disciplinary matters considered by the Administrative Charging Committee, also established by Maryland law in 2022, and to submit an annual report to the Council which identifies trends in the disciplinary procedures of police officers in the county and to make recommendations on changes in policy which would improve police accountability. He stated that the Police Accountability Board meets on a quarterly basis with the Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) in the county and he provided information on the number of complaints received and the disposition of same. Mr. Ettinger requested Council consideration as to whether to broaden the mandate of the Police Accountability Board as has been done in other jurisdictions throughout the state. The Police Accountability Board will continue to update the Council on a regular or as needed basis.

VIII. Update by Maryland Environmental Service – Tim Ford, Managing Director, Environmental Operations, Maryland Environmental Service; Gary Lasako, P.G., Senior Project Manager, Maryland Environmental Service – Mr. Ford stated that Mid-Shore I (Talbot County) closed in 2010 but currently serves as a transfer station and homeowner drop-off location for Talbot County residents. Mr. Lasako provided statistical information on tonnage of trash, brush and scalehouse transactions at Mid-Shore I for the past four quarters, stating that the tonnages are on track as budgeted for FY25. He also provided statistical information on the tonnages received for FY18 through present, as well as statistics for the homeowner drop-off, noting customer visits and number of punch cards sold. Mr. Lasako then updated the Council on activities at Mid-Shore II (Caroline County), providing statistics on billable tonnages received at the landfill for FY21 to present. He stated that Mid-Shore II recently piloted, then purchased, a new trash compactor for the facility which is 15 to 20% more efficient than the compactor which was previously used, significantly increasing compaction, resulting in less fuel and soil usage, thereby producing cost savings. Mr. Lasako reiterated that the goal of a landfill operation is to maximize the air space as much as possible in order to prolong the life of the landfill. Mr. Ford then briefed the Council on proposed Mid-Shore II tipping fees for FY26 to $71.50 per ton (an increase of $1.50 per ton); $46.50 per ton for brush; and a new proposed new sewage sludge surcharge of $15.00 per ton. He stated that MES is still considering other options with regard to the sludge surcharge and is taking suggestions from the participating counties. He stated that Talbot County has suggested utilizing a test-out option, whereby MES allows the County to test out if their PFAS (Per-and Polyfluoroalkyl substances) levels are low. Mr. Ford stated that sludge contains a higher concentration of PFAS than other materials accepted at the landfill. Council discussion ensued with Mr. Ford and Mr. Lasako as various facets of the presentation were brought forward. Maryland Environmental Service will continue to update the Council on a regular or as-needed basis.

IX. Presentation of 2024 Diversity Training Report – Donna Pardieu, Director, Administrative Services – Ms. Pardieu briefed the Council on the diversity, equity, and inclusion report for 2024 in accordance with guidelines of the administrative resolution adopted by the County Council on June 23, 2020. Ms. Pardieu stated that the Council continues to focus on recruiting the best qualified candidates for County employment opportunities and outlined the locations where the employment opportunities are listed/posted, providing the County with exposure to 60 job markets in 28 languages, as well as thousands of job boards and career sites. She stated that County employees had completed three online courses through the Kantola Learning System focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion, harassment prevention and employee conduct. She stated that the Council approved a bilingual pay policy in 2024, and that language related to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO); Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, and information on reporting possible discrimination was included in the County Employee Handbook which became effective on May 1, 2024. A Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion statement is posted on the County website. Council discussion ensued with Ms. Pardieu.

X. Introduction of Administrative Resolution:

ADMINISTRATIVE RESOLUTION OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF TALBOT COUNTY (THE "COUNTY COUNCIL"), PURSUANT TO THE AUTHORITY OF BILL NO. 1563 ENACTED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL ON JULY 23, 2024 (THE "PUBLIC LOCAL LAW"), AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF AN EQUIPMENT LEASE-PURCHASE AGREEMENT AND RELATED INSTRUMENTS BETWEEN TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND, AS LESSEE, AND MOTOROLA SOLUTIONS, INC., AS LESSOR, FOR THE PURCHASE OF EQUIPMENT FOR THE COUNTY'S 911 DIVISION AND THE 911 DIVISION COMPUTER AIDED DISPATCH SYSTEM was read into the record by the Clerk and brought

forward for introduction. Prior to introduction, Brian LeCates, Director, Talbot County Department of Emergency Services, stated that the administrative resolution relates to the lease to purchase of equipment for the County's 9-1-1 Division's Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) System which, if approved, will provide the 9-1-1 Center with access to the radio system which is already used out in the field. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved the administrative resolution by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye
Mr. Stepp – Aye
Mr. Lesher – Aye (via telephone)
Ms. Mielke – Aye
Ms. Haythe – Aye

XI. Public Hearings:

Resolution No. 371, A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE WATER AND SEWER PLAN BY RECLASSIFYING AND REMAPPING CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 5536 PUBLIC LANDING ROAD, ROYAL OAK, MARYLAND, AND FURTHER DESCRIBED AS TAX MAP 46, PARCEL 46, FROM "UNPROGRAMMED" TO "S-1," IMMEDIATE PRIORITY STATUS PURSUANT TO AN APPLICATION FILED BY TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND, was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for public hearing. Prior to the public hearing, Ray Clarke, County Engineer, stated that the purpose of the resolution is to provide sewer service to the Bellevue Passage Museum which is currently located outside the County's sewer service area. Mr. Clarke stated that the Public Works Advisory Board, at its meeting on Thursday, March 20, 2025, reviewed Resolution No. 371 and recommended that the Council approve the resolution by a vote of 5 – 0. He stated that the Planning Commission, at its meeting on Wednesday, April 2, 2025, reviewed Resolution No. 371, found it consistent with the 2016 County Comprehensive Plan and recommended that the Council approve the resolution by a vote of 4 – 0. Members of the public were provided an opportunity to comment on the legislation. The Council approved Resolution No. 371 by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye
Mr. Stepp – Aye
Mr. Lesher – Aye (via telephone)
Ms. Mielke – Aye
Ms. Haythe – Aye

Resolution No. 371 will become effective immediately.

Resolution No. 372, A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE WATER AND SEWER PLAN BY RECLASSIFYING AND REMAPPING TWO PARCELS OF REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 23452 PINE POINT ROAD, BOZMAN, MARYLAND AND PINE POINT ROAD, BOZMAN, MARYLAND, AND FURTHER DESCRIBED AS TAX MAP 31, PARCEL 352, LOT 2, AND TAX MAP 31, PARCEL 351, LOT 3, RESPECTIVELY, FROM "UNPROGRAMMED" TO "S-1," IMMEDIATE PRIORITY STATUS PURSUANT TO AN APPLICATION FILED BY CHRISTOPHER F. DANIELS AND DeVON WILLIAMS DANIELS, TRUSTEES UNDER THE C&D DANIELS TRUST DATED MAY 30, 2024, was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for public hearing. Prior to the public hearing, Ray Clarke, County Engineer, stated that the Public Works Advisory Board, at its meeting on Thursday, March 20, 2025, reviewed Resolution No. 372 and

recommended that Council approve the resolution by a vote of 4 – 0 – 1. Bryce Yelton, Assistant Planning Officer, stated that the Planning Commission, at its meeting on Wednesday, April 2, 2025, reviewed Resolution No. 372, found it consistent with the 2016 County Comprehensive Plan and voted 4 – 0 to recommend that the Council approve the resolution. Members of the public were provided an opportunity to comment on the legislation; Council discussion ensued. The Council approved Resolution No 372 by voting 4 – 1 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye
Mr. Stepp – Aye
Mr. Lesher – Nay (via telephone)
Ms. Mielke – Aye
Ms. Haythe – Aye

Resolution No. 372 will become effective immediately.

Resolution No. 373, A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE WATER AND SEWER PLAN BY RECLASSIFYING AND REMAPPING A PORTION OF CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 24500 ROLLES RANGE ROAD, ST. MICHAELS, MARYLAND, AND FURTHER DESCRIBED AS TAX MAP 23, PARCEL 41, FROM "UNPROGRAMMED" TO "S-1," IMMEDIATE PRIORITY STATUS PURSUANT TO AN APPLICATION FILED BY ROLLES RANGE PARTNERS, LLC, was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for public hearing. Prior to the public hearing, Ray Clarke, County Engineer, stated that the Public Works Advisory Board, at its meeting on Thursday, March 20, 2025, reviewed Resolution No. 373 and recommended that Council approve the resolution with the following changes: to SECTION TWO……*remap the* ***portion***…… and SECTION FOUR ..***The portion of the property as shown in Exhibit B, which includes an additional 1.935 ac ± from what was approved in Resolution 282***…….. by a vote of 4 – 0. Elisa Deflaux, Senior Planner, stated that the Planning Commission, at its meeting on Wednesday, April 2, 2025, reviewed Resolution 373, found it consistent with the 2016 County Comprehensive Plan and voted 4 – 0 to recommend that the Council approve the resolution. Members of the public were afforded an opportunity to comment on the legislation. The Council approved Resolution No. 373 by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye
Mr. Stepp – Aye
Mr. Lesher – Aye (via telephone)
Ms. Mielke – Aye
Ms. Haythe – Aye

Resolution No. 373 becomes effective immediately.

Resolution No. 375, A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE WATER AND SEWER PLAN BY RECLASSIFYING AND REMAPPING CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 26396 ST. MICHAELS ROAD, EASTON, MARYLAND, AND FURTHER DESCRIBED AS TAX MAP 33, PARCEL 30, FROM "UNPROGRAMMED" TO "S-1," IMMEDIATE PRIORITY STATUS PURSUANT TO AN APPLICATION FILED BY 2500 SAINT MICHAELS HOLDINGS, LLC, was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for public hearing. Prior to the public hearing, Ray Clarke, County Engineer, stated that the Public Works Advisory Board, at its meeting on Thursday, March 20, 2025, reviewed Resolution No. 375 and inquired if the property owner were willing to

limit development rights on the property to one EDU (Equivalent Dwelling Unit) and to give up any subdivision rights for the property. The property owner, who was in attendance at the Public Works Advisory Board meeting, agreed, following which the Board vote 5 – 0 to recommend that the Council adopt Resolution 375, with the change as agreed to. Bryce Yelton, Assistant Planning Officer, stated that, in staff's opinion, the resolution as originally introduced contained an incorrect size for the acreage of the property. Mr. Yelton stated that clarification was needed that only the northern section of the property on St. Michaels Road (Deed Parcel 1 of 2) is the subject of the application for amendment to the Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan (21.228 ± acres), instead of 50.3837 ± acres. He stated that the Planning Commission, at its meeting on Wednesday, April 2, 2025, reviewed Resolution No. 375 and with the clarification, found it consistent with the 2016 County Comprehensive Plan, and voted 4 – 0 to recommend that the Council approve the resolution, with an amendment. Mr. Lesher stated that he wished to introduce an amendment clarifying the acreage. The Clerk read the amendment into the record and Council discussion ensued with Mr. Clarke, Mr. Yelton and Patrick Thomas, County Attorney. The amendment was introduced by Mr. Callahan, Ms. Haythe, Mr. Lesher (via telephone), Ms. Mielke, and Mr. Stepp. The Council approved the amendment to Resolution No. 375 by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye
Mr. Stepp - Aye
Mr. Lesher – Aye (via telephone)
Ms. Mielke – Aye
Ms. Haythe – Aye

Members of the public were afforded an opportunity to comment on the resolution and the amendment. The Council approved Resolution No. 375, as amended, by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye
Mr. Stepp - Aye
Mr. Lesher – Aye (via telephone)
Ms. Mielke – Aye
Ms. Haythe – Aye

Resolution No. 375, as amended, will become effective immediately.

Resolution No. 376, A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE WATER AND SEWER PLAN BY RECLASSIFYING AND REMAPPING CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 7952 CHURCH NECK ROAD, ST. MICHAELS, MARYLAND, AND FURTHER DESCRIBED AS TAX MAP 32, PARCEL 154, FROM "UNPROGRAMMED" TO "S-1," IMMEDIATE PRIORITY STATUS PURSUANT TO AN APPLICATION FILED BY EDMUND FLEETWOOD DUNSTAN AND AUGUSTA HARRISON DUNSTAN, was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for public hearing. Prior to the public hearing, Ray Clarke, County Engineer, stated that the Public Works Advisory Board, at its meeting on Thursday, March 20, 2025, reviewed Resolution No. 375 and voted 5 – 0 to recommend that the Council approve the resolution. Bryce Yelton, Assistant Planning Officer, stated that the Planning Commission, at its meeting on Wednesday, April 2, 2025, reviewed Resolution No. 376, found it consistent with the 2016 County Comprehensive Plan, and voted 4 – 0 to recommend that the Council approve the resolution. Members of the public were afforded an opportunity to comment on the legislation. The Council approved Resolution No. 376 by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye
Mr. Stepp - Aye

Mr. Lesher – Aye (via telephone)
Ms. Mielke – Aye
Ms. Haythe – Aye

Resolution No. 377, A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE WATER AND SEWER PLAN BY RECLASSIFYING AND REMAPPING CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 3965 OCEAN GATEWAY, TRAPPE, MARYLAND, AND FURTHER DESCRIBED AS TAX MAP 55, PARCEL 51, FROM "UNPROGRAMMED" TO "S-1," IMMEDIATE PRIORITY STATUS PURSUANT TO AN APPLICATION FILED BY THE TOWN OF TRAPPE, was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for public hearing. Prior to the public hearing, Ray Clarke, County Engineer, stated that the Public Works Advisory Board, at its meeting on Thursday, March 20, 2025, reviewed Resolution No. 377 and requested that an additional *"WHEREAS"* clause be added to the resolution which would acknowledge that the property was previously connected to public sewer due to the mistake and assumption that the property was already mapped as "S-1". Mr. Clarke stated that the Board, voted 4 – 0 – 1 to recommend that the Council approve the resolution with the amendment as outlined. Brennan Tarleton, Planning Officer, stated that the Planning Commission, at its meeting on Wednesday, April 2, 2025, reviewed Resolution 377, found it consistent with the 2016 County Comprehensive Plan and voted 4 – 0 to recommend that the Council approve the resolution. Members of the public were provided an opportunity to comment on the legislation. At Mr. Lesher's request, Council deferred the vote on Resolution No. 377 until Tuesday, April 22, 2025, Council meeting.

Bill No. 1584, A BILL TO REPEAL OFFICIAL ZONING MAP 32 OF TALBOT COUNTY AND REENACT THE SAME WITH AMENDMENTS TO THE ZONING CLASSIFICATIONS OF TAX MAP 32, PARCEL 36, CONSISTING OF 3.737 ACRES, MORE OR LESS, FROM TOWN RESIDENTIAL (TR) TO GENERAL COMMERCIAL (GC) AND OF A PORTION OF TAX MAP 32, PARCEL 91, CONSISTING OF 4.6603 ACRES, MORE OR LESS, FROM TR TO GC, was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for public hearing. Elisa Deflaux, Senior Planner, stated that the Planning Commission, at its meeting on Wednesday, January 8, 2025, reviewed Bill No. 1584 and found that more than likely a mistake had been made in the zoning maps in the last 10 years and recommended by a vote of 4 – 0 that the Council approve the rezoning based on the Findings of Fact. Members of the public were afforded an opportunity to comment on the legislation. Bill No. 1584 is eligible for vote on Tuesday, April 22, 2025.

XII. Council Discussion of Proposed Text Amendment to Chapter 190 concerning Short-Term Rental Licenses and Short-Term Rental Review Board – Prior to Council discussion, Patrick Thomas, County Attorney, stated that his office had been requested by Councilwoman Mielke to draft proposed amendments to the Talbot County Zoning Code relating to short-term rentals and outlined several of the proposed amendments. He stated that since it is a proposed zoning text amendment, the Council must decide whether to refer the matter to the Planning Commission for review and recommendation; once a recommendation is received from the Planning Commission, the Council can decide whether to introduce legislation. Upon motion by Ms. Mielke, seconded by Ms. Haythe, the Council approved forwarding the proposed text amendment to the Planning Commission for review and recommendation by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye
Mr. Stepp – Aye
Mr. Lesher – Aye (via telephone)
Ms. Mielke – Aye
Ms. Haythe - Aye

XIII. County Manager's Report:

A. Request from County Manager – Requested Council approval to declare Tuesday, April 15, 2025, a Special Legislative Day for the purpose of introduction of the FY 2025 - 2026 Budget and Appropriation Ordinance. Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Ms. Haythe, the Council approved the request by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye
Mr. Stepp – Aye
Mr. Lesher – Aye (via telephone)
Ms. Mielke – Aye
Ms. Haythe - Aye

B. Request from Neighborhood Service Center – Requested Council consideration of a request from the Neighborhood Service Center for assistance with a critical funding challenge. Marilyn Neal, Executive Director, Neighborhood Service Center, expressed her appreciation to the Council for their past support and stated that the Neighborhood Service Center (NSC) is currently facing a funding shortage due to a reduction in federal funding which flows to the organization through the State of Maryland in the form of grants and is funding already spent which would normally be reimbursed by the grants. She stated that the NSC serves as Talbot County's community action agency to serve the county's most vulnerable citizens; its mission is to address poverty and inequity by focusing on the root causes of poverty through various programs, including, among others, job training, housing support, food insecurity, and health programs. She stated that over the past five (5) years, the NSC has served over 9,000 households in Talbot County and she outlined in detail how funding for the organization which is received from both grants and private donors is utilized to serve the community. Ms. Neal then requested Council consideration to appropriate $150,000 in Contingency Funds to the NSC to help fill the funding gap for the remaining portion of FY25 to help offset impacts on the community served by the NSC should the grant funding not be replenished. She stated that $33,000 has been requested from the municipalities of Easton, Oxford, and St. Michaels. Council discussion ensued with Ms. Neal. Mr. Callahan made a motion which was seconded by Mr. Lesher, to loan the Neighborhood Service Center $150,000 as requested and Council discussion ensued with Ms. Haythe and Ms. Mielke indicating they were not prepared to vote on the matter at present. Council discussion again ensued. Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Mr. Lesher, the Council approved providing the NSC with $50,000 in Contingency Funds, not as a loan, which the County Manager certified are available, to bridge the funding gap and to consider the request for additional funding at a later date by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan- Aye
Mr. Stepp – Aye
Mr. Lesher – Aye (via telephone)
Ms. Mielke – Aye
Ms. Haythe – Aye

C. Request for Letter of Support – Requested Council approval of a request from the Department of Economic Development and Tourism for a letter in support of the Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway Alliance's grant application for a Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) non-capital grant in the sum of $50,000; Talbot County will contribute $2,500 in matching funding. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Mr. Stepp, the Council approved the request by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan- Aye
Mr. Stepp – Aye
Mr. Lesher – Aye (via telephone)
Ms. Mielke – Aye
Ms. Haythe – Aye

D. Request from Roads Department – Requested Council approval of the recommendation of the Roads Superintendent to piggyback on a Somerset County contract with American Paving Fabrics, Inc. in the sum of $234,000 for tarring and chipping of several non-primary County roads; there are sufficient funds in the FY25 Roads Department budget for the project. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved the request by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye
Mr. Stepp – Aye
Mr. Lesher – Aye (via telephone)
Ms. Mielke – Aye
Ms. Haythe – Aye

E. Bid No. 25-04, GRASS CUTTING SERVICES – PARKS, BALL FIELDS AND LANDINGS – TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND – Requested Council approval of the recommendation of the Assistant Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation to award the contract for Bid No. 25-04 to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, Marshall Property Management, LLC in the sum of $89,500 for the 2025 season; a total of five (5) bids was received. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved the award as presented by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan- Aye
Mr. Stepp – Aye
Mr. Lesher – Aye (via telephone)
Ms. Mielke – Aye
Ms. Haythe – Aye

F. Bid No. 23-09, GOLDSBOROUGH NECK ROAD AND GLEBE ROAD CULVERT REPLACEMENT – EASTON – TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND – Requested Council approval of the County Engineer's recommendation to award Change Order No. 1 for Bid No. 23-09 to contractor David A. Bramble, Inc. in the sum of $1,108,539.00. Council discussion ensued with County Engineer, Ray Clarke, who

stated that the cost includes a request for $150,000 in Contingency Funds to cover any unforeseen construction costs; Mr. Stamp stated that the project is a Capital Improvement Project and the funding is available. Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Ms. Haythe, the Council approved Change Order No. 1 as presented, by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye
Mr. Stepp – Aye
Mr. Lesher – Aye (via telephone)
Ms. Mielke – Aye
Ms. Haythe – Aye

G. Request from Finance Office to Approve 4th Quarter Budget Transfers for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 – Martha Sparks, Finance Director, stated that § 615 of the Talbot County Charter provides for transfers between agencies of the County government and within the same fund only during the last quarter of the fiscal year, upon the recommendation of the County Manager and the approval of the County Council. Ms. Sparks stated that the list of requested transfers focuses on Capital Outlay items which were requested as part of the FY26 budget, but which were later determined could be purchased with funding appropriated in FY25 under the guidelines of § 615 and the Council's approval. She stated that approval of the request for Budget transfers will ensure that departments can order and receive the capital outlay items by June 30, 2025. Items previously approved by Council for purchase utilizing Contingency Funds are also included in the transfer request. Ms. Sparks then outlined the specific items requested for transfer which total $553,950. Council approved the 4th Quarter Budget Transfers as outlined by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye
Mr. Stepp – Aye
Mr. Lesher – Aye (via telephone)
Ms. Mielke – Aye
Ms. Haythe - Aye

XIV. Public Comments: There were no public comments.

XV. Council Comments:

Mr. Stepp - No comments.

Mr. Lesher - No comments.

Ms. Mielke - Ms. Mielke stated that the Council, at a previous meeting, had received a request from the Talbot County Health Department to send a letter to the State opposing any cuts to the Senior Care Program. She stated that the Council had approved forwarding a letter and was notified today that the Legislature voted against any cuts to the Senior Care Program.

Ms. Haythe - Ms. Haythe stated that she and Ms. Mielke will be working with the Department of Planning and Zoning on a draft of an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) in the near future.

Mr. Callahan - Mr. Callahan offered best wishes to Ms. Haythe as she competes in a half marathon this coming weekend.

Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Mr. Stepp, the Council voted to adjourn and to reconvene on Tuesday, April 15, 2025, a Special Legislative Day, at 4:00 p.m. in Open Session and to adjourn into Closed Session as listed on the statement for closing that meeting, then for the regularly scheduled meeting at 5:00 p.m. by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye
Mr. Stepp – Aye
Mr. Lesher – Aye (via telephone)
Ms. Mielke – Aye
Ms. Haythe - Aye

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

The transcript of the April 8, 2025, County Council meeting is available for review in the Office of the Talbot County Manager during regular office hours.

XVI. Summary of Closed Session Held on March 27, 2025:

1. Statement of the time, place, and purpose of the closed session:

Time of closed session:	4:30 p.m. to 5:10 p.m.
Place of closed session:	County Council Office
Purpose of the closed session:	To consider various matters as set forth in the statement for closing the meeting

2. Record of the vote of each member as to closing the session:

Names of members voting aye:	Callahan, Lesher, Haythe, Mielke, Stepp
Members opposed:	None
Abstaining:	None
Absent:	None

3. Statutory authority to close session and listing of each topic actually discussed, persons present, and each action taken in the session:

Topic Description	**Statutory Authority**	**Reason for Closed Session Discussion**	**Persons Present**	**Action Taken**
To discuss personnel matter regarding	GP § 3-305(b)(1)(i)	Discussion involves specific individual	Chuck Callahan, Pete Lesher, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke,	No action

compensation for County employees			Dave Stepp, Clay Stamp, Jessica Morris, Martha Sparks, Kaitlin Foster Clark, Donna Pardieu	

XVII. Summary of Closed Session Held on April 1, 2025:

1. Statement of the time, place, and purpose of the closed session:

   Time of closed session: 2:05 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. and 4:40 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
   Place of closed session: County Council Office
   Purpose of the closed session: To consider various matters as set forth in the statement for closing the meeting

2. Record of the vote of each member as to closing the session:

   Names of members voting aye: Callahan, Lesher, Haythe, Mielke, Stepp
   Members opposed: None
   Abstaining: None
   Absent: None

3. Statutory authority to close session and listing of each topic actually discussed, persons present, and each action taken in the session:

Topic Description	**Statutory Authority**	**Reason for Closed Session Discussion**	**Persons Present**	**Action Taken**
To discuss personnel matter regarding compensation and benefits for County employees	GP § 3-305(b)(1)(i)	Discussion involves specific individual	Chuck Callahan, Pete Lesher, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Clay Stamp, Jessica Morris, Martha Sparks, Kaitlin Foster Clark, Donna Pardieu	No action
To discuss personnel matter in Sheriff's Office	GP § 3-305(b)(1)(i)	Discussion involves specific individual	Chuck Callahan, Pete Lesher, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Clay Stamp, Jessica Morris, Martha Sparks, Kaitlin Foster Clark, Donna Pardieu	No action

XVIII. Summary of Closed Session Held on April 8, 2025:

1. Statement of the time, place, and purpose of the closed session:

Time of closed session:	3:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Place of closed session:	County Council Office
Purpose of the closed session:	To consider various matters as set forth in the statement for closing the meeting

2. Record of the vote of each member as to closing the session:

Names of members voting aye:	Callahan, Lesher, Haythe, Mielke, Stepp
Members opposed:	None
Abstaining:	None
Absent:	None

3. Statutory authority to close session and listing of each topic actually discussed, persons present, and each action taken in the session:

Topic Description	**Statutory Authority**	**Reason for Closed Session Discussion**	**Persons Present**	**Action Taken**
To discuss appointments to various County boards and committees	GP § 3-305(b)(1)(i)	Public discussion would discourage individuals from volunteering to serve	Chuck Callahan, Pete Lesher, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Clay Stamp, Susan Moran	No action

XIX. Joint Work Session with Town of Easton and Easton Utilities on EDA Grant for Regional Medical Center Project – The County Council, members of the Easton Town Council and representatives of Easton Utilities held a joint work session on Monday, March 31, 2025, at 4:30 p.m. in the Easton Town Council Chambers, located at 14 S. Harrison Street in Easton. County Council member Dave Stepp was absent. Cassandra Vanhooser, Director, Talbot County Department of Economic Development and Tourism, and John Horner, President & CEO, Easton Utilities Commission, briefed the Council on the criteria for submitting applications for U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Adjustment Assistance (EDA) Grants, including, among others, funding of projects located in or serving distressed areas and which serve multiple jurisdictions. Ms. Vanhooser stated that the Town of Easton, Easton Utilities, and Talbot County, along with Shore Health System, Inc. (now UMMS Shore Regional Health) are partnering on the regional medical center project through a Development Rights and Responsibilities Agreement (DRRA). Mr. Horner outlined the scope of the $20 million project, of which Talbot County has committed $9 million to bring water and sewer to the regional medical center property line and Easton Utilities has committed $11 million to bring other utilities, including gas and fiber optics, to the property line. He stated that the maximum amount of funding which can be requested is $3.5 million; a 1:1 match in federal and local funds is also one criterion for seeking funding. He stated that 700 new jobs (over a 10-year timeframe) are anticipated to be created by the project which will serve the new University of Maryland Medical

System Regional Medical Center Campus and Easton Airport. Mr. Horner then outlined specific infrastructure costs for the project, stating that water and sewer (water main, pump station and approximately 6,000 ft. of force main) are anticipated to cost approximately $4.7 million, or 2/3 of the proposed EDA portion of the project of $7.0 million; the substation (transformer and circuit breakers) will cost approximately $2.3 million, or 1/3 of the proposed EDA portion of the project. Mr. Horner stated that the application will be submitted in the 2nd quarter of 2025, and a decision on receipt of funding should be known within 3 to 6 months of grant submittal; the work cannot start before receipt of any EDA grant funding. He stated that temporary electricity is on the regional medical center project site; electrical infrastructure has been relocated in anticipation of the relocation of MD Rt. 662; the contract for design of the electrical substation has been awarded to Delmarva Power; a temporary force main from the Talbot County Community Center is open; and property owners who will be affected by the relocation of the force main have been identified. Ms. Vanhooser stated that the new Regional Medical Center will serve the 170,000 residents in the five Mid-Shore counties. She then briefed those in attendance on the positive economic impact the Regional Medical Center project will have on Talbot County including, supporting ancillary business growth on the Regional Medical Center campus, attracting high quality healthcare and aeronautical jobs, and acting as a catalyst for both aeronautical and non-aeronautical development on 100 acres at Easton Airport. She stated that the Regional Medical Center is scheduled to open in February 2028. Discussion ensued with Ms. Vanhooser, Mr. Horner, and Scott Warner, Executive Director, Mid-Shore Regional Council regarding various facets of the presentation and the project. Ms. Vanhooser concluded the presentation by stating that her office will be requesting letters in support of the grant application in the near future from both the Easton Town Council and the County Council.

XX. Joint Meeting with the Talbot County Board of Education – The County Council and the Talbot County Board of Education held a joint meeting on Monday, March 31, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. at the Easton High School Culinary Arts Program, 723 Mecklenburg Avenue in Easton.

In attendance:

Board of Education members: Emily Jackson, Amy Dodson, Dyshekia Strawberry, Ann O'Connor, Karla Wieland-Cherry, Cynthia Jurrius, Esq., Deborah Bridges; Talbot County Public Schools (TCPS) staff: Dr. Sharon Pepukayi, Dr. Zulieka Jarmon-Horsey, Sarah Jones, Debbie Gardner, Helga Einhorn, Kevin Shafer; Talbot County Council members: Chuck Callahan, Pete Lesher, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp; Talbot County staff: Clay Stamp, Martha Sparks, Kaitlin Foster-Clark, Jessica Morris

Update on TCPS Blueprint for Maryland's Future

Ms. Jones stated that SB 429, *Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act*, has moved from the House to the Senate and noted there may still be some amendments to the legislation. At this time, funding for special education has been held harmless and there is still discussion on how collaborative time for teachers may be altered. Dr. Pepukayi stated that Local Education Agencies (LEA) believe there should be more latitude at the local level in implementing the Blueprint for Education. Ms. Jones noted that projections from the Maryland Department of Legislative Services (DLS) indicate Talbot County's local share would increase $34.8 million (approximately 63%) between FY26 and FY34. In FY34 it is projected Talbot County would be required to fund TCPS approximately $90 million. Discussion ensued about the projected increase and Talbot County's tax structure. Council requested additional information on the data behind the projected figures from DLS. There was also discussion about the mandated increase in teacher starting salaries to

$60,000, which accounts for part of the increase. Council requested better communication from the TCPS Blueprint Implementation Coordinator regarding the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Review of TCPS Data from 2019-2025

Ms. Mielke reviewed data from www.marylandpublicschools.org from 2019-2025 showing an increase in the number of TCPS teachers and professional staff and a decrease in TCPS enrollment and inquired about the figures. Dr. Pepukayi noted that there are tremendous needs at the student level for education, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and mental health particularly post COVID. She stated that more interventions are being conducted to assist students with reading and math. She has been conducting listening sessions at the public schools and is getting data on the needs of ESOL families. Ms. Jones noted there are 215 students experiencing homelessness. There is a full-time social worker in six schools. Dr. Horsey noted while some instructional assistants are bilingual, not many certified teachers are bilingual. She clarified that instructional assistants are classified as professional staff. Ms. Jackson noted that more rigorous curriculums are being implemented.

Review of Historical Talbot County Funding of TCPS

A chart was provided showing Talbot County funding of TCPS from FY19 – FY25 with an overview of operating, supplemental and debt payment.

Update on Cell Phone Policy at Easton Middle School

Dr. Pepukayi provided an update on the pilot project at Easton Middle School for use of Yondr pouches for cell phones. Since December 2024, students have been placing their cell phones in locked Yondr pouches during the school day. Dr. Pepukayi reported that the pilot project has been successful with an increase in student engagement. Dr. Pepukayi explained that there is a progressive discipline procedure in place for violations of the cell phone policy. Teachers can contact the office for any infractions or assistance while they continue to focus on teaching. The Board of Education will be discussing next steps on the cell phone policy later this month which may include possible expanding the pilot program to other schools.

Update on Chapel District Elementary School Project

Mr. Shafer provided an update on the renovation/expansion project at Chapel District Elementary School located in Cordova, Maryland. The project is on schedule with no change orders to date. The first phase of the project (approximately 30%) is expected to be completed by June. Mr. Shafer thanked the Council for providing Bill Stagg as the County's project manager for the project. Mr. Shafer invited the Council to tour the school in late May.

Update on Strategic Planning Process

Dr. Pepukayi provided an update on the TCPS Strategic Planning process and noted that TCPS is focusing on updating the profile of a graduate, which is a Board Policy, as well as the district's Priorities, Objectives and Strategies, which will include metrics and action steps. She will continue to keep the Council appraised of the process and thanked Council for their participation. Discussion ensued with the Board of Education and Council noting that their October 2025 meeting should focus on strategic planning.

The Board of Education and County Council thanked Mrs. Brown, Mr. Candel and their students in the Easton High School Culinary Arts Program for the delicious meal and customer service provided.

The next meeting dates of the Board of Education and Talbot County Council are scheduled for Tuesday, July 15, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. and Tuesday, October 7, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND
WEEKLY CASH STATEMENT
4/01/2025

OPERATING FUNDS - SHORE UNITED BANK			
OPERATING FUNDS AT	**3/25/2025**		**$ 22,948,016.97**
Total ADP Monthly Payroll PPE 3/31/2025			(18,814.57)
Community Center Sales & Use Tax Due 3/20/2025			(681.44)
Golf Course Sales & Use Tax Due 3/20/2025			(341.92)
Roads Sales & Use Tax Due 3/20/2025			(179.87)
Returned Value Payment			(578.22)
Airport Merchant Portal Hosting 3/2025			(11.00)
Repurposing Merchant Portal Hostnig 3/2025			(15.00)
Roads Merchant Portal Hosting 3/2025			(15.00)
Deposit Adjustment Duplicate Batch			(51,505.06)
Deposits			1,962,852.92
Checks			(88,493.30)
ACH Disbursements			(2,500,088.35)
EFT's			(519,233.20)
Wire Transfers			(739,654.04)
OPERATING FUNDS AT	**4/1/2025**		**$ 20,991,258.92**
PETTY CASH FUNDS			$ 18,105.00
INVESTMENT FUNDS			
		Yield	
Maryland Local Government Investment Pool (MLGIP)		4.33%	$ 23,076,011.37
Bayvanguard Bank		4.15%	$ 11,102,086.96
Shore United Money Market Account		4.33%	$ 81,918,266.73
INVESTMENT FUNDS TOTAL			**$ 116,114,470.06**
TOTAL ALL CASH AND INVESTMENTS			**$ 137,105,728.98**

TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND
WEEKLY CASH STATEMENT
4/08/2025

OPERATING FUNDS - SHORE UNITED BANK			
OPERATING FUNDS AT	**4/1/2025**		**$ 20,991,258.92**
Total ADP Monthly Payroll PPE 3/28/2025			(932,972.06)
Harland Deposit Tickets/Community Center			(152.41)
106 S. Fremont Street/County Owned Property Sewer Charge			(231.25)
7419 Back Street/County Owned Property Sewer Charge			(326.63)
911 Talbot Street/County Owned Property Sewer Charge			(390.00)
Deposits			1,849,419.01
Checks			(102,477.86)
ACH Disbursements			(1,133,069.21)
EFT's			(82,231.35)
Wire Transfers			0.00
OPERATING FUNDS AT	**4/8/2025**		**$ 20,588,827.16**
PETTY CASH FUNDS			$ 18,105.00
INVESTMENT FUNDS			
		Yield	
Maryland Local Government Investment Pool (MLGIP)		4.30%	$ 23,076,011.37
Bayvanguard Bank		4.15%	$ 11,102,086.96
Shore United Money Market Account		4.33%	$ 81,918,266.73
INVESTMENT FUNDS TOTAL			**$ 116,114,470.06**
TOTAL ALL CASH AND INVESTMENTS			**$ 136,703,297.22**