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COUNTY COUNCIL OF TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

Budget Public Hearing

May 7, 2019; 7:00 p.m.

Easton High School Cafeteria
Easton, Maryland

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Corey W. Pack

Chuck F. Callahan

Frank Divilio

Pete Leshner

Laura E. Price

Reported by

Diane Houlihan

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1 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
2 * * * * *

3 MR. PACK: Okay. Good afternoon. We're
4 going to go ahead and get started.
5 This is a continuation of the public
6 hearing we held earlier today on Bill 1410.
7 This is on our 2019-2020 budget ordinance. So
8 we're going to pick up where we left off
9 earlier this morning. I should say this
10 afternoon.
11 We're going to do things slightly
12 different. Council wanted to set aside a sheet
13 for just students. So we have a student
14 sign-in sheet. Yes, you can speak soon, honey.
15 We have a student sign-in sheet and then we
16 have the regular sign-in sheet, and we have
17 another one that's going to come in shortly.
18 We're going to do something different with
19 the time limit. Last year, some of you who
20 were here remember we ran quite long last year.
21 So we're going to schedule two minutes for

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1 those persons speaking for themselves, four
2 minutes if you're speaking for a group. Let us
3 know when you come up if you're speaking for a
4 group, which group you're speaking for so
5 Mr. Callahan will know how to set your time
6 appropriately.
7 MR. CALLAHAN: I'm fair, I'm fair.
8 MR. PACK: So when do you come up, please
9 give your us name.
10 I'm going to go through the sheet, and
11 then we're going to open it up to the rest of
12 the audience.
13 Please give us your name, your address.
14 And again, if you're speaking for a group, let
15 us know which group you're speaking for.
16 So we're going to start off with the
17 student sheet, which is the green sheet here.
18 And I have Lydia is it Shreves?
19 MS. SHREVES: Yeah.
20 MR. PACK: Lydia.
21 Lydia, before I do that. I'm sorry,

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1 Lydia. I do apologize.
2 MS. SHREVES: You're fine.
3 MR. PACK: I'm going to need to turn to
4 Ms. Lane for the presentation of the budget and
5 I'll call you up just shortly. If you want to
6 sit there, Lydia, you can, you're fine. You
7 can sit there.
8 MS. SHREVES: Okay.
9 MR. PACK: Then you're already in place.
10 I do apologize.
11 Ms. Lane, I got ahead of myself. I'm
12 going to turn it over to you for the
13 presentation.
14 MS. LANE: There is a Powerpoint on the
15 screen, and I'll be discussing -- this bill
16 establishes the proposed budget for fiscal year
17 2020 for the Talbot County general fund,
18 capital projects fund, development impact fund,
19 the grants and special revenues fund, the
20 recreation fund, which includes the Talbot
21 County Community Center and the Hog Neck Golf

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1 Course, the sanitary districts, the Easton
2 Airport, and the Talbot Family Network.
3 My comments and the associated charts will
4 focus on the proposed fiscal 2020 general fund
5 budget.
6 The general fund budget is the operating
7 fund of the county. All revenues and
8 expenditures, except those required to be
9 accounted for in other funds, are included in
10 the general fund. Most county taxes and fees
11 and most county services are included in the
12 general fund.
13 The fiscal 2020 proposed general fund
14 budget totals \$91,913,000. The current fiscal
15 year general fund budget is \$92,038,750.
16 The next slide will discuss budget
17 overview. The County Council received requests
18 for operating and capital outlay expenditures
19 of \$98,962,440, which is \$6.9 million more than
20 the current fiscal 2019 budget and \$7 million
21 less than the proposed fiscal 2020 budget. The

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1 fiscal 2020 budget reflects a slight decrease
 2 from the current general fund budget.
 3 This budget is funded in part with
 4 revenues of almost \$4 million from prior year
 5 fund balance, which is the county's savings.
 6 Great effort was taken in the development
 7 of this budget, which maintains current
 8 services for our citizens while continuing to
 9 maintain two of the lowest tax rates, property
 10 tax and income tax, in the state.
 11 In order to fund expenses for the public
 12 school system, the Talbot County Council has
 13 proposed to override the voter imposed property
 14 tax revenue cap. The authority to override the
 15 cap is authorized in State law in order to fund
 16 education expenses only. This budget proposes
 17 to override the tax cap by \$1,345,000, which
 18 correlates to an increase of 1.8 cents in the
 19 real property tax rate.
 20 This slide shows the history of the use of
 21 this education supplement to provide additional

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1 funding for the Talbot County Public Schools.
 2 In fiscal 2020, the Council will use the
 3 education supplement for the fifth time. Those
 4 five increases have added 9.35 cents to the
 5 real property tax rate of our tax payers and
 6 have added \$6.9 million to the Talbot County
 7 Public School's budget, \$5 million in just the
 8 last five years.
 9 This slide shows the real property tax
 10 rates for all of the counties in the State. As
 11 you will notice, Talbot County is in the yellow
 12 and we are the lowest. We do have the lowest
 13 real property tax rate in the state. The
 14 proposed fiscal 2020 real property tax rate is
 15 63.22 cents, which does include the 1.8 cents
 16 for the education supplement, and is 20 cents
 17 lower than the next real property tax rate in
 18 the state.
 19 I'm now going to discuss budget
 20 highlights. This slide is budget highlights
 21 that relate to the Talbot County Public

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1 Schools. The Talbot County Public School's
 2 operating appropriation is \$936,330 above the
 3 required Maintenance of Effort level.
 4 Maintenance of Effort did increase by \$907,897.
 5 Those two numbers add up to an increase of
 6 \$1,844,227 in funding for the public school
 7 system from fiscal 2019.
 8 The county is also including funding of
 9 \$409,170 for expenditures that are not included
 10 in the Maintenance of Effort.
 11 As some of you may have heard, those were
 12 for very specific items that have to be
 13 approved by Maryland Department of Education.
 14 The Maryland Department of Education only
 15 approve one of the items that was submitted.
 16 We have, the county and the Board of Education
 17 has submitted an appeal to the Maryland
 18 Department of Education to have these items
 19 reviewed. We are optimistic that we will
 20 receive approval to complete a number of those
 21 tasks, if not all of them.

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1 The same situation happened last year. We
 2 did not receive approval on the first round.
 3 But once we went through the appeal process, we
 4 did receive approval for the items that were
 5 excluded from Maintenance of Effort. So we are
 6 optimistic that we will be able to fund a
 7 number of those expenses.
 8 In addition to the operating appropriation
 9 and the 409,000 for expenditures that are not
 10 included in Maintenance of Effort, this budget
 11 includes \$3.7 million for debt service on
 12 public school facilities. Debt service has
 13 increased by over \$1 million from last fiscal
 14 year. And that million dollars will pay for
 15 half of the annual debt service on the new
 16 Easton Elementary School.
 17 The Easton Elementary School will cost
 18 approximately \$50 million, and \$30 million is
 19 the county's share of that.
 20 The county appropriation increase of
 21 \$1.8 million to the Talbot County Public School

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1 System is a 4.63 increase from the current
 2 fiscal year.
 3 Talbot County Public Schools is also
 4 expected to receive an additional \$665,518 in
 5 State funding that was added by the State
 6 legislature during their budget session. This
 7 is the Kirwan funding. There are certain
 8 aspects of that funding that the Board of
 9 Education and the public school system will
 10 have to meet in order to receive all of those
 11 funds. But we have been told that they will do
 12 what needs to be done to receive those funds
 13 during fiscal 2020.
 14 In addition, when the budget was prepared
 15 by the Talbot County Public Schools, State
 16 funding was increased by \$672,986 from last
 17 year, bringing the total State funding increase
 18 for fiscal 2020 to be \$1.3 million.
 19 And the fiscal 2020 county capital
 20 projects budget also includes \$11 million to
 21 fund the final phase of our contribution to the

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1 Easton Elementary School.
 2 We now have budget highlights on the rest
 3 of the budget. From the county side, there are
 4 no changes in the number of full-time positions
 5 for county departments. There are salary scale
 6 adjustments for sheriff's deputies and
 7 correctional officers to address recruitment
 8 and retention issues.
 9 We have added one part-time housing
 10 coordinator position. This had been a
 11 full-time position several years ago. I
 12 believe in fiscal 10 that position was
 13 eliminated. So this budget will add a
 14 part-time housing coordinator to address those
 15 needs.
 16 There is also a step increase and a
 17 one percent cost of living adjustment for
 18 full-time county employees.
 19 As you can see from this slide, this is
 20 our general fund expenditures for the proposed
 21 budget, the majority of our budget goes to

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1 education. A total of 51.9 percent of our
 2 budget goes to education. 49.8 percent, or
 3 \$45.8 million, goes to the Talbot County Public
 4 Schools. 2.1 percent, or \$1.9 million, is
 5 budgeted for Chesapeake College.
 6 The next largest segment of our
 7 expenditure budget is public safety. Public
 8 safety includes the Sheriff's Department, the
 9 Department of Corrections, the volunteer fire
 10 departments, and the Department of Emergency
 11 Services, which includes the 911 Dispatch
 12 Center and Emergency Medical Services, which is
 13 the county-funded paramedic and ambulance
 14 service which provides 24-hour services at five
 15 locations in the county.
 16 Public safety accounts for 23.4 percent of
 17 our budget, or \$21.5 million.
 18 This chart shows public school revenues
 19 for the current fiscal year. This is for
 20 fiscal 2019. All of these figures come from
 21 the Department of Legislative Services. These

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1 are not county numbers. These are from the
 2 State.
 3 The first column shows the per pupil
 4 funding for each school system in the state.
 5 As you can see, Talbot County, which is in the
 6 purple, is at the lower end of the spectrum.
 7 But Talbot County's per pupil funding is more
 8 than the funding provided in Frederick, Queen
 9 Anne's, and Harford Counties.
 10 The next column in the middle shows the
 11 funding provided by counties for each school
 12 system. In the green, you will see that Talbot
 13 County provided the second highest amount of
 14 local funding in the state at 66 percent. Only
 15 Worcester County provides additional or a
 16 higher percentage of local funding.
 17 The third column shows the State funding
 18 for the school systems. In this case, Talbot
 19 County is the second lowest in the State. This
 20 raises the question who is not doing their
 21 share in supporting the Talbot County Public

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1 School System; the county or the State?
 2 In just the past four years, Talbot County
 3 has provided \$6.3 million to the Talbot County
 4 Public Schools, an increase of 16.1 percent in
 5 county funding during these four years. This
 6 does include debt service to the public school
 7 system, but it is an obligation that has to be
 8 met.
 9 And this chart shows county funding to the
 10 Board of Education. This chart does not
 11 include debt service and enrollment. If you
 12 look at this chart, from fiscal 2005 through
 13 fiscal 2020, you'll see that enrollment during
 14 that time period has increased by 169 students,
 15 a 3.8 percent increase. And county funding has
 16 increased by \$15.7 million, or 59.7 percent,
 17 during this period.
 18 However, if we look at only the last four
 19 fiscal years, county funding increased by
 20 16.1 percent. That includes debt service. If
 21 I back out debt service, county funding has

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1 increased by \$5.2 million, or 14.3 percent.
 2 But enrollment in the last four fiscal years
 3 has only increased by 44 students. So less
 4 than a one percent increase in enrollment but a
 5 14.3 to a 16.1 percent increase in funding from
 6 the county.
 7 This slide is the county's fund balance.
 8 This is where we are getting the \$4 million to
 9 balance our budget this year. And this shows
 10 what is happening with our fund balance.
 11 If you look back to the start in fiscal 13
 12 I believe, we had \$6 million I believe. We are
 13 currently at the end of fiscal 20, so for
 14 fiscal 21 and beyond, we will have the same
 15 level of funds available approximately as we
 16 had in fiscal 14. This obviously is not
 17 sustainable to continue to use \$4 million a
 18 year. We've used approximately \$4 million in
 19 the last two years. We need to find other ways
 20 of balancing our budget.
 21 This chart does not include, though, the

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1 rainy day fund. That is still intact, but that
 2 is for true emergencies, not for operating
 3 expenses.
 4 Up until this point, I've been discussing
 5 what has been included in the proposed budget.
 6 I would now like to take some time to discuss
 7 items that are not included in the budget that
 8 have been identified by departments, some for
 9 many years, that are not funded once again.
 10 The Sheriff's Office has identified the
 11 need for additional positions at a cost of
 12 \$360,000 a year. We do not have 25-year
 13 retirement for law enforcement personnel.
 14 Talbot County is the only county on the shore
 15 that does not have a 25-year or less retirement
 16 system.
 17 The annual cost of that would be
 18 approximately \$425,000. That 425,000 is just
 19 an annual cost. It does not include our
 20 initial buy-in to transfer to a 25-year
 21 retirement system.

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1 The State's Attorney has asked for several
 2 years for an additional position. That would
 3 be approximately \$83,000.
 4 We have a need for an additional EMS,
 5 emergency medical services, station for the
 6 northern part of the county to address response
 7 time concerns. The operating expense of a new
 8 emergency medical system station is
 9 approximately \$610,000 a year. Additional
 10 full-time county positions we estimate to be
 11 approximately \$300,000.
 12 Again, as I had said earlier, there are no
 13 new full-time positions in this budget. There
 14 are virtually every county department has needs
 15 that could be met and should be met but don't
 16 have the additional staff to meet all of those
 17 needs.
 18 The golf course has additional workforce
 19 needs of approximately \$150,000.
 20 The full year debt service for the Easton
 21 Elementary School, we are projecting it to be

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1 1.9 million. We only have \$1 million of that
 2 budgeted in the current budget.
 3 The impact of minimum wage increasing to
 4 \$15 an hour will cost the county approximately
 5 \$180,000 a year.
 6 Some of these, the impact of the minimum
 7 wage, we have to incorporate in our budgets.
 8 The other items are not incorporated in our
 9 budget. But that's over \$4 million of
 10 identified items that are not included in this
 11 budget and will probably not be included in
 12 future budgets, at least not in the near
 13 future.
 14 One thing that I will want to add is that
 15 with the Sheriff's Office, the sheriff did not
 16 ask for any additional positions in this
 17 budget. His priority was retaining the current
 18 staffing that he has, and that is his priority.
 19 He certainly needs positions. He has certainly
 20 identified positions. But whatever funding we
 21 had available to go to the Sheriff's Office,

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1 his priority was keeping the existing staff.
 2 We know when we lose deputies, we are losing
 3 tens of thousands of dollars each time a deputy
 4 goes to a different jurisdiction.
 5 The bottom part of the screen are capital
 6 projects that need to be funded. We need a new
 7 facility for the Sheriff's Office. The sheriff
 8 is currently located in the Talbot County
 9 Business Center, which is the former Black and
 10 Decker property. That building will be
 11 transferred to the Easton Airport. At that
 12 point, it will no longer be available to the
 13 county and probably in a few years will be
 14 demolished. So we have to find a new facility
 15 for the Sheriff's Office. We expect that cost
 16 to be approximately \$12 million.
 17 We need a new emergency medical services
 18 station for the northern part of the county.
 19 We expect that to cost approximately
 20 \$1.2 million. The EMS station in the Bay
 21 Hundred area should probably be relocated to

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1 address response time concerns. That budgeted
 2 amount is approximately \$1.3 million.
 3 We need a new facility for our Health
 4 Department. That cost is estimated to be
 5 \$8 million.
 6 The Roads Department has equipment
 7 requests every year in the millions of dollars,
 8 and we fund hundreds of thousands of dollars in
 9 their request. That shortfall is approximately
 10 \$2 million each year.
 11 The replacement of the 40-year-old
 12 irrigation system at the Hog Neck Golf Course
 13 is expected to cost \$1.8 million.
 14 The purchase of agricultural land
 15 easements to retain the rural nature of our
 16 character is budgeted to be \$5.9 million.
 17 Some of these items are in our capital
 18 projects budget. None are in the current year
 19 budget. They're in years going out. Some of
 20 these we have moved out several times.
 21 We will have to address some of these

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1 needs in the very near future, but there's the
 2 funding issue. If we were to borrow the whole
 3 \$32 million, that would add an additional
 4 \$2.6 million of annual debt service each year,
 5 and we do not have an identified funding stream
 6 for that kind of debt service.
 7 So that concludes my remarks on 2020
 8 proposed budget.
 9 MR. PACK: Thank you very much, Ms. Lane,
 10 for that thorough presentation.
 11 As you can see, the Council is dealing
 12 with its own budget constraints as we're trying
 13 to fill all the needs of the departments, not
 14 just the Board of Education. But our Sheriff's
 15 Office, our State's Attorney Office, and Roads
 16 Department and Public Works Department.
 17 So we know that we only have a limited
 18 amount of funds to deal with, and we try to
 19 meet the needs as best we possibly can.
 20 We heard from Micah Risher today, our
 21 airport manager. Council approved his

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1 application to the FAA and MAA to receive the
 2 funding back from them to purchase the
 3 property, the former Black and Decker building,
 4 which is the Talbot County Business Center.
 5 Once that takes place, that property then
 6 changes hands over to the airport, which means
 7 that the Sheriff's Office and the other county
 8 departments which are located in that building
 9 are now on the clock. Meaning that a lot of
 10 those capital projects we see up there on the
 11 board, if not this Council, the next Council is
 12 going to have to look to find ways to either
 13 lease or build new space.
 14 So the capital constraints that we were
 15 talking about for many, many years are now
 16 here. And we're going to have to deal with
 17 them as we go along.
 18 So when you hear about the lowest property
 19 tax in the state, as someone said earlier
 20 today, there's no bragging about it if you
 21 can't meet the needs of your citizens. No

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1 sense running around and telling your friends
 2 in Montgomery County or other places around the
 3 nation that you live in the county with the
 4 lowest property tax in the state and you cannot
 5 meet the needs of your people. No sense
 6 bragging about that. There's nothing to be
 7 happy about.
 8 So with that being said, Lydia is here
 9 patiently. She's one of our student reps I
 10 believe on the board. So Lydia, glad to see
 11 you here as well.
 12 I'm going to call somebody on deck as we
 13 go, Lydia. Adrianna DiSilvestro. Is Adrianna
 14 here? Adrianna, you can have that seat there.
 15 And Lydia, our student rep on the board,
 16 I'm going to turn it over to you. Are you
 17 speaking for the board or for yourself?
 18 MS. SHREVES: Just myself.
 19 MR. PACK: Give her two minutes on the
 20 clock. The floors is yours.
 21 MS. SHREVES: To begin, I'd like to thank

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1 the County Council members for allowing us to
 2 speak before you tonight. To introduce myself,
 3 my name is Lydia Shreves, and I am a senior at
 4 St. Michaels Middle High School and serve as
 5 our student board representative on the Talbot
 6 County Public School Board of Education.
 7 I would like to preface that, like you
 8 said, I understand the decisions you face are
 9 not easy and that you do care deeply and
 10 greatly for your county and its wonderful
 11 constituents.
 12 Though, the recent underfunding of the
 13 2019-2020 proposed budget does concern me. I,
 14 even as a graduating senior, raise concerns for
 15 my fellow classmates next year if they were to
 16 function short of their need-based requests.
 17 I ask how will our budget account for our
 18 growing ESOL and gifted and talented
 19 populations? I ask how do we justify an under
 20 competitive pay to our amazingly talented,
 21 dedicated, and invested staff? I ask how much

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1 do we value today's attractive property tax
 2 rates versus tomorrow's well educated doctors,
 3 teachers, and first responders, etc.?
 4 As I am well aware that you know, Talbot
 5 County falls at the lowest property taxes out
 6 of all of Maryland's 24 counties. I urge you
 7 to make an attempt at lessening this gap and
 8 further investing in our students' future. We
 9 owe it to our hard working students, teachers,
 10 faculty members, and all of our families to
 11 attempt to provide any and all solutions we
 12 can.
 13 Thank you.
 14 MR. PACK: I'm going to call Nathen
 15 Simpkins up to this chair here.
 16 Go ahead, Adrianna.
 17 MS. DiSILVESTRO: Good evening. My name
 18 is Adrianna DiSilvestro, and I attend
 19 St. Michaels Middle High School. I previously
 20 spoke last year at this meeting on a similar
 21 topic.

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1 First and foremost, I would like to thank
 2 you for your time and taking into consideration
 3 our requests.
 4 As many of you know, Talbot County has the
 5 lowest property taxes of any county in the
 6 state. However, to our dismay, Talbot County
 7 is still one of the lowest funded per capita
 8 per pupil funded counties of our 24 counties.
 9 This simply does not suffice.
 10 Our schools are worth it and our teachers
 11 are worth it. We have an amazing dedicated
 12 staff. And it's disheartening to come every
 13 year with the same problems and the same
 14 issues.
 15 I really, really hope that we can work
 16 towards finding a solution so that every year
 17 similar people in the same building in the same
 18 cafeteria don't have to be asking or making a
 19 request for the same topics. No one likes
 20 repeating themselves.
 21 And I don't want this to be an opportunity

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1 to miss because our students are worth it. We
 2 have never asked Talbot County's County Council
 3 to make cuts to their operations or their
 4 public safety, but countless times we have been
 5 asked to cut programs, such as universal pre-k
 6 and programs at our school.
 7 That's really all I have to say. So thank
 8 you for time your time.
 9 MR. PACK: Nathen, before you start, I'm
 10 going to ask if Bella Simmons can take this
 11 chair here. Bella, if you're with us. Bella?
 12 She's coming up, okay.
 13 Nathen, the floor is yours.
 14 MR. SIMPKINS: I'll try to keep this short
 15 and sweet. My name is Nathen Simpkins. I'm a
 16 junior at St. Michael's High School.
 17 I did just, we did just go over the recent
 18 budget that was released. But after looking
 19 over it carefully, it was not apparent that it
 20 met all the standards that were needed for
 21 student daily like learning, which I do

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1 understand that the Council has made some
 2 sacrifices to try to keep students as well
 3 prepared as they can.
 4 But with this, students are adapting every
 5 day with different learning like technologies
 6 and all that, such as like textbooks that we do
 7 have with advancements in science and math and
 8 new techniques that are given with it.
 9 One thing that I wanted to touch on was
 10 that the education of our students should, one,
 11 be the main priority that is given when the
 12 budget is out. So I feel as that should be the
 13 main priority. And with all the students and
 14 the materials that is at hand with this at
 15 mind, I feel that the budget should be fully
 16 funded, but I understand that there is
 17 sacrifices that should be made.
 18 Thank you.
 19 MS. SIMMONS: Good evening, County
 20 Council. My name is Bella Simmons. I live on
 21 Tilghman, and I'm a third grader at Tilghman

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1 Elementary School.
 2 Tonight I would like to speak about
 3 Dr. Griffith's budget request for the gifted
 4 and talented teachers.
 5 This year I was able to participate in the
 6 gifted and talented program. Ms. Spears was
 7 the teacher that came to Tilghman to work with
 8 us in the gifted and talented program. I feel
 9 that this program is important because the
 10 things that we do in GT make us think deeper
 11 about different information. It challenges me
 12 in that different way to delve deeper into
 13 something. With the teacher, we are able to do
 14 this beyond our classroom.
 15 A challenging education keeps gifted
 16 children engaged in school and gives them the
 17 opportunity to delve deeper in topics in and
 18 out of the classroom.
 19 I have really enjoyed the time I've spent
 20 in this program this year. I wish that we
 21 could have more time with the GT teacher.

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1 Ms. Spears works with Tilghman Elementary,
 2 St. Michael's Elementary, and Easton
 3 Elementary. Since she is at three different
 4 schools, her time is limited in all three
 5 places.
 6 If this school system could get more GT
 7 teachers, I think that it would help our school
 8 get more GT time. We are glad to have the GT
 9 teachers, but more time in the program with the
 10 teachers would be valuable to us. If we have a
 11 couple more GT teachers, I think it would be
 12 easier for Ms. Spears not having to go to all
 13 three schools.
 14 So I'm asking for you to rethink and look
 15 at Dr. Griffin's budget and consider funding
 16 the budget to include the GT teachers. Thank
 17 you.
 18 MR. PACK: Well done. Bella, we can stop
 19 right there.
 20 Mr. Garman, if you wouldn't mind taking
 21 this chair.

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1 Dr. Griffith, if I can have you take this
 2 chair. We'll give you both four minutes on the
 3 clock when you're ready.
 4 MR. GARMAN: Thank you, President Pack and
 5 Members of the Council for this opportunity to
 6 speak on behalf of our budget.
 7 I'd like to introduce you to the members
 8 of the board that are present in addition to
 9 myself. There's Ms. Emily Jackson, Ms. Juanita
 10 Hopkins, Mr. Otis Sampson, and Mary Wheeler is
 11 with us as well.
 12 First off, I want to thank you for funding
 13 our 2019 budget at above Maintenance of Effort.
 14 We are able to add the instructional assistants
 15 in the kindergartens and some of the classes.
 16 Some of the Council members that were able to
 17 go around with myself and Dr. Griffith were
 18 able to see the impact that those teachers,
 19 that the instructional assistants have in the
 20 classroom, allowing them to work with students
 21 while the teacher is also working with students

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1 at the same time to be able to give more
 2 enhanced opportunity.
 3 The board has been very involved in the
 4 shaping of this budget from the very beginning
 5 with Dr. Griffith and staff by outlining our
 6 priorities and expectations. We have included
 7 a one step and a two percent COLA for teachers
 8 and staff to show them that we value what they
 9 bring to TCPS as well as to keep pace with the
 10 other school systems on the shore, as it was
 11 mentioned about keeping sheriff's deputies
 12 in-house. We want to keep our teachers
 13 in-house as well.
 14 We have included increased funding for ELL
 15 as we have experienced rapid growth among our
 16 English language learners in the past year.
 17 And again, you were able to see that as well
 18 when you went around to the classrooms, the
 19 increasing amount of students that are new to
 20 school, let alone new to the language as well.
 21 We have budgeted to add additional

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1 instructional assistants to cover all of our
 2 kindergarten classrooms. We have added this
 3 year an increase to the money for after school
 4 transportation to enable middle and high school
 5 students the opportunity to work after school
 6 with their teachers so that if there's a
 7 subject that they're struggling on, they don't
 8 just have to take it home and figure it out.
 9 We're providing transportation to make sure
 10 that they have that ability to stay after
 11 school. Maybe not every day, but at least a
 12 couple, two, three times a week.
 13 This list is by no means inclusive of
 14 everything in the budget, but I wanted to point
 15 out the care and thoughtfulness that went into
 16 the preparation of what was presented to the
 17 Council.
 18 And whereas, Kirwan has been approved by
 19 the legislature, it's been passed by the
 20 legislature, it has not yet been signed by
 21 Governor Hogan. It has not yet, the funds have

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1 not been released. And so this money was meant
 2 by the legislature to supplement and not
 3 supplant current county and State funding
 4 obligations.
 5 So thank you again for this opportunity.
 6 And we, the board, look forward to working with
 7 you to improve the quality of life for all in
 8 Talbot County. So thank you.
 9 MR. PACK: If I can have Dr. Einhorn take
 10 this chair here.
 11 Dr. Griffith, we'll hear from you.
 12 DR. GRIFFITH: All right. Good evening.
 13 School districts are people powered
 14 organizations that spend 80 percent of their
 15 budget on compensating teachers, support staff,
 16 and administrators.
 17 While the instructional core, the
 18 students, the curriculum, the teacher, remains
 19 constant, each component has undergone
 20 significant transformation in recent years.
 21 There is a need for greater specialization of

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1 the teaching position and a shift in the
 2 teacher's role today in order to meet the
 3 rising needs of an increasingly diverse student
 4 population.
 5 Funding is actually reform. It builds
 6 resiliency, and it shows what you value as a
 7 governing body.
 8 Funding education is the biggest reform in
 9 the community because schools have been
 10 underfunded for years. And it does seem like
 11 maybe we may not have that many more kids, but
 12 we know that our fixed charges have doubled in
 13 the past ten years. So there are some things
 14 that aren't constant, especially since we are
 15 one of the lowest per pupil, and I want to
 16 thank you because I know we're not the lowest
 17 anymore, which is good, but we must reevaluate
 18 our human capital strategies to rebuild our
 19 resiliency in our community.
 20 I am here this evening to share my support
 21 for all teachers, support staff, parents, and

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1 children by requesting full funding of our
 2 school system's approved needs-based budget
 3 that we presented to you in March.
 4 This budget was built with every child's
 5 need in mind, and it really is a needs based.
 6 It's not a wants. It doesn't fulfill the 2020
 7 vision strategic plan.
 8 I want to share with you tonight three
 9 things. I'm going to talk quickly.
 10 First, thank you for the additional
 11 funding above Maintenance of Effort since
 12 FY 19. We've had a lot to celebrate on this
 13 return on investment. We have highest
 14 graduation rate that we've had ever, lowest
 15 dropout rate, highest SAT composite scores,
 16 and more career and technology completers than
 17 ever.
 18 Secondly, I want to let you know we are
 19 grateful of your proposed above Maintenance of
 20 Effort budget appropriations, which according
 21 to your letter includes a one step one percent

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1 cost of living adjustment, our health insurance
 2 increase, a continuation of an SRO at Easton
 3 Middle School, slight increase in special ed,
 4 and some additional funding for maintenance
 5 repairs. We also appreciate your support for
 6 Easton Elementary School and the non-recurring
 7 cost.
 8 But we do ask that you reconsider full
 9 funding of this needs-based budget in order for
 10 us to hire the additional positions that we are
 11 requesting to meet our changing demographics
 12 and student needs.
 13 As of today, we've increased enrollment by
 14 153 students since last year's September 30th
 15 enrollment. Currently we have 4,747 students
 16 enrolled, with 4,800 inspected next year.
 17 Here is just a breakdown of the students
 18 that enrolled this school year. The students
 19 that enrolled this school year, 40 percent of
 20 them are English language learners. 100
 21 children came from out of the country into our

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1 school system, and our teachers need resources
 2 and our students need those resources to be
 3 able to thrive. This is why we need our
 4 English language learners teachers.
 5 As a matter of fact, Talbot County has the
 6 highest increase in English language learners
 7 in the entire State of Maryland this year
 8 compared to last year.
 9 Twelve percent of our students that
 10 enrolled this year are needing special
 11 education services, which is why we ask for an
 12 additional position.
 13 Seventy-four percent of our students that
 14 enrolled this school year qualify for free and
 15 reduced meals. This is why our schools
 16 requested additional resources and
 17 instructional assistants.
 18 We've also requested additional funding
 19 for gifted and talented, as Bella said so
 20 eloquently, because we have increased that
 21 population.

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1 After school transportation, like
 2 Mr. Garment said, continuation of summer
 3 school, environmental field trips, and the
 4 increase of athletes and fine arts, and an
 5 additional one percent cost of living
 6 adjustment for all staff to make sure that we
 7 are competitive.
 8 If we do get the Kirwan grant, we will be
 9 one of the lowest ones in the state to get
 10 funding for salaries. So we need to make sure
 11 we push that.
 12 We must address the needs of our students
 13 coming to live in our community. We
 14 respectfully request an additional 2.2 cents to
 15 be added to the tax revenue cap increase as
 16 allowed by law which then can fully fund this
 17 budget submitted.
 18 Last but not least, I do need you to be
 19 mindful that Kirwan funding has not been
 20 approved by the governor. It should not be
 21 included in our FY budget appropriation

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1 revenue, as you said in the categories on
 2 April 17th. By adding this \$665,000 of revenue
 3 that we may receive in Kirwan funding, it makes
 4 it seem like our needs are being met for
 5 additional staff. It does not meet with --
 6 that funding would need to be the funding we
 7 need for House Bill 1030.
 8 If and when Kirwan funding comes around,
 9 it will be given as restricted grant funding
 10 and require submission of an action plan. As a
 11 matter of fact, Mr. Connelly went to a meeting
 12 yesterday, and it sounds to me like that that's
 13 exactly what is going to happen and we may not
 14 get any funding for this coming school year.
 15 Thank you for listening, reconsidering,
 16 and doing what is right for our future
 17 generation. As I've always said, good, better,
 18 best, and you can say it with me, never let it
 19 rest until your good is your better and your
 20 better is your best.
 21 I agree with you, Mr. Pack, we are not our

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1 best and we can do something for education to
 2 be our best. An investment in knowledge always
 3 pays the best interest. And that was Benjamin
 4 Franklin a long, long time ago.
 5 So thank you very much. Appreciate it.
 6 MR. PACK: I'm going to call for Mr. Joe
 7 Brummell to take this open chair. Is he here?
 8 There he is.
 9 And Dr. Einhorn, you're up.
 10 DR. EINHORN: Good evening, Mr. Pack,
 11 members of the Council. I proudly serve the
 12 students and families of Talbot County as the
 13 assistant superintendent for curriculum and
 14 instruction.
 15 I want to begin by thanking the four of
 16 you who made visiting our school a priority in
 17 your busy schedule.
 18 We shared numbers with you all of the
 19 time. Student enrollment figures, demographic
 20 percentages, student performance data, and most
 21 apropos for this evening, budget requests

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1 numbers.

2 Taken out of context, these numbers can be

3 seen as just that, numbers. As you know from

4 your school visits, those numbers represent

5 something much greater when you have the

6 opportunity to see how they translate to actual

7 students and their diverse needs, as well as

8 the extraordinary efforts of our teachers and

9 support staff to implement on a daily basis

10 those strategies to nurture our students'

11 brilliance.

12 Thank you for caring enough to actually

13 see for yourself what our numbers really mean.

14 As I reflect on our efforts to share with

15 you the reality behind our numbers, I realize

16 that we have been remiss in sharing a key

17 component of our organization that this time

18 every year becomes much maligned and targeted

19 as an area to cut in our budget request to meet

20 other vital needs. Let me start by debunking

21 the misconception that Talbot County Public

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1 Schools has too many administrative positions.

2 The fact is that there has been a decrease in

3 the percentage of the budget allocated for

4 administration and mid-level administration

5 compared to ten years ago, despite the

6 proliferation of State and federal mandates

7 that require more.

8 Included in these line items are not only

9 the senior staff, but principals, assistant

10 principals, school secretaries, curriculum

11 supervisors, the finance department, human

12 resource department, board members, legal

13 services, and the resources for the operation

14 of our organization, including office supplies,

15 copiers, and too much to enumerate in the time

16 I have.

17 I do not have the time to speak to each

18 component of the administration, but I do want

19 the provide you with just one example of what a

20 curriculum supervisor does in my department.

21 Unlike other districts where a supervisor

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1 specializes in one, maybe two areas, one person

2 in my department is responsible for pre-k to

3 fifth grade math, gifted and talented

4 education, primary talent development, new

5 teacher mentors, mentoring title 2A, and all

6 professional development initiatives. In

7 addition, she observes teachers, participates

8 in school-based data meetings, completes all of

9 the mandatory State compliance reports in her

10 areas of responsibility, and writes and manages

11 grants.

12 For greater context, this is an example of

13 the documentation required just to be able to

14 apply for one grant.

15 I was and always will be a teacher. I am

16 not here tonight to complain, by rather to

17 educate. I'm here because I love what I do and

18 I believe in the students I serve.

19 I also believe in every administrator who

20 works tirelessly to support teaching and

21 learning. This is also why I implore you to

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1 fully fund the Talbot County Public School's

2 2020 budget without eroding the structure that

3 supports its success.

4 Thank you.

5 MR. PACK: Thank you. Sheriff Gamble, if

6 you can start making your way forward and

7 taking this chair, please.

8 Mr. Brummell.

9 MR. BRUMMELL: Thank you. First I'd like

10 to thank Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, the

11 greatest gift in the world, and the opportunity

12 to come here to speak to you all on behalf of

13 my children and also for the public school

14 system.

15 My children are students at St. Michael's

16 Elementary School. I'd like to thank you all

17 for your committed service to this county and

18 making it a better place and a safer place and

19 a more productive place.

20 I know some of you. I'm happy to know you

21 and others I met.

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1 But the reason for being here today is
 2 strictly about the children and about those
 3 people who have given their lives to be
 4 educators. We live in Talbot County, one of
 5 the greatest places in the country to live. We
 6 are all well aware of that. That's why we live
 7 here and are fighting to stay here.
 8 There's no reason why, when you look at
 9 the financial stability of Talbot County,
 10 there's no reason why the counties up there
 11 that are right on the borderline, some at the
 12 poverty level, will fund more into their
 13 educational system than we do to promote their
 14 children to a better future.
 15 I believe that the school system fully
 16 deserves the budget that they're asking for and
 17 then some more. And the reasons being, if we
 18 don't invest in our future, being the children,
 19 then where does that leave us in tomorrow's
 20 society.
 21 You look at all the downfalls in society,

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1 it comes, it has to start somewhere. We can
 2 reverse a lot of that by investing that money,
 3 those dollars that we have that you said,
 4 Mr. Pack, if you people are bragging about
 5 having the lowest tax rate in the state. If we
 6 put that money towards investing in our
 7 children, there's possibilities that we will
 8 turn around and the purple will go away, the
 9 poverty levels.
 10 The people who are here without secondary
 11 education, there's possibilities that they will
 12 go away because we will have equipped the
 13 teachers with the skills that they need and the
 14 tools that they need to better teach our
 15 children, which propels us all into a better
 16 tomorrow, which I think is the hope and the
 17 dream of living not only here in this county,
 18 but living in America. That everyone, every
 19 generation sees their next generation succeed
 20 the last generation. Not just in financial
 21 stature, but also in education and how they

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1 behave and how they present themselves. But
 2 they need to be taught that. They can't just
 3 pick this up on their own.
 4 I have some examples. First, let's start
 5 with the curriculum. My children are brown
 6 children. So what that means, what that means
 7 in a lot of cases is that they're not picking
 8 up on the language that is being taught on the
 9 assessment test. The larger cities have proven
 10 this, that they need to be taught in their own
 11 language.
 12 So even though we are all citizens of the
 13 United States, we speak different languages.
 14 So that's what that curriculum is, to help
 15 bind that together so all the children will
 16 understand. And you'll see, once you've done
 17 that, they've done studies and tests all over
 18 the country. Once that goes away, you'll see
 19 that the scores, test scores of black and brown
 20 children will start to elevate because now they
 21 understand in their own language what's being

Page 49

1 taught.
 2 I have two children here who just last
 3 month are victims of being understaffed. I
 4 would just like to explain to you very quickly.
 5 Josiah went to the hospital with a mild
 6 concussion because of a short staff in the
 7 cafeteria situation. The teachers have to eat,
 8 too. So they were short staffed in the
 9 cafeteria.
 10 He was tripped by another student, hit his
 11 head on the tile floor. The nurse was not
 12 available because of short staff. We had to
 13 take him to the hospital. And the hospital,
 14 they said the protocol was not followed because
 15 the nurse was not there.
 16 He was tripped by another student because
 17 there wasn't enough faculty there to watch over
 18 him.
 19 Bryson was stuck on a bus. He has special
 20 needs, total care. He was stuck on a bus
 21 because the lift malfunctioned and they didn't

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1 have proper training for all the bus drivers.
 2 They had his driver trained, but they didn't
 3 have proper training for all of the bus
 4 drivers, which they need to have throughout the
 5 county.
 6 If they have this proper training, then no
 7 matter who operates the bus, they're able to
 8 crank him down.
 9 This, I don't have to tell you, if he gets
 10 stuck on a bus, that could be fatal for him.
 11 So they need the funding. If not, I'll
 12 just leave you with this, cut it off there.
 13 I'll just leave you with this. The Proverbs
 14 says if you give a person a fish, you feed him
 15 for the day. If you teach him to fish, you
 16 feed him for a lifetime.
 17 They're asking for a grant writer. That
 18 grant writer that they're asking for -- well,
 19 he has rare and expensive care. But the public
 20 school has to supply for him. They're fighting
 21 not to because they don't have the money to.

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1 But if they have the grant writer, they can
 2 write grants and get State and federal funding
 3 that will cover his expenses, safe
 4 transportation, his education, his therapy, all
 5 things that are required by law for them to
 6 meet. And also, for him to be safe because
 7 they'll have the actual staff to watch over
 8 him.
 9 And a number of other things, but
 10 that's -- I know my time is up.
 11 Thank you, Chuck, I appreciate it. I
 12 thank you all for taking time to hear from me.
 13 MR. PACK: Before you get started, I need
 14 to call our on-deck batter. Sherry Bowen.
 15 And Sheriff Gamble, on to you.
 16 SHERIFF GAMBLE: President Pack, thank
 17 you. Council members, thank you. I just want
 18 to take two quick minutes of your time.
 19 First, I want to thank you for looking at
 20 our requests and meeting our needs the best
 21 that we can. As a citizen in this county, I'm

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1 well aware of our tax cap, tax revenue cap
 2 issues. I think as a county we need to come
 3 together as one and address those in the next
 4 election.
 5 But the imagination that you use in trying
 6 to help me retain good quality sheriff's
 7 deputies in the county based on my request is
 8 greatly appreciated. I know the last Council
 9 and now I see in this Council the proposal are
 10 supporters of public safety. And I wanted to
 11 thank each one of you personally for making it
 12 a priority in our budget.
 13 I'm looking forward to working with you to
 14 try to get over the hump in a lot of the areas
 15 that we have, being one of the lower paid
 16 Sheriff's Offices on the shore and having the
 17 worst retirement package of any Sheriff's
 18 Office on the shore is a struggle to keep and
 19 maintain good quality deputies. But I know
 20 that with the imagination that you used in this
 21 budget, that we can put our heads together and

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1 hopefully overcome that in the future.
 2 So thank you for your time.
 3 MR. PACK: Thank you, Sheriff Gamble.
 4 Could Christine Dans take this chair,
 5 Christine Davis.
 6 SPEAKER: Davis.
 7 MR. PACK: Davis, I'm sorry.
 8 Sherry, how are you?
 9 MS. BOWEN: Hi. I'm Sherry Bowen. I'm
 10 the principal of Easton Elementary School Moton
 11 and a resident of Talbot County.
 12 And I want to first thank you for your
 13 ongoing support of the Easton Elementary School
 14 campus project. Without your support, this
 15 campus construction would not be possible.
 16 I would also come to you this evening to
 17 ask for your support in fully funding the
 18 proposed FY 20 budget. Our students deserve to
 19 have their needs met within our schools. We
 20 need to be able to effectively demonstrate
 21 student growth with our constantly changing

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1 population.

2 Currently with what you're proposing to

3 fund, we will not be able to add any additional

4 staff. All of the staff Dr. Griffith has

5 proposed to add are vital to our schools, but I

6 would like to speak specifically on the need

7 for additional teachers for our ELL, or English

8 language learners.

9 Additional ELL teachers are necessary to

10 meet the needs of our non-English speaking

11 students. Our teacher caseloads are continuing

12 to soar, especially with the Easton schools.

13 Some of our caseloads at Moton are getting

14 close to 40 students per teacher, and I know

15 that number is almost double at Easton Middle

16 School.

17 Please consider fully funding this budget

18 request. Thank you.

19 MR. PACK: I'd like to call Kirk Howie to

20 this chair here, please.

21 Christine.

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1 MS. DAVIS: Good evening. My name is

2 Christine Davis.

3 I'm a curriculum supervisor for Talbot

4 County Public Schools. I am responsible for

5 curriculum and instruction in secondary English

6 language arts, which includes grades six

7 through 12; world languages for grades seven

8 through 12; and ESOL, English for speakers of

9 other languages, for grades K through 12.

10 Additionally, I am the grant manager for title

11 three and one of the grant managers for our

12 striving readers literacy grant.

13 I am here to speak in support of fully

14 funding the 2020 Talbot County Public School's

15 budget, which includes two additional ESOL

16 teaching positions. Twelve of the 43 amazing

17 teachers that I supervise are teachers of

18 English learners.

19 Currently our ESOL program serves 461

20 students who speak, to name several, Spanish,

21 French, Korean, Urdu, Pashto, Turkish, Telugu,

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1 and Ukranian.

2 These students qualify for and must

3 receive specialized services, direct English

4 language services from our 12 teachers.

5 Caseloads range from 30 students up to 60

6 students per teacher. They provide not only

7 the required direct services but also

8 instructional support across all content areas.

9 Adding two additional ESOL positions is a

10 crucial need in order to support the

11 professionals who are striving to provide these

12 services and to appropriately and equitably

13 provide all students full access to a

14 high-quality education.

15 I urge you to fully support the 2020

16 Talbot County Public School's budget.

17 MR. PACK: Mr. Burke, Andy.

18 MR. BURKE: Yup.

19 MR. HOWIE: Thank you for allowing me the

20 opportunity to go before Mr. Burke.

21 MR. PACK: There you go.

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1 MR. HOWIE: I just want to say thank you

2 all for coming out tonight. I am the proud

3 principal here at Easton High School and

4 hopefully your gracious host tonight.

5 And I do not envy the task that you all

6 have. It's difficult. As we've heard from

7 many of the people who have spoken here

8 tonight, we simply have needs that our current

9 funding revenue cannot support. And that is

10 not just in our schools. Public health,

11 safety, etc. I'm going to speak more about

12 education because that's my field, that's my

13 domain.

14 Here at Easton High School we serve over

15 1,200 students, and our numbers will go up

16 again next year with projected no increases in

17 staff. What does that mean? That means more

18 needs with fewer resources. We're a pretty

19 good bargain when you look at our rate per

20 student across other schools, across other

21 states, across other districts.

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1 I like the fact that we consider ourselves
 2 to be a champion of being financial stewards
 3 and the fact that we do have a low tax rate.
 4 However, when we constantly compare ourselves
 5 to Worcester County and other counties that
 6 have that low tax rate, I also like to call
 7 their attention that they out fund us in per
 8 pupil spending by several thousand dollars, and
 9 yet they still do not receive their fair share
 10 or that same amount from the State. It's a
 11 reality that we have to accept.
 12 Unfortunately, if we do not change the
 13 paradigm and how we're doing this, we're going
 14 to continue to fight this battle and it's
 15 kicking the can down the road.
 16 We can't wait until our roads are no
 17 longer drivable, our police officers can't
 18 respond, our health care workers don't want to
 19 live here because they cannot make the living
 20 wage or afford to live in this area.
 21 And quite frankly, if our school system is

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1 not supportive of all those needs, those people
 2 will not come here. And that's a fact, and
 3 it's been proven throughout other areas
 4 throughout the country.
 5 It's our duty as public educators to
 6 provide the means for each and every student
 7 who walks through our doors to succeed and
 8 achieve their dreams and be able to reach those
 9 plateaus, whatever they may be.
 10 If we don't fully fund our education, we
 11 will miss that opportunity, and down the road
 12 we will pay that price. We cannot continue to
 13 think short term in terms of how we prepare
 14 ourselves and our community. If we do fully
 15 fund our needs, eventually we're going to lose
 16 the community that we so desperately cherish.
 17 Thank you for your time.
 18 MR. PACK: Thank you.
 19 MR. BURKE: Andrew Burke, Talbot County
 20 Education Association.
 21 MR. PACK: Hold on one second. We know

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1 who you are.
 2 May I have Leah Schultz? Leah, are you
 3 here?
 4 MR. BURKE: You gave me four minutes, and
 5 I got to get started.
 6 MR. PACK: Let me get Ms. Leah here.
 7 MR. BURKE: Of course.
 8 MR. PACK: Go ahead.
 9 MR. BURKE: Council, we have to get
 10 four cents. That's half a million dollar
 11 house, 16 bucks per month extra. I ask the
 12 people of Talbot County, the property owners to
 13 step up. If you have a \$300,000 house, I need
 14 \$11 per month. If you got a \$200,000 property,
 15 that's ten bucks per month. That's 120 bucks
 16 next year, please.
 17 Andrew Burke, Talbot County Education
 18 Association. We support the full funding of
 19 the budget request from our employer, the Board
 20 of Education. It's thoughtfully crafted. It's
 21 evolved over many months of public input and

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1 deliberation.
 2 This is unacceptable to underfund us. We
 3 negotiated for two percent COLA and a step. We
 4 ask for that consideration from this body. You
 5 hold the purse strings. We ask you for that
 6 consideration.
 7 Our point of emphasis this evening is the
 8 category of instructional salaries. The
 9 instructional salaries has lagged behind the
 10 state. Got the facts and figures I presented
 11 to the Council. You each got a copy. They're
 12 supported by evidence-based data.
 13 In October, the MSDE published the
 14 analysis of professional salaries. We noticed
 15 that we lagged behind. \$61,000 is the average
 16 pay. We're behind that. Index to the shore,
 17 if you look at table two, page nine, we're
 18 about 4.6 percent behind. We're not
 19 competitive with Caroline, Cecil, Kent, Queen
 20 Anne's. That's unacceptable. That's
 21 embarrassing to me. We should address that.

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1 It will take four cents.
 2 We ask that you include a modest increase
 3 to the income tax rate. This body can
 4 deliberate and you can make a choice. Please
 5 consider that. That's reasonable.
 6 I close with my perspective from
 7 March 11th. We rallied in Annapolis. There
 8 were 8,500 of us that were holding signs.
 9 Tonight, if you've got a sign, please hold
 10 it up. We've got a message here.
 11 We just ask for your consideration. We
 12 came out to show you support. We ask you for
 13 that consideration.
 14 The rally in Annapolis convinced Annapolis
 15 legislature to take action. We're here in this
 16 small group tonight to consider taking action
 17 with you. I support that.
 18 Thank you for your time.
 19 MR. PACK: Thank you, Andy.
 20 Indra.
 21 MS. SCHULTZ: Hi. My name is Leah

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1 Schultz. I have kids at Tilghman Elementary
 2 and St. Michael's High School. I also grew up
 3 in the county and went to St. Michael's
 4 Elementary, Middle, and High School myself.
 5 Thank you for continuing to support the
 6 school system. Over about half of the budget
 7 is the school. So I do appreciate that.
 8 But I am a little embarrassed that we
 9 continuously have to come and beg for money
 10 every year. This is my third or fourth time at
 11 one of these meetings. And continuously we get
 12 less funding than requested, and we're at the
 13 bottom of the barrel with the other counties.
 14 I know that you guys fund more than the
 15 other counties. But as far as the State goes,
 16 we don't get the same funding. So I guess I'm
 17 asking please call on us when you go to the
 18 State or to re-fund, however they calculate all
 19 the schools and the parents to come with you
 20 because I think we're all in a big predicament
 21 as far as our county goes. I don't think it's

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1 just the school system.
 2 Thank you.
 3 MR. PACK: Thank you. Is Lisa Devaric
 4 here? Lisa.
 5 MS. BULLOCK: Hi. My name is Indra
 6 Bullock. I am the proud principal at
 7 St. Michael's Elementary School. Good evening,
 8 President Pack and the Council members.
 9 I would like to start by thanking
 10 President Pack and Mr. Callahan for your
 11 support of last year's school budget. I'd also
 12 like to thank Mr. Pack and Mr. Leshner for your
 13 visit to St. Michael's Elementary earlier this
 14 school year.
 15 In the past decade, I've had the fortune
 16 of working with students from all areas of
 17 Talbot County. Despite their differences as
 18 individuals, there's been one consistent among
 19 all of them. And that is the primary motivator
 20 for learning; a teacher, an instructional
 21 assistant, a school administrator, their

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1 counselor. It's been a staff member who cares
 2 about their success.
 3 Please support our schools by fully
 4 funding our needs-based budget. Show the
 5 students of Talbot County Public Schools you
 6 care about their greatest resource.
 7 Thank you.
 8 MR. PACK: Can I have Mr. Bill Ryan here,
 9 please.
 10 Lisa.
 11 MS. DEVARIC: Good evening. Before I
 12 begin, could I ask any stakeholders for Dobson
 13 to come join me up here? Parents, staff,
 14 instructional assistants, anybody who is a
 15 stakeholder for Dobson, please.
 16 Good evening. I'm Lisa Devaric, principal
 17 at Easton Elementary School Dobson. I reside
 18 here in Easton. Thank you, President Pack, for
 19 allowing me to speak tonight on behalf of those
 20 who cannot.
 21 I'm representing the families and the

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1 children who are working tonight. Maybe they
 2 cannot express their concerns in English or
 3 maybe they're just too tired. Either way, I'm
 4 here, here speaking on behalf of those families
 5 and the children they love and care for the
 6 best way they can every day.

7 We have tough jobs, all of us. For me, I
 8 am charged with ensuring a quality education
 9 for every single student who comes to my
 10 school. I'm entrusted to care for them no
 11 matter how or where they come from, no matter
 12 who is caring for them or what happened to
 13 them.

14 My staff, my stakeholders are charged with
 15 loving these sweet little kids, educating them.
 16 We can't do this without your support.

17 Your job, to allocate funds for the
 18 betterment of Talbot County. Our kids, our
 19 schools, we need you to support our budget.

20 Tonight I'm sitting here and I'm asking
 21 you to think about the school, the students who

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1 attend Talbot County Public Schools. Will you
 2 do the right thing? Will you increase the tax
 3 cap as you can? Will you be our partner in
 4 providing the best possible education for our
 5 kids? Will you do the right thing? I know you
 6 will.

7 Think about the day when you're longer in
 8 public office. What would you like people to
 9 say about you and your commitment to public
 10 education? Did you put our kids first? Do you
 11 love our kids enough to raise the tax cap to
 12 support this budget?

13 I'm certain you chose this job or was
 14 elected to do this job to make changes for the
 15 betterment of Talbot County. What better way
 16 to make a change. Raise that tax cap. Make a
 17 difference in the lives of our students. I'm
 18 confident each one of you will do the right and
 19 the moral thing, raise that tax cap. The
 20 quality of our education of our students are
 21 counting on you and so is our community.

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1 Thank you.

2 MR. PACK: I'm going to go to my second
 3 page while Mr. Ryan is there. I'm going to
 4 call Emily George, Emily George.

5 Mr. Ryan.

6 MR. RYAN: Good evening. My name is Bill
 7 Ryan. I'm the president of the Board of
 8 Building African American Minds, Incorporated,
 9 universally known as BAAM.

10 I'm here to speak in support of the
 11 proposed grant to our program for the purchase
 12 of music equipment. BAAM is a Talbot County
 13 based nonprofit organization, is committed to
 14 the social and academic development of young
 15 African American males.

16 I would note that our program, while we
 17 focus on African American males, is open to all
 18 and is free.

19 Our core is a four-day per week after
 20 school program for elementary school students.
 21 That includes tutoring services as well as a

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1 number of other activities. We focus on math,
 2 reading, public speaking, and comportment.

3 Two years ago with the purchase of the old
 4 Head Start building on Jowite Street, we opened
 5 a middle school program, and we're only a half
 6 block from the Easton Elementary School.

7 We're now in our 15th year. And we're by
 8 now deeply embedded in our community. Because
 9 we are small and independent, we are able to
 10 respond nimbly to changing needs in our
 11 community. For example, the athletic center
 12 that we're building on Jowite Street grew out
 13 of our concern that our students, our
 14 elementary school students, some of them would
 15 drift away from what we call the BAAM way once
 16 they get into middle school and high school.
 17 We're building that athletic and community
 18 center to keep them with us.

19 And in the same vain, we identified a need
 20 for a music program, particularly in the summer
 21 when a lot of students tend to regress a little

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1 bit. As you know, many studies have shown, and
 2 I'm sure you're all aware, that music learning
 3 facilitates learning in all branches,
 4 particularly math and reading.
 5 In the winter, I spend a few months
 6 teaching a senior level meteorology class at
 7 Penn State. And every semester I ask the kids
 8 how many of you can play an instrument. And
 9 it's at least half.
 10 So music playing supports all learning,
 11 and our students will certainly benefit from
 12 your support in this area. And we thank you
 13 for that.
 14 Finally, don't forget our spring festival
 15 is Saturday at Idlewild Park Saturday
 16 afternoon. It's free. There's food, there's
 17 music, there's a dance concert, there's face
 18 painting, there's all sorts of things for your
 19 children.
 20 Thank you for your time and we appreciate
 21 your support.

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1 MR. PACK: Thank you, Mr. Ryan, for all
 2 you do.
 3 Mr. Philip Jackson on this chair here,
 4 please.
 5 MS. GEORGE: Good evening, Council. Thank
 6 you for having me here tonight. My name is
 7 Emily George. I'm a proud parent of
 8 St. Michael's children. I have one in high
 9 school and one going into the middle school in
 10 another year and one that attended the pre-k
 11 three program and is now in pre-k and a second
 12 grader. So we utilize all of the school needs.
 13 I'm also the head volleyball coach at
 14 Chesapeake College and I also volunteer coach
 15 at the YMCA. So we try to be very involved in
 16 the community.
 17 I appreciate that you're hearing our needs
 18 tonight. My children utilize a lot of the
 19 stuff. They've gone to the after school Smash
 20 program almost every time. They are in --
 21 they've done the summer school with the Y and

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1 the school. My oldest was in band for a little
 2 while. And like I said, the pre-k three
 3 program, which has been a major blessing for
 4 our family last year.
 5 We had just moved to the area. We've been
 6 here for two years. And we were in Virginia
 7 where our kids were behind and they probably
 8 had more per child and they didn't do as much.
 9 Here where they have even less, the teachers
 10 here do so much with the little that they even
 11 do have that even if they had just a little
 12 more, how much more could they do.
 13 It is also teachers week. So what better
 14 time to help with the education than this week
 15 to give what they need. That would be amazing.
 16 I also have a child with ADHD who has been
 17 receiving IEP needs. And the teachers have
 18 been amazing with helping with all of that,
 19 coordinate all of that so all his needs are met
 20 so he's not left behind.
 21 Thank you.

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1 MR. PACK: Thank you. How is your
 2 volleyball team doing?
 3 MS. GEORGE: We're going to be awesome
 4 this year. You should come.
 5 MR. PACK: Okay. If I could have
 6 Ms. Kristin is it Mentges, Kristin.
 7 Mr. Jackson.
 8 MR. JACKSON: Good evening. Thank you,
 9 Mr. Pack. My name is Phil Jackson. I reside
 10 in Wye Mills in Talbot County.
 11 I'm here this evening to express my deep
 12 concern that we're once again at an impasse
 13 with regards to the funding for our school
 14 system and our municipalities.
 15 My wife and I moved to Talbot County in
 16 2008 with deep gratitude for the community and
 17 anticipated excitement of being members of this
 18 community. We have ten children -- ten
 19 children. We don't have ten children. We have
 20 four children. Four, just four. And they're
 21 all actively engaged in the school system in

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1 some capacity.

2 They are, in fact, the educators and the

3 professionals that we work with, some of the

4 finest folks that I have the pleasure to know.

5 They come to work every day and seemingly do

6 the impossible with the most basic resources.

7 As a community, it seems we've chosen to

8 limit our educators and our municipalities to

9 the extent that we are, and I quote, removing

10 light bulbs from refrigerators to save money.

11 It's unimaginable to me that as a

12 community we would choose not to empower our

13 educators and municipalities with the resources

14 they need to deliver exceptional value and

15 service to our community.

16 In the case of our students, our children,

17 that exceptional value results in the

18 exceptional development of our children. And

19 ultimately, we entrust those children as the

20 future caretakers of this community who are

21 responsible for its future economic growth and

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1 hopeful success.

2 It's also incredible that we are

3 effectively asking our educators to come to

4 this meeting today and ask for a cost of living

5 increase. I'm fortunate to work for a company

6 that provides this annually without raising my

7 hand at a quarterly shareholders meeting and

8 asking my CEO. Cost of living is something

9 that's expected practice in industry.

10 In the opening remarks by Ms. Lane it was

11 suggested that the State of Maryland is

12 shorting us as it relates to the funding

13 necessary per pupil. I'm not necessarily

14 interested in finger pointing or excuses, but I

15 am interested in a resolution, and that lies on

16 the shoulders of our citizens and its

17 leadership.

18 So today I am asking for the specific

19 increase to be funded. But more broadly, I

20 implore our community, its leadership, and

21 importantly the citizens who ultimately have

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1 the right to vote for this to remove the tax

2 revenue cap. It is harming this community.

3 It's harming our ability to be successful in

4 many ways. And we must get past this obstacle.

5 Thank you.

6 MR. PACK: Thank you. Anita, this table

7 here, please.

8 MS. MENTGES: Good evening, members of the

9 County Council. My name is Kristin Mentges,

10 and I reside in Trappe.

11 I come before you this evening as a tax

12 payer of Talbot County, parent of a graduate of

13 Easton High School and current 11th grader at

14 Easton High, the supervisor of special

15 education for Talbot County, and an advocate

16 for public education.

17 As a parent, I have had the opportunity to

18 see both of my children thrive in Talbot

19 County. They have both had excellent teachers

20 and have been involved in academic and

21 non-academic programs that have helped them

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1 develop into well-rounded individuals.

2 As the supervisor of special education, I

3 want to help ensure students who receive

4 special education services in Talbot County not

5 only have adequate services but have excellent

6 services, as that is what is going to help them

7 make progress to help close the gap.

8 I want to thank you for the financing you

9 have granted for special education to this

10 point. But in the last five years, the number

11 of students receiving special education

12 services in Talbot County has increased by more

13 than 100 students, yet the number of special

14 education teachers since that time has only

15 increased by three.

16 In that same period of time, the amount of

17 special education policies have increased each

18 year, often requiring that teachers spend more

19 time on documentation and paperwork.

20 Along with this, special education

21 teachers must spend time collaborating with

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1 other teachers and support staff, communicating
 2 with parents, and co-planning lessons and
 3 co-grading assignments with general education
 4 teachers.
 5 To do all these things well, special
 6 education teachers need a manageable caseload
 7 of students. Likewise, general education
 8 teachers need a manageable number of students
 9 in their classrooms so they are able to provide
 10 effective instruction to the diverse needs of
 11 the students who are in their classrooms,
 12 whether they have special needs or are gifted
 13 and talented.
 14 We also require staff to support our
 15 growing number of students who are learning
 16 English.
 17 Our budget was built on the needs of all
 18 our students so that they are all able to make
 19 progress. Given this, I ask you to give
 20 consideration for funding the full budget, as
 21 all the students of Talbot County deserve to be

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1 given the chance to be able to make academic
 2 progress that is meaningful.
 3 I wish to thank you for your time and the
 4 fiscal resources you have already allocated.
 5 Thank you.
 6 MR. PACK: Ms. Mentges, could you send me
 7 a copy of that, please?
 8 I think I jumped over Christina is it
 9 Dostin. Drostin, thank you. I got Kristin and
 10 Christina mixed up. Thank you.
 11 And yes, Anita.
 12 MS. SCHNEIDER: Hi. My name is Anita
 13 Hughlow Schneider, and I'm the new executive
 14 director of the Classic Motor Museum.
 15 I want to thank you for tentatively
 16 approving our request for a grant.
 17 We are, as I said, a museum. So we're
 18 drawing people into the St. Michael's area, and
 19 our hope is to impact the economy not just in
 20 St. Michael's but the Bay 100 area.
 21 I think the biggest thing that I want to

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1 bring up tonight, especially after hearing
 2 everyone else, is that for the first time in I
 3 think it's been said to me over 30 years,
 4 driver's ed is in St. Michaels. We are the
 5 venue for Shane's Driving School and Chief
 6 Smith and JR Burkhardt at St. Michaels Middle
 7 and High School. It was their brain child
 8 before I ever got there, but I think it's kind
 9 of serendipitous that it's at a motor museum.
 10 But today was the second day that kids walked
 11 over for driver's ed.
 12 So I want to thank you for the grant that
 13 you've tentatively approved, and I hope we get
 14 the whole thing. And thanks for being here.
 15 MR. PACK: Thank you. Go ahead.
 16 MS. DROSTIN: Good evening. Thank you for
 17 letting me speak for a couple of minutes. I'm
 18 Dr. Drostin. I'm a family physician. I moved
 19 here three years ago with my family.
 20 I appreciate the incredible challenge you
 21 all face with working to adequately fund our

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1 county services and programs. Ms. Lane, your
 2 presentation was particularly enlightening.
 3 I'm proud to say that I support public
 4 school. I'm a daughter of a life-long
 5 educator, and I'm happy that my child is a
 6 student here at Easton Elementary.
 7 However, I am deeply troubled about the
 8 proposed budget. Although we moved here only
 9 after researching your local school system and
 10 trusting many signs that this is a very good
 11 school system, I must be honest with you. We
 12 were shocked to learn that our kindergarten
 13 teachers have 25 children in their classroom.
 14 I never imagined I would be sending my child to
 15 a school with that poor of a student to teacher
 16 ratio.
 17 The problem has been somewhat alleviated
 18 by providing instructional assistants this
 19 year. That said, instructional assistants
 20 should not be a long-term solution for having
 21 classes with 25 students.

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1 Furthermore, the proposed budget does not
 2 even continue to adequately fund this Band-Aid
 3 of a solution. Not only are we proposing that
 4 some of our youngest learners enter a classroom
 5 environment that is inadequately staffed and
 6 not conducive to learning, we are also setting
 7 up our teachers for exhaustion, burn out, and
 8 simply giving them many reasons to leave the
 9 district.

10 I am speaking to only one of the many gaps
 11 in the proposed budget. Due to time limits, I
 12 won't go into detail on why we obviously need
 13 funds for algebra and biology textbooks,
 14 additional special ed staff and ELL
 15 instructors.

16 The solution to this problem is easy. I
 17 know none of us like the idea of raising taxes.
 18 However, to increase the property tax by \$200 a
 19 year on a half million dollar home is quite
 20 insignificant.

21 President Pack, I'm happy to hear you

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1 agree that leaving our current tax levels as
 2 the lowest in the state and having an
 3 underfunded school, police, and EMS system is
 4 not a viable option.

5 People who move into waterfront properties
 6 for either a vacation home or a retirement home
 7 do not do so for the purpose of settling into a
 8 community that does not have a well educated
 9 workforce that they will soon rely on in their
 10 older years.

11 What we either give or restrict these
 12 children right now will shape the future of our
 13 communities in Talbot County for generations.
 14 If you want to attract young professional to
 15 Talbot County, such as doctors and lawyers with
 16 young families with them, you have got to
 17 better fund our school system.

18 If you truly wish to recognize teacher
 19 appreciation week, which is occurring this
 20 week, let's sincerely and respectfully show our
 21 appreciation by giving our school system the

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1 funds that it sorely needs.

2 Thank you.

3 MR. PACK: Thank you. That is the last
 4 listed person on my list. I'm going to save
 5 Mr. Connelly for last.

6 Mr. Smith, I'm going to go beyond you and
 7 I'm going to go to one of the raised hands and,
 8 Larry, you take that chair there. You go
 9 first.

10 MS. LEESON: I get to go first. Thanks.
 11 My name is Tara Leeson.

12 MR. PACK: I'm sorry, your name again,
 13 please?

14 MS. LEESON: Tara Leeson. I live in
 15 Easton. I've lived in Easton most of my life.
 16 And every time I come to one of these meetings,
 17 I feel like I'm having deja vu.

18 I can remember my mother 30 years ago
 19 arguing against the tax cap, and I just told
 20 you how old I was, when I was in elementary
 21 school. It is ridiculous that 30 years later

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1 we're still having this argument.

2 I didn't really have any intentions of
 3 speaking tonight, but I started thinking about
 4 not just speaking for me, but my brother is a
 5 Talbot County sheriff.

6 When picking our careers, I don't think
 7 either of us questioned being public servants,
 8 but we also never thought that choosing a
 9 career as a teacher or a police officer would
 10 mean living paycheck to paycheck. Maybe your
 11 answer is that we should budget better or work
 12 more, but you can't budget what you don't have.

13 The public servants of Talbot County
 14 deserve to be valued by the county. Many of us
 15 can't even afford to live here.

16 I heard you say that even with a tax
 17 increase of .04 cents, we would still have the
 18 lowest property taxes in the state. If adding
 19 a couple more cents would support the public
 20 servants of Talbot County, four cents, aren't
 21 we worth that to you, don't we deserve that?

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1 Thank you.

2 MR. PACK: Thank you. Mr. Smith.

3 MR. SMITH: My name is Larry Smith. I've

4 been a Talbot County resident for 69 years,

5 went to school here.

6 As I sit here before you tonight, I had

7 the wonderful honor of representing Talbot

8 County in 1969 in the All State Chorus because

9 that Council funded monies for our chorus. I

10 also had the funding for the All Shore Band. I

11 was able to participate because of that also

12 funding.

13 I'm asking you for full funding. And I

14 want to thank you for each of the jobs that

15 each of you are currently doing because you're

16 not doing it for the money, you're doing it for

17 the citizens and the betterment of Talbot

18 County. And as I for one, I want to applaud

19 you and thank you and be your cheerleader. Go,

20 team, go. I thank you.

21 But we have a difficult job, and it's not

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1 easy. I have three grandchildren in the

2 system. One is playing first chair in our

3 music that Donna Ewing is doing.

4 Former school board president George

5 Island Whitley was a great champion of the

6 public school system. And I learned a lot from

7 George Island Whitley, and he was a great

8 proponent of Donna Ewing. And I have come to

9 also worship what she does for our children in

10 music and to the quality that they're

11 performing.

12 For any of those that were there at the

13 All Shore Band concert, one of the guest

14 conductors, he stopped after the first number.

15 He thanked the audience for the quality of

16 children that he had to work with. He says I

17 don't have this everywhere I go. I'm amazed.

18 I want to honor the teachers that have brought

19 me to this point.

20 And again, this is my point, we have

21 quality teachers that have made sacrifices,

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1 that are currently making sacrifices.

2 In years to come, 20, 30, 40 years, the

3 children that are here are going to be

4 providing what services to each of us. Their

5 quality lies in the balance and rests on your

6 shoulders tonight.

7 And I'm asking for your cooperation. And

8 I know it's not easy to get that magic wand out

9 and come up and make it all balance out. But

10 somehow Talbot County has always been able to

11 rise to whatever the needs are. Whatever the

12 difficulties, Talbot County has always met

13 those needs. Obviously when there's a need and

14 you need the sheriff's deputy, they need to be

15 on the scene quickly as possible to remedy that

16 situation. Our EMS, as you know our

17 volunteers, the countless thousands of hours

18 that they give to this community.

19 And our teachers are doing the same, but

20 they need assistance, they need the help.

21 Last time I heard Kelly give a report was

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1 40 different languages. Is that still correct?

2 DR. GRIFFITH: Twenty.

3 MR. SMITH: Oh, there are 20 different

4 languages now that are in our school system.

5 And yet there are people don't think we need

6 border protection. What is that going to do to

7 influx of people coming from our border, what

8 is that going to do to our budget? We're in

9 trouble.

10 And it's time we, as Talbot County, rise

11 to the effort and meet those needs.

12 Thank you.

13 MR. PACK: Go ahead. Come up.

14 MS. SWENTZER: I didn't sign in.

15 MR. PACK: That's okay. Come on up.

16 MS. SWENTZER: Good evening. My name is

17 Jackie Schwencer. I have a grandchild at White

18 Marsh Elementary School and a grandson here at

19 Easton High School. I'm also the chair lady of

20 the Grandparents Club at White Marsh Elementary

21 School.

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1 So I'm sitting here tonight asking that
2 you fully fund the Talbot County Board of
3 Education budget.
4 White Marsh Elementary would benefit by
5 having a full-time gifted and talented teacher.
6 We share our teacher with Chapel Elementary.
7 We have a large number of students in this
8 program, and our students deserve to be
9 challenged. And a full-time gifted and
10 talented teacher would make that happen.
11 Smaller class size is critical. Every
12 student should receive the very best education
13 possible without being overcrowded.
14 I would like to thank you for funding
15 money for two instructional assistants at White
16 Marsh Elementary School. We have one in each
17 class and have seen a huge growth compared to
18 last year.
19 Thank you.
20 MR. PACK: Thank you. Before we hear from
21 Mr. Connelly, is there anyone else I missed?

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1 Steve.
2 MR. WILSON: Good evening, Council
3 members. Steve Wilson. I'm IT director here
4 for Talbot County Public Schools, resident of
5 37 years, and I've had three children who have
6 graduated from the school system.
7 And here to talk a little bit about one of
8 our many successes, and that has been the
9 laptop program over 13 years for which you have
10 funded. I think by all measures it has been
11 probably one of our very successful and the
12 envy of the rest of the state. There's nobody
13 in the state right now that has a laptop
14 program or one-to-one type device program that
15 we do. And they're struggling right now to do
16 that.
17 They're all doing it obviously with more
18 funds per pupil than we are. But we've managed
19 all these years, and most of those funds have
20 been above Maintenance of Effort that you've
21 all provided.

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1 Some of those avenues such as
2 non-recurring funds and so forth, those doors
3 have been closed to us now. So all the
4 revenues or all the expenses are now inside the
5 Maintenance of Effort.
6 So with the hundreds of thousands of
7 dollars it takes to run this program, we
8 probably are displacing other important and
9 vital programs.
10 So I would ask that you would consider
11 increasing our budget to help cover what has
12 been displaced as a result of the laptop
13 program being brought down into the Maintenance
14 of Effort budget and so we can continue to
15 expand some programs, try new things, and move
16 forward.
17 We do have so many other expenses. I mean
18 because we're now moving more towards privacy
19 and security. We've always had privacy and
20 security. But there's new mandates coming down
21 from the State that require us to really

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1 tighten up. And since we've now got devices at
2 all grade levels, it's even more important that
3 we put more infrastructure in place to protect
4 the rights and privacies of students.
5 Thank you very much.
6 MR. PACK: Thank you, Steve.
7 Okay. Have I missed anyone else? If not,
8 we're going to hear from Mr. Connelly. He
9 attended a meeting on this past Monday with the
10 State, and we are anxious to hear his results
11 from that meeting.
12 MR. CONNELLY: Thank you. My name is
13 Charles Connelly. I'm the director of finance
14 for Talbot County Public Schools. I'm also a
15 lifelong resident of Talbot County. I'm either
16 related to half of you and the other half I'm
17 friends with you. I know most everybody.
18 MR. PACK: Cousin Charlie.
19 MR. CONNELLY: There's been a lot of
20 discussion regarding Kirwan funding. As you
21 well know, that this is a supplemental

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1 appropriation to the governor's budget.
 2 The governor has several options. He can
 3 approve. As you well know, it's passed the
 4 legislation. However, he can either sign the
 5 bill, he can veto the bill, or he can do
 6 nothing and the bill will become law I think
 7 either May 27th or 28th. But he has control of
 8 when he can release these funds. He can dole
 9 it all out July 1st or he can fence it in and
 10 partial it out as he sees fit or he doesn't
 11 have to give any out at all. However, in FY
 12 2021 he has to release those funds.
 13 So being said that, we cannot include
 14 Kirwan funds as any unrestricted operating
 15 revenue for next year. At the best, we can
 16 restrict them just like any other federal or
 17 State grants and we can spend them when
 18 received for their intended purpose. And their
 19 intended purpose is not to supplant our
 20 operating budget.
 21 I also want to talk just a few minutes

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1 about a chart that Angela presented earlier
 2 about the education supplemental history. What
 3 I've also done and I've got for you and I'll
 4 give to you is a history of our appropriations
 5 and also Maintenance of Effort.
 6 We often forget back in FY 12, fiscal year
 7 12, that the county had underfunded our
 8 Maintenance of Effort budget by \$1.8 million.
 9 We worked through that. And then in succeeding
 10 years, the county has either met the operations
 11 budget or have surpassed that amount, which I
 12 am truly appreciative of.
 13 In the past ten years, you have given us
 14 \$1.7 million above Maintenance of Effort and
 15 also \$2.6 million in non-recurring costs. We
 16 are greatly appreciative of all these funds and
 17 have put them to great use.
 18 No matter what you're going to do with
 19 this year's budget, this upcoming budget,
 20 you're going to receive I think a chorus of
 21 protests in the proposal that you come up with

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1 that's either going to be unfair, inadequate,
 2 or unworkable.
 3 We need to educate everyone in the amount
 4 of services that they receive for their tax
 5 dollars. We already have a method to increase
 6 the revenue for our school system that does not
 7 require voter input. We just need to use that
 8 process to fully fund the educational budget.
 9 However, we do need to get out there and talk
 10 to the citizens of Talbot County about what
 11 their tax dollars is providing and what a few
 12 cents more in property taxes could do for them.
 13 Thank you.
 14 MR. PACK: Thank you. Okay. Well, thanks
 15 for everyone who came out, all the students. I
 16 guess they probably already left. I see a
 17 couple of them still here with us in the front
 18 row. Thank you all for coming out.
 19 Before you leave, Council does have some
 20 comment. We want to address some of the points
 21 that were made and then we're going to give our

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1 closing comments as well.
 2 Charlie, I know we're probably going to be
 3 getting back with you sometime this week as
 4 well. Okay.
 5 So with that being said, I'm going to turn
 6 to Mr. Divilio. I know he's a product of a
 7 teacher here in Talbot County, and I want to
 8 hear his remarks, if he would.
 9 MR. DIVILIO: Yes, I am a product of a
 10 teacher of Talbot County. My mother, I'm sure
 11 most teachers here know her, taught here,
 12 retired from here, from teaching here. I went
 13 through the public school system here. And now
 14 my kids are in it. They're going to Cordova
 15 Chapel District Elementary School with
 16 Ms. Lisa, who is an amazing teacher.
 17 Yeah. I remember your mom going through
 18 this and our parents going through this. It's
 19 the same discussion every single year. It is
 20 disheartening to hear.
 21 But there's one thing that Talbot County

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1 does do differently that you won't see on any
 2 slides. We truly do care more than any other
 3 county around because we have to. When you
 4 look at all of these departments, everybody is
 5 doing more with less than what's around us.
 6 And we're here because we love it here.
 7 And it's my goal to make sure that it's
 8 sustainable, that we are able to keep everybody
 9 here, that we're able to fund the departments
 10 as much as all the departments need. But also
 11 stay fiscally conservative as we have been.
 12 It's a very tight balancing act. It's
 13 going to take a lot of just unique ideas.
 14 You saw all ten candidates in the last
 15 election asking for a raise on the tax cap, to
 16 increase that. All ten candidates were saying
 17 that, and it did not happen. So now it falls
 18 back to us to try to be creative and do what we
 19 can to get through this.
 20 So I appreciate everyone coming out here.
 21 I appreciate everybody's opinions. We've

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1 received countless e-mails and phone calls, and
 2 that's beneficial. But it's not just for us.
 3 It's for the residents to hear as well.
 4 So make sure that you're letting them know
 5 what shortfalls you're seeing around, but
 6 remind them that you're here because you love
 7 it here and you want to see it improve and we
 8 can. We can fix it.
 9 So thank you for everybody coming out.
 10 I've got a lot to take back, a lot to digest
 11 and be creative and see what we can come up
 12 with. Thank you.
 13 MR. PACK: Thanks, Frank.
 14 Mr. Leshner has two school-age students.
 15 First time dealing with the school budget. Do
 16 you have any comments?
 17 MR. LESHER: I do, Mr. Pack. And thank
 18 all of you for your impassioned advocacy here
 19 tonight. Those of you who voiced your advocacy
 20 and those of you who showed your advocacy
 21 simply by being here.

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1 This is my first time on this side of the
 2 table. I've been on your side of the table the
 3 past several years advocating as you have.
 4 And I came in here tonight, frankly, with
 5 some trepidation, but I'm going away with
 6 enlightenment and hope. You have been
 7 articulate, passionate, dedicated, and frankly
 8 compelling. I would be tempted to single out
 9 several of you for your testimony, but what you
 10 spoke about are very real needs for special ed,
 11 for our needs for English language learners,
 12 for the gifted and talented program, and for
 13 other aspects here have really touched me.
 14 I am certainly moved to increase the
 15 school budget, to meet the school supplement in
 16 the budget, and I hope that I can persuade
 17 enough of my colleagues here to go along with
 18 me.
 19 Thank you very much.
 20 MR. PACK: Mr. Callahan, do you have any
 21 statements to make, sir?

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1 MR. CALLAHAN: I sure do. I'm a product
 2 of Easton High School myself and the school
 3 system.
 4 First of all, I want to thank everyone.
 5 You were the best timed people. I never had to
 6 do anybody.
 7 So there's so many things that I'm proud
 8 of. First of all, I'm proud of you guys, proud
 9 of all the teachers.
 10 I've been here. This is my fifth year.
 11 There's several accomplishments that I feel
 12 like that this Council, the past Council that
 13 we accomplished in the last five years.
 14 One was keeping that Tilghman School open.
 15 I'm so proud that we were able to do that and
 16 keep that for the time being open and running.
 17 It meant a lot to me and it meant a lot to the
 18 community, and it's something to be extremely
 19 proud of.
 20 The other thing that I'm extremely proud
 21 of is being part of, me and Kevin Schafer and

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1 many, many, many other people and Council that
 2 have made this new school just a thriving part
 3 and heart of a school system of Talbot County.
 4 I'm very, very proud of that new school being
 5 built. I went to Moton and Dobson myself. So
 6 it is kind of sad to see it leave, but yet it's
 7 bringing a bright future to Talbot County. And
 8 I'm very, very proud to be a part of that, and
 9 I can't wait until you guys enjoy it. You
 10 deserve it. You worked very hard. Got great
 11 families, great students.

12 I have had a couple of kids that went to
 13 the school, too, Cole and Clark. They had a
 14 great education. They got great jobs in Talbot
 15 County. They're going to be here for a long
 16 time.

17 And I think that's really what we strive
 18 to do. We'd like to see our kids go away and
 19 come back or just stay here because it's such a
 20 great community.

21 The other thing I want to thank is Kelly.

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1 I tell you how passionate I am, but I can tell
 2 you how passionate she is. We were on the
 3 phone together this morning at a quarter after
 4 six or 6:30. So we were talking about things
 5 that are important to us, important to you.
 6 Yes, we agree to disagree on a lot of stuff.

7 But that's what's part of a phenomenal
 8 team. We're all a member here. We're all
 9 working together. We all know where we got to
 10 get to. We realize that there's going to be
 11 some tough times. We realize that we got to
 12 work together.

13 So I suggested to Kelly that the Council
 14 for the next three to four years probably try
 15 to work a little bit closer together to try to
 16 figure out where we need to go, where we need
 17 to be. So each year, like some of the great
 18 people that were up here, so we're not, and I
 19 don't want to use the word fighting, but
 20 arguing and trying to discuss that we are not
 21 funding enough. So we need to find a mechanism

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1 and get creative on how to try to help each
 2 year so we're not sitting here every single
 3 year. Just like the young lady said, we've
 4 been doing this for 30 years. So trying to
 5 fund this stuff.

6 So I'm all open for trying to find
 7 mechanisms and working with the school system
 8 and the school board. And you guys have done a
 9 great job. I really appreciate that. It's
 10 great working with you.

11 So I'm going to close by saying that my
 12 heart is in here with you. I'm going to do the
 13 best I can to help you guys, and I just want to
 14 let you know that I'm here for you.

15 Thank you.

16 MR. PACK: Ms. Price.

17 MS. PRICE: Sure. Maybe you liked it
 18 better when my microphone wasn't on.

19 Certainly I went through the Talbot County
 20 Public School system, as did my two children.
 21 My eldest is now in his -- just finished his

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1 first semester of medical school. So he got a
 2 great education. And the other one is about to
 3 graduate from college in two weeks. So no more
 4 tuition. So I'm excited about that. So I'm
 5 very familiar with the school system.

6 One person said public servants deserve to
 7 be valued. And I hope that there's not any
 8 question in this room or anywhere else in the
 9 county how very much we value every single one
 10 of our public servants, teachers and everybody
 11 else in the county.

12 And we need to be able to do for them what
 13 we have I think have a really good start in
 14 doing what we have done for the school system.
 15 And you ask us to raise it just a few cents,
 16 but just let me put it into perspective and
 17 reminding people that Mr. Connelly said that
 18 the education supplement doesn't require voter
 19 input.

20 But if we disrespect what the voters just
 21 told us six months ago, they did elect us here

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1 and they told us no. And I don't think it's
 2 very fair to continue to raise the taxes
 3 substantially and not be able to fund the other
 4 half of county government. And that's my
 5 concern. Because the more we go up and up on
 6 one side, it doesn't mean that we don't need it
 7 in education, but the more we do that, I
 8 believe the less likely we're going to have a
 9 chance in getting it to pass in 2020.
 10 But just to put a couple of numbers out
 11 there. And Ms. Lane did a great job in telling
 12 you what those numbers were.
 13 And I will admit that we did in 2012
 14 before they passed the Maintenance of Effort
 15 law, we did cut \$1.8 million from the budget.
 16 But at the same time, we cut about the same
 17 amount from the county budget. We had to
 18 eliminate positions. People lost their jobs.
 19 We raised taxes. I think that was the year
 20 that we went up in the income tax. We had no
 21 ability at that time to go up in the property

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1 tax. And we raised the recordation and
 2 transfer taxes. So that year was a very
 3 precarious year and we really had no choice
 4 because that was following up on the previous
 5 Council before I got on using \$17,000,000,
 6 8,000,000 more than your 9 million the
 7 following year, in fund balance.
 8 We've just proposed using another
 9 \$4 million of fund balance after almost
 10 4 million last year. And we know that's not
 11 sustainable. But when you talk about
 12 four cents, four cents on the average house,
 13 which we use median household income at 300 --
 14 not income, but the value \$350,000. Penny is
 15 \$35. That's \$140.
 16 What we've already done is almost nine and
 17 a half cents, which is 20 percent. We've
 18 already raised property tax just for education
 19 an average of \$327 per house on top of the 18
 20 or 1,900. That's a 20 percent increase. That
 21 is not insignificant. And every single penny

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1 of it has gone to education.
 2 We need to be able to do that for the
 3 other half of county government, and we haven't
 4 been able to do that. So when you say it's
 5 just two cents, it's not just two cents. These
 6 are hundreds of dollars on the working people.
 7 We are raising taxes on our deputies, on our
 8 teachers, on our working people.
 9 And yeah, the people that -- one of the
 10 people testified earlier today that she would
 11 gladly pay \$400 more per year. Well, that
 12 person is living in a million dollar home.
 13 That's not a problem. My concern is the
 14 average working person who's making 30, 40, 50,
 15 \$60,000 a year that a couple hundred dollars a
 16 year is a big deal.
 17 And I just need you to understand that.
 18 It's not us. The voters said no. We are still
 19 proposing another 1.8 cents, which is another
 20 \$63 on top of the 327. Again, the average
 21 person, the average working person, that is

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1 significant. And we shouldn't just ignore the
 2 will of the voters.
 3 I think that's most of it, though.
 4 One other person did say, you talked about
 5 the fact that we fund the second most in the
 6 state. And remind you, Worcester County has
 7 Ocean City. So they've got a humungous tax
 8 base from their tourism that we don't have. So
 9 in my book, we're number one because we don't
 10 have Ocean City.
 11 But she said that she's willing to go to
 12 the State with us. I've been beating my head
 13 against a wall. I have made some inroads when
 14 I go and testify to try to get these senators
 15 and delegates to understand that the funding
 16 formula is messed up. I go all day long. And
 17 I've written articles about it, about why the
 18 formula is wrong.
 19 I need the schools to go with me. Instead
 20 of telling the County Council that we don't
 21 give enough, because in my book we're number

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1 one, I want you all to go with me and fight
 2 this formula. Because as we go forward with
 3 Kirwan, they will be looking at the funding
 4 formula. We fund 75 percent of the school's
 5 budget. That needs to change. And I need you
 6 guys to go and help me do that and convince
 7 these people that the funding formula is unfair
 8 to Talbot County.
 9 Thank you.
 10 MR. PACK: Thank you, Ms. Price. Is Lou
 11 Bellis still here with us? She left. She went
 12 home already. She is gone to bed.
 13 I want to thank all of you, first of all,
 14 for coming out and spending the evening with
 15 us. I think we're going to hit record time
 16 here, just two hours. I know last year we were
 17 here for, what, five hours. Mr. Callahan said
 18 it felt like 12 hours.
 19 But we certainly appreciate you coming
 20 out. We understand your passion. We certainly
 21 hear what you're saying to us regarding your

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1 budget and wanting to see your schools fully
 2 funded. And have no doubt in your mind, so do
 3 I.
 4 I've said to Andy Burke and I said to
 5 other members of the school system that one
 6 thing that I wanted to see in my time here on
 7 this Council was Talbot County not being the
 8 lowest in the state when it came to school
 9 funding.
 10 Last year Mr. Callahan and myself with
 11 Ms. Williams put out another \$700,000 into your
 12 budget to bring us up out of last place. Yes,
 13 we're still in the bottom third. But we're no
 14 longer in the last place when it comes to
 15 school funding. That doesn't mean there's not
 16 still work yet to be done, and we're going to
 17 continue working with you and for you to see
 18 that we can adequately fund our schools to the
 19 level that it needs to be funded.
 20 I've said it this year and last year. We
 21 have an awesome capital weight on our

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1 shoulders. And I know the people in this room
 2 get it. And I think next year we may need to
 3 move this down to St. Michael's or somewhere
 4 else so we can reach some other people in the
 5 county who maybe are not hearing what we're
 6 saying.
 7 The Talbot County Business Center will
 8 close. I've been saying this for the last
 9 three years. It will close. That building
 10 will come down, and we're going to have to find
 11 a place to put your Sheriff's Department. That
 12 building right now is estimated anywhere
 13 between 8 to \$12 million. There's no place,
 14 there's no suitable structure right now in the
 15 county for us to put a Sheriff's Department.
 16 We're looking. And if we can find some place
 17 to lease, then we'll look to do that. But we
 18 have to work with our Sheriff's Department and
 19 make sure we're meeting his needs of his staff
 20 to do that.
 21 We're meeting with Dr. Wadley because we

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1 have a very aged Health Department. That
 2 building is not meeting the needs of that
 3 staff, and we know we're going to have to find
 4 space for them as well.
 5 So our capital expenditure -- and let's
 6 not forget the new elementary school here in
 7 Easton that we're building. And that's a
 8 \$30 million debt service that we're going to
 9 happily pay for that as well.
 10 These capital expenditures are real. They
 11 have to be paid. And we have to find a way to
 12 do that. We can't mortgage so far into the
 13 future. Ms. Lane gave you some numbers earlier
 14 tonight if we were to go out on loan on all
 15 these projects, how much it would cost us.
 16 So we have to be very, as the sheriff
 17 said, very creative in our approach to this.
 18 The Sheriff's Office, our Correction
 19 Department, they're facing a very tough
 20 shortage when it comes to manpower. These are
 21 the people that protect you when you're on the

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1 highway or when you're in your homes and you
 2 place that call. These are the men and women
 3 that are going to come out to help serve you.
 4 So we're trying to retain that force as
 5 best we can. We came up with some ideas in
 6 order to work with the Sheriff's Department to
 7 keep those men and women in place. He and
 8 Scott sat down with us and agreed to those
 9 changes. Likewise with Doug Devenyns with our
 10 Correction Department.
 11 So we're willing to work with you to try
 12 to find a way to address your needs. We did it
 13 last year creatively. I think if we sit down
 14 this year and put our heads together, we can
 15 find a way to do it again this year.
 16 But we're going to have to sit down with
 17 Charlie and look over those notes from that
 18 meeting to see what we can do with that. If
 19 the Kirwan funds are as restrictive as you say,
 20 then we're going to have to maybe go back to
 21 the drawing board when it comes to that.

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1 But please believe that, and I've been
 2 here for ten-plus years as a product of a
 3 public school system. My daughter graduated
 4 here. My son graduated here at Easton High
 5 School. I certainly understand the importance
 6 of a quality education and are willing to work
 7 with you to make sure that happens.
 8 I remember going back, as Steve pointed
 9 out regarding the laptops, I remember one
 10 Council when we didn't fund the laptops, if you
 11 remember, Steve, we took it out of the budget.
 12 And Dr. Sammy went out and raised money in the
 13 community.
 14 So we're going to continue working with
 15 you to get whatever shortfall that we can
 16 resolve as best as we possibly can. We may not
 17 meet you all the way. I think last year we
 18 came within a million dollars or so, fully
 19 funded. So we'll see what we can come up with
 20 as we go along.
 21 The Board of Education has a meeting on

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1 May the 15th. What the Council has decided to
 2 do is to push back our deliberations until
 3 after your meeting on the 15th to May the 16th.
 4 So we will be holding a public
 5 deliberations at three p.m. on the 16th so that
 6 we can look at some of the comments that were
 7 given here this evening, some of the
 8 information we're going to get back from
 9 Charlie, and see where we can make adjustments
 10 here or there.
 11 Again, every increase to that supplement
 12 means something different to somebody else.
 13 Whether you're living in a \$250,000 home or
 14 \$3.5 million home, every time we hit that
 15 supplement, it does increase somebody's
 16 property tax differently.
 17 Property tax cap. Again, I've been
 18 banging this drum for a long time. I know you
 19 all get it in this room. I don't want to keep
 20 on belaboring the point to you all. But please
 21 take it out to your neighbors and other people

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1 who are not here and make sure they understand
 2 the importance of us relooking at that revenue
 3 cap.
 4 Hopefully I can get a four-fifths vote
 5 here from the Council to put that back on the
 6 ballot come this November or come next
 7 November. We need to look at that again. We
 8 need to keep on trying to get that revenue cap
 9 adjusted as best we can because other
 10 departments need the same help that we can give
 11 you on the supplement. But we can't do it
 12 without your help. So we're going to be asking
 13 for your help as we go forward with that
 14 question as well.
 15 So please mark your calendar for May the
 16 15th to be here with your Board of Education as
 17 they go through their deliberations, and then
 18 come back the next night and be with us on May
 19 the 16th as we go through our deliberations as
 20 well, if I said that right. Okay.
 21 With that being said, again, record time.


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1 Yes, yes, Ms. Price. We're going to keep
 2 the public record open for those who want to
 3 write into us until next Tuesday, which is the
 4 14th. Next Tuesday, the 14th. So if anyone
 5 had to leave or anyone want to write down your
 6 comment, please send it into us before next
 7 Tuesday, the 14th.
 8 Very quickly. We lost a member of our
 9 community who was a mentor to many of this
 10 Council members up here in Nick Panuzio who
 11 passed away last Friday. We just want to send
 12 our prayers and thoughts out to his family. I
 13 know there's going to be something in the paper
 14 if it hasn't been already about his life and
 15 his legacy. He was a great mentor, part of the
 16 St. Michaels Housing Authority and (inaudible)
 17 committee and former mayor as well. So we
 18 wanted to send our heartfelt thoughts and
 19 prayers out to his family as they go through
 20 the process of grieving and also the planning
 21 for his home going services.

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1 So with that being said, again, I want to
 2 thank you all for coming out. Appreciate your
 3 comments.
 4 Again, May 15th for the board meeting and
 5 May 16th for the Council meeting.
 6 (Meeting concluded at: 9:00 p.m.)
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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 Anne Arundel,
 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 this 20th day of
 May, 2019.

 Diane Houlihan
 Notary Public
 My Commission Expires: September 16, 2021

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