



# TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

County Council

MINUTES

March 26, 2020

Present – President Corey W. Pack (via conference call), Vice President Chuck F. Callahan, Frank Divilio, Pete Leshner, Laura Price, County Manager R. Andrew Hollis, Assistant County Attorney Mary O’Donnell, Clay Stamp, Director of Emergency Services and Assistant County Manager, and Finance Director Angela Lane.

- I. Agenda – The Agenda of Thursday, March 26, 2020 was brought forward for approval. Ms. Price made a motion to amend the Agenda to include an Update from Director of Emergency Services on COVID-19 and Discussion of Council Action related to Visitors to Talbot County. Upon motion by Ms. Price, seconded by Mr. Leshner, Council approved of the Agenda of Thursday, March 26, 2020, as amended, by voting 5 – 0 as follows:
  - Mr. Pack – aye
  - Mr. Callahan – aye
  - Mr. Divilio – aye
  - Ms. Price – aye
  - Mr. Leshner – aye
  
- II. Approval of Minutes – no minutes for approval.
  
- III. Discussion of Council Action related to Visitors to Talbot County – With ongoing concerns surrounding the spread of the Coronavirus/COVID-19, the Council discussed sending a letter to all short term rental license holders, bed and breakfasts, inns and hotels urging establishments to immediately suspend all future rental operations and to place a copy of the letter in their establishments requesting that visitors self-quarantine for fourteen (14) days. Upon motion by Ms. Price, seconded by Mr. Leshner, Council approved sending the letter and posting to the [www.talbotcovid19.org](http://www.talbotcovid19.org) website by a vote of 5-0 as follows:
  - Mr. Pack – aye
  - Mr. Callahan – aye
  - Mr. Divilio – aye
  - Ms. Price – aye
  - Mr. Leshner – aye
  
- IV. Update from Director of Emergency Services on COVID-19 – Clay Stamp, Director of Emergency Services (DES) and Assistant County Manager provided an update on COVID-19 and the purpose of the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) in coordinating the County’s preparation efforts. The Talbot County Health Department is the lead agency under Dr. Fredia Wadley, Health Officer with Talbot DES providing support. A daily call is held at 10:00 a.m. with the Operational Working Group which includes County departments, municipal representatives and partner agencies and stakeholders. Additional workgroups have been established as part of the EOC including the Senior Policy Workgroup which holds a daily conference call at 9:00 a.m., Private Sector Information and Coordination Workgroup which includes businesses with a conference call held at 12:00 p.m. every Tuesday and Friday and a Joint Information Workgroup that coordinates a daily press release. In addition, Operations Coordination Groups have been

formed which include Feeding and Volunteers, and Housing and Medical Surge. Mr. Stamp directed citizens to [www.talbotcovid19.org](http://www.talbotcovid19.org) for the most up-to-date information on the COVID-19 pandemic.

- V. Discussion of FY 2021 Budget Preparation – Ms. Lane discussed budget preparation for FY2021 and proposed a County budget of \$96,360,000 which represents a 4.37% increase from FY2020. As proposed, the budget would level fund all County departments. Talbot County Public Schools would be funded at Maintenance of Effort (MOE) level which includes a \$1.5 million increase from FY2020. County debt service would be fully funded and increase by \$600,000 to account for the new Easton Elementary School. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on the national economy, Ms. Lane has reduced projections for income tax and recordation tax revenue. The proposed budget includes \$1.5 million in capital outlay to be placed in the County Manager’s budget for County Council consideration and approval throughout the year. The total for capital outlay requests as submitted is \$4.08 million, with the proposed budget including \$1.45 million. If possible, \$390,000 in capital outlay will be purchased in FY20. Additionally, the County’s Contingency Fund would be increased to \$2.4 million to address salary adjustments and other supplemental requests submitted for funding in FY 2021, which would be approved by the County Council throughout the year. The proposed budget includes a Real Property Tax Rate of \$.6426 (increase of .54 cents) and an Educational Supplement of \$1.1 million (1.45 cents). Ms. Lane noted that at the end of FY19, the fund balance was approximately \$30 million (\$13 million in Rainy Day funds and \$17 million available for expenses). She is projecting in FY20 for the fund balance to be \$38 million (which accounts for \$8 million from FY 2020 operations). As proposed, the budget includes \$5 million to balance the FY21 budget leaving a balance of \$33 million in fund balance (similar to FY10). Council discussion ensued.

By a vote of 2-3, Council did not approve the proposed Real Property Tax Rate increase of .54 cents which is allowed under the current Tax Cap as follows:

- Mr. Callahan – nay
- Mr. Divilio – nay
- Mr. Leshner – aye
- Mr. Pack – aye
- Ms. Price – nay

By a vote of 2-3, Council did not approve the proposed Educational Supplement of 1.45 cents as follows:

- Mr. Callahan – nay
- Mr. Divilio – nay
- Mr. Leshner – aye
- Mr. Pack – aye
- Ms. Price – nay

Ms. Lane noted that reserves of approximately \$6 million will be used to balance the FY21 budget.

Council discussed the Roads Department’s proposal for a Repurposing Facility. By general consensus, Council approved the Roads Department renting equipment to process materials from the demolition of the Easton Elementary School – Moton building, selling the repurposed material and then re-evaluating the proposal. Ms. Lane noted that Council can revisit this proposal mid-year.

Council discussed the Grants Fund which includes franchise fees from cable TV (Atlantic Broadband and Easton Utilities), funding for Mid-Shore Community Television (MCTV), funding for Granicus, Inc. and community grant requests. As of June 30, 2020, Ms. Lane estimates a balance of approximately \$477,000. The proposed FY21 budget includes funds for the County’s match for the Re-Connect USDA grant to

extend broadband in the County, \$110,000 for FY21 and FY22 which will fund MCTV at the FY20 level, fund Granicus, Inc. and include approximately \$14,000 for community grant requests. There was general consensus to approve as proposed.

The budget work session recessed at 5:55 p.m.

The budget work session resumed at 6:25 p.m.

Council discussed the Capital Projects Fund. There was general consensus to abandon the Oxford Conservation Park project and to use the remaining funds of approximately \$94,000 toward another capital project. There is approximately \$1.2 million available for Capital Projects with \$2.35 million in requests. Council discussed each project as it was brought forward. Under County Facilities there was general consensus to move the Early Head Start classrooms (Family Support Center) in the amount of \$800,000 to FY22. Under Waterways and Wharves there was general consensus to approve the use of \$100,000 in federal and state grants for Skipton Creek Landing. Under Highways and Streets, Council approved the use of \$475,000 in local funds for Black Dog Alley roadwork to include survey and right-of-way acquisition by a vote of 4-1 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – aye  
Mr. Divilio – aye  
Mr. Leshner – aye  
Mr. Pack – aye  
Ms. Price – nay

Council approved the use of \$300,000 in local funds for improvements to Goldsborough Neck Road by general consensus. Under Parks and Recreation Facilities, Council approved the use of \$160,000 in local funds for improvements to Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe by a vote of 4-1 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – aye  
Mr. Divilio – aye  
Mr. Leshner – aye  
Mr. Pack – aye  
Ms. Price – nay

Council discussed the Capital Projects request from Talbot County Public Schools which totals \$596,000. Council discussion ensued with Council proposing to fund the Capital Projects as submitted and asked that the Roads Superintendent review the estimated cost for repaving of the Easton High School parking lot and St. Michaels High School resurfacing.

Council discussed Sanitary District Capital Projects. There was unanimous consent to approve \$100,000 in local funds for the nutrient credit program. Council discussed funding for the Ferry Point sewer extension which has been broken into two phases: Phase 1 for commercial properties (\$1,645,000) and Phase 2 for residential properties (\$855,000). By a vote of 4-1 Council approved including both Phase 1 and Phase 2 in the FY2021 budget, but proceeding with Phase 1 for now as follows:

Mr. Callahan – aye  
Mr. Divilio – aye  
Mr. Leshner – aye  
Mr. Pack – aye  
Ms. Price – nay

Council discussed projected Development Impact Fees and proposed using \$100,000 from library and general government categories to fund portion of General Fund Debt service in FY 2021. Discussion ensued if \$453,000 from public schools could be used to fund the Early Head Start classrooms. Ms. Lane will do additional research and report back at the next budget work session on March 31, 2020.

The budget work session ended at 7:25 p.m.

VI. Summary of Closed Session Held on March 26, 2020:

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

Time of closed session: 6:00 p.m.  
 Place of closed session: Bradley Meeting Room and County Council Office  
 Purpose of the closed session: To consider various matters as set forth in the statement for closing the meeting

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

Names of members voting aye: Pack, Price, Divilio, Leshner, Callahan  
 Members opposed: None  
 Abstaining: None  
 Absent: None

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

<b>Topic description</b>	<b>Statutory authority</b>	<b>Persons present</b>	<b>Action taken</b>
Discuss personnel matters related to preparation of the FY2021 budget	GP § 3-305 (b) (1)	Corey Pack, Laura Price, Frank Divilio, Pete Leshner, Chuck Callahan, Andy Hollis, Jessica Morris, Anthony Kupersmith (via conference call), Mary O'Donnell, Clay Stamp	None
Discuss public security related to the development and implementation of emergency plans involving continuity of operations and hazard pay for certain employees during a catastrophic health emergency,	GP § 3-305 (b) (10)	Same	None

since a public discussion would constitute a risk to public security.			
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