

COUNTY COUNCIL OF TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

Council Meeting

December 16, 2025; 5:00 p.m.

Council Chambers, Easton, Maryland

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Chuck F. Callahan

Pete Leshner

Keasha N. Haythe

Lynn L. Mielke

Dave Stepp

Reported by

Diane Houlihan

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<p>1 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS</p> <p>2</p> <p>3 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Let's go ahead and</p> <p>4 get started. If you don't mind standing, and</p> <p>5 we're going to say the prayer and then the</p> <p>6 Pledge of Allegiance of the Flag.</p> <p>7 (Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.)</p> <p>8 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Appreciate everybody</p> <p>9 being here tonight. I appreciate it. Okay.</p> <p>10 We've got the agenda in front of the</p> <p>11 Council. Is there any additions, deletions, or</p> <p>12 corrections to the agenda, Council? Hearing</p> <p>13 none, the chair moves that the agenda be</p> <p>14 accepted as unanimous consent.</p> <p>15 Next is the minutes of December 9th.</p> <p>16 We've had a chance to take a look at the</p> <p>17 minutes. Is there any additions, deletions, or</p> <p>18 corrections to the minutes, Council? Hearing</p> <p>19 none, the chair moves that the minutes be</p> <p>20 accepted as unanimous consent.</p> <p>21 Next is the disbursements of</p>	<p>1 Can we do a quick time check just to see</p> <p>2 how much time we have?</p> <p>3 MR. CALLAHAN: Five minutes at the max.</p> <p>4 MR. KOZEL: Five minutes at the max.</p> <p>5 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah. Exactly.</p> <p>6 MR. KOZEL: Well, I'm going to defer my</p> <p>7 conversation.</p> <p>8 MR. CALLAHAN: No. If you can kind of</p> <p>9 keep it, you know, ten to 15.</p> <p>10 MR. KOZEL: Ten to 15.</p> <p>11 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah, you know.</p> <p>12 MR. KOZEL: And then please feel free to</p> <p>13 ask any questions you like.</p> <p>14 MR. CALLAHAN: Yes, sir.</p> <p>15 MR. KOZEL: We'll try to make sure you</p> <p>16 stay informed.</p> <p>17 MR. CALLAHAN: But I want you to be able</p> <p>18 to get your point out, what's important to you</p> <p>19 guys.</p> <p>20 MR. KOZEL: Okay.</p> <p>21 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. For us to know.</p>
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<p>1 December 16th. Once again, we've had a chance</p> <p>2 to take a look at those. Is there any</p> <p>3 additions, deletions, or corrections to the</p> <p>4 disbursements, Council? Okay. Hearing none,</p> <p>5 the chair moves that the disbursement be</p> <p>6 accepted as unanimous consent. Okay.</p> <p>7 First on the agenda tonight is an update</p> <p>8 on the new hospital. And Ken, you guys want to</p> <p>9 come on up?</p> <p>10 MR. KOZEL: Good evening, everybody.</p> <p>11 MR. CALLAHAN: Good evening. How are you?</p> <p>12 MR. KOZEL: Doing great. How are you?</p> <p>13 MR. CALLAHAN: Good.</p> <p>14 MR. KOZEL: As we call up the</p> <p>15 presentation, just wanted to start by saying</p> <p>16 thank you.</p> <p>17 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup.</p> <p>18 MR. KOZEL: Thank you for giving us some</p> <p>19 time on your agenda today. We really</p> <p>20 appreciate it, and we hope it's informative for</p> <p>21 you.</p>	<p>1 MR. KOZEL: Thank you.</p> <p>2 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah.</p> <p>3 MR. KOZEL: I'm hopeful everyone knows my</p> <p>4 name. I'm Ken Kozel.</p> <p>5 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup.</p> <p>6 MR. KOZEL: I'm the president for</p> <p>7 University of Maryland Shore Regional Health.</p> <p>8 I've been in this role and blessed to serve</p> <p>9 this community for 14 years as your president</p> <p>10 of the hospitals.</p> <p>11 I'm here today with Ms. Lara Wilson. Lara</p> <p>12 is our director for external affairs and</p> <p>13 community relations. Lara does a great job</p> <p>14 with me keeping our community informed about</p> <p>15 what we're doing.</p> <p>16 So we're going to partner on this</p> <p>17 presentation today. And what you'll see is two</p> <p>18 pieces to this presentation. I'm going to give</p> <p>19 you the 10,000-foot view of the federal</p> <p>20 government and health care, the State</p> <p>21 government and health care, the University of</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 6</p> <p>1 Maryland and health care and what our vision 2 has been here at Shore Regional Health and how 3 we're executing on that vision. 4 Lara is going to complement that brief 5 presentation with what we're doing specifically 6 in Talbot County to support the new vision for 7 health care as established by the federal 8 government and the State government, what do 9 they want us to become as a health care 10 industry, and what is Shore Regional Health 11 doing today and will continue to do to support 12 their vision for how we create healthier 13 communities in our region. 14 So we're going to complement each other. 15 I guess feel free to ask any questions anytime. 16 So let's just stop in mid-sentence if you like 17 and make sure your questions are answered. 18 That pretty much covers the first slide, 19 but I'm going to walk you through a little bit 20 about the new model that is taking place here 21 in the State of Maryland. So we'll give you</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 8</p> <p>1 to operate are struggling with maintaining 2 service levels in their communities. 3 And these are important service levels 4 like cardiac care, cancer care, obstetrical 5 care. So these are essential foundational 6 services, and many hospitals across the country 7 are reducing or stopping those services in 8 their rural communities. 9 Notwithstanding that, you've got about 700 10 of the 2,000 rural hospitals across the country 11 that are at financial risk for a closure. That 12 is the element that's causing rural hospitals 13 to struggle. It's can they make it financially 14 in these, in these times. Of the 700 that are 15 at risk of closure financially, and half of 16 those are running at negative margins today. 17 So that's not a great prognosis for rural 18 health care for the future. 19 But what I wanted to share with you is that 20 Maryland has done an outstanding job I think, 21 the State of Maryland, with how we've advanced</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 7</p> <p>1 some details on that. 2 I also want to share with you a little bit 3 about the School of Medicine, some of the 4 things they're doing from a workforce 5 perspective that's going to support our efforts 6 and facilities here. 7 And then again, Lara will pick up with the 8 community impact update. 9 So I wanted to share this slide with you 10 just as a foundational slide that talks about 11 rural health care across the country. We've 12 talked about this before, but I want this to 13 serve as a gentle reminder that rural health 14 care is in dire straits throughout the United 15 States. And these statistics are pretty 16 revealing in that almost 200 rural hospitals 17 across the country have closed since 2005. 18 You've got 36 just since 2000 (sic.). So 19 that's only in the last five years, 36 have 20 closed. But the additional startling facts are 21 that those rural hospitals that are continuing</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 9</p> <p>1 health care in the State and how we're focusing 2 on the future of rural health care in our 3 region. 4 This is a very busy slide that I just 5 wanted to complement with a few updates. 6 First of all, the State of Maryland has 7 signed a ten-year agreement with the federal 8 government to extend our relationship with the 9 federal government into the new AHEAD model. 10 AHEAD stands for Achieving Healthcare 11 Efficiency through Accountable Design. 12 So the AHEAD model is the new model that 13 the State of Maryland will be working in. 14 We've signed that agreement. It will take 15 place on January 1st of 2026 and will run 16 through December 31st of 2035. So it's a 17 ten-year period. 18 The goal of this new model is to curb 19 health care cost growth, improve population 20 health, and promote healthier living. The aim 21 of this new model is to increase investments in</p>

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<p>1 primary care, to provide financial stability 2 for hospitals, and support connections to 3 community resources. So it really is using 4 technology and innovation to try to promote 5 healthier communities that we live in.</p> <p>6 The next slide focuses a little bit on 7 additional funding by the federal government to 8 support rural hospitals and rural health care 9 systems around the country.</p> <p>10 You might have heard of the one big 11 beautiful bill. Well, this was a piece of that 12 bill that focuses on allocating 50 billion, 13 that's 5-0 billion, with a B, dollars towards 14 rural health care if certain conditions are 15 met.</p> <p>16 So the first condition is that the states 17 must individually apply for 25 billion of this 18 \$50 billion fund. I'm pleased to say and share 19 that the State of Maryland has, in fact, 20 applied for the \$25 billion aspect of this.</p> <p>21 If all 50 States in the country apply for</p>	<p>1 preventative health. They want to support 2 workforce development by strengthening 3 recruitment and retention of health care 4 providers in rural communities, and they want 5 to use technology and innovation to advance the 6 health of our communities.</p> <p>7 So that is the strategy of the federal 8 government to address some of the rural health 9 care challenges that I shared with you on the 10 first slide. And that's what this \$50 billion 11 allocation is intended to do.</p> <p>12 Next slide. So I want to bring the plane 13 down a little bit and talk about the State of 14 Maryland and Shore Regional Health 15 specifically.</p> <p>16 You can see the State's slide. You can 17 see color variations. The green are counties 18 where the University of Maryland Medical System 19 has a presence, either a hospital or they 20 provide health care in those counties. And in 21 total, we're about 30,000 employees that are</p>
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<p>1 this \$25 billion allocation, each State will 2 get \$100 million a year for five years to put 3 towards advancing rural health care in their 4 communities statewide. So we'll find out which 5 States have applied and which States get 6 accepted by the federal government by the end 7 of this calendar year, December 31st.</p> <p>8 So that's an encouraging sign in that the 9 federal government is investing some money into 10 rural health care across the nation.</p> <p>11 The second allocation of \$25 billion is 12 going to be controlled by the federal 13 government, and we're going to have to apply 14 directly for the use of those funds.</p> <p>15 And next slide tells you a little bit 16 about what the feds are thinking are important 17 for not only sustaining rural health care but 18 advancing it across the nation. And there's 19 five strategic goals. These goals really 20 summarize by saying that they really want to 21 make rural America healthier again by promoting</p>	<p>1 part of the University of Maryland. Shore 2 Regional Health is obviously part of Maryland.</p> <p>3 And we cover about 25 percent of the total 4 health care in the State of Maryland. So we're 5 a big player. The other two big ones are 6 Hopkins and MedStar. And then there's a 7 variety of other hospitals that make up the 8 rest. But University of Maryland is one of the 9 largest in the State, covering about 25 percent 10 of the health care.</p> <p>11 You see in the red box the five counties 12 of the midshore. Those counties represent 13 Shore Regional Health's primary service area 14 and the counties that we focus our health care 15 on.</p> <p>16 Next slide. This slide just tries to give 17 you a sense of the population. We all know 18 within the five counties it's about 172,000 19 people. But what I find interesting is when 20 you look at the population and you break it 21 down from a Medicare-Medicaid perspective,</p>

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<p>1 total percentages are about 54 percent of our 2 five counties have either Medicare or Medicaid 3 services. You see some counties have a little 4 higher, some lower. But on average across the 5 five counties, we're at about 54 percent.</p> <p>6 That's an important number because when 7 you start to hear about health care and you 8 start to hear about Medicare services and 9 revenue from Medicare being cut, you start to 10 hear about Medicaid services and qualifications 11 for Medicaid changing and fewer people 12 qualifying for Medicaid, meaning that fewer 13 funds will flow from Medicare, we'll have more 14 uncompensated care as a result of that.</p> <p>15 So it all connects to our population and 16 to the percentages of Medicare and Medicaid 17 services that we have to keep a constant eye 18 on.</p> <p>19 Next slide. And this slide is really one 20 slide that kind of tries to share our vision 21 for what we've been trying to accomplish over</p>	<p>1 see the second floor of the structure being 2 built. And that structure represents the 3 actual inpatient unit of the hospital. So 4 pretty exciting to see the structure start to 5 take shape and start to go up.</p> <p>6 In addition to the second floor being 7 added, what you probably can't see from the 8 road but that's happening every single day is 9 the drilling of geothermal wells on that site. 10 In total, we're going to have about 1,728 wells 11 on that site. Each of them are going to be 12 about 400 feet deep.</p> <p>13 And they are going to provide the ability 14 for us to heat and cool using the ground's 15 temperature to support the heating and cooling 16 needs of the hospital.</p> <p>17 I believe it's the first hospital in the 18 University of Maryland Medical System and 19 likely the State that is using geothermal 20 technology for their facility.</p> <p>21 And in addition to on-the-site work, you</p>
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<p>1 of last 15 years or so. And that starts with 2 each county of the five counties of the 3 midshore having local access to health care. 4 And by that, I mean primary care, specialists, 5 diagnostics testing, all within their home 6 communities. And that represents about 90 to 7 95 percent of the health care that you're going 8 to need locally.</p> <p>9 The center of this slide, though, focuses 10 on the regional medical center. And that is 11 where we're going to provide the lion's share 12 of acute care hospital-based care in our 13 five-county region. That's been our vision.</p> <p>14 We put the spokes of this plan together in 15 the five counties that we serve. And now, as 16 you know, we're focusing on the regional 17 medical center as the corner piece of our 18 vision.</p> <p>19 So a little bit on the regional medical 20 center. And if you haven't been by the site, I 21 drove past it today. You can actually start to</p>	<p>1 can also know that we are working on Route 50 2 as we speak with entering and exiting through 3 the Talbot County Community Center entranceway. 4 So that work is being done as well. So a lot 5 of construction work being done on the site.</p> <p>6 You can see just a little less than a year 7 and a half ago, it was a green field where we 8 have really done a lot of site prep work to 9 today where you can start to see the structure 10 take place.</p> <p>11 My sense is by this time next year, you 12 will see the full structure of the east and 13 west wings of the hospital be built and up and 14 running. So you'll be able to see that from 15 Route 50.</p> <p>16 And at this point, we still envision an 17 opening date, seeing first patients, in and 18 around mid-2028. So that's our target 19 timeline.</p> <p>20 Next slide. The other thing I just wanted 21 to share with you that may be a misconception</p>

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<p>1 of our community is why are we building the</p> <p>2 number of beds that are associated with this</p> <p>3 hospital, what is the rationale behind the</p> <p>4 number of beds that we are intending to build.</p> <p>5 First and foremost, the State of Maryland,</p> <p>6 through our regulatory agencies, define how big</p> <p>7 we can build our hospital. Hospital systems</p> <p>8 can't just go and build a 400-bed facility</p> <p>9 anywhere they want.</p> <p>10 It's a CON State. You have to go through</p> <p>11 a Certificate of Need process, and you've got</p> <p>12 to get that approved.</p> <p>13 In the State of Maryland, we did that. We</p> <p>14 filed a Certificate of Need. And we actually</p> <p>15 pushed for more beds than the State typically</p> <p>16 allows in their formulas.</p> <p>17 Because we're rural, because we're</p> <p>18 geographically separated from the rest of</p> <p>19 health care in our region, they've allowed us</p> <p>20 to add another 29 beds to our licensed bed</p> <p>21 count of 118.</p>	<p>1 rendering of the facility once it's been fully</p> <p>2 constructed out on the campus off of Route 50</p> <p>3 near the Community Center.</p> <p>4 And again, that's what's going on. So a</p> <p>5 lot change from a national level, a State level</p> <p>6 with extending the model, with the University</p> <p>7 of Maryland and our efforts to create the</p> <p>8 integrated delivery system that we have,</p> <p>9 culminating with the regional medical center</p> <p>10 that we expect to be open in 2028.</p> <p>11 So that's what's going on at 5,000 feet.</p> <p>12 Lara is going to tell you what's going on</p> <p>13 today, and then we'll answer your questions.</p> <p>14 MS. WILSON: Great. Yes. So I know Ken</p> <p>15 introduced me. But I'll just say again I'm</p> <p>16 Lara Wilson. I'm the director of external</p> <p>17 affairs and community liaison.</p> <p>18 And I'm just going to go through just a</p> <p>19 few slides talking about some things that are</p> <p>20 more specific to Talbot County.</p> <p>21 But first, I'm going to start with just</p>
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<p>1 But for me, that's not the total answer.</p> <p>2 The total answer is yes, we've got 29 more</p> <p>3 beds. So we are building a bigger hospital.</p> <p>4 But within those 29 beds, we've got much more</p> <p>5 flexibility to move our patients through our</p> <p>6 hospital system.</p> <p>7 So that means when you hear about</p> <p>8 emergency departments getting full with</p> <p>9 patients, we are now able to move those</p> <p>10 patients up to beds much more easier because,</p> <p>11 one, they're all private beds; two, we've got</p> <p>12 more of those beds that we need and use every</p> <p>13 single day, and those are the med surge beds;</p> <p>14 and three, we've got 25 more observation beds</p> <p>15 that are adjacent to the ED that allow us to</p> <p>16 flex and use much greater capacity for our ED</p> <p>17 patients and observation patients.</p> <p>18 So a lot more flexibility is the key for</p> <p>19 me. And the additional number is now 147 beds</p> <p>20 total that we're building.</p> <p>21 Next slide. So this is the artist</p>	<p>1 for across the five midshore counties, these</p> <p>2 are the numbers for fiscal 25. And I just want</p> <p>3 to highlight a couple of numbers here.</p> <p>4 So across for regional health, our five</p> <p>5 counties, we had 7,500 admissions last year and</p> <p>6 71,000 emergency department visits and 118,553</p> <p>7 primary care visits.</p> <p>8 Also just want to highlight here we had</p> <p>9 over, we reached over 1,300 community members</p> <p>10 for cancer outreach in the last fiscal year.</p> <p>11 And we have some really strong partnerships</p> <p>12 with our health departments, our EMS,</p> <p>13 behavioral health providers, and really, really</p> <p>14 are focusing on workforce development in our</p> <p>15 pipeline.</p> <p>16 So this slide shares how many new</p> <p>17 providers we've hired in last fiscal year. And</p> <p>18 again, recruitment is really challenging in</p> <p>19 rural communities. And so really proud of</p> <p>20 these numbers trying to recruit providers here.</p> <p>21 I would like to highlight that out of the</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 22</p> <p>1 21, there's six primary care, new primary care 2 providers were hired and 15 specialists. And 3 again, for being a rural community, it's 4 something we're really proud of, trying to 5 provide that specialty care for our community 6 and our patients. 7 So here obviously just want to highlight 8 we have our, we have three urgent cares across 9 the midshore. We have one here in Easton. And 10 in the last fiscal year, the Easton urgent care 11 saw 13,727 patients. 12 Also want to highlight here something 13 we're excited about that the University of 14 Maryland urgent care system is working with on 15 an alternate destination program. And that's 16 specifically with the local EMS. 17 And that's a really exciting program where 18 our ambulances will be able to evaluate and 19 connect live with providers and determine 20 whether the ER is the right place for them or 21 if there's another level of care that's best</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 24</p> <p>1 know that last year, Talbot launched their 2 program. And we're really excited that we 3 have -- are part of that. 4 We have a transitions pharmacist. Her 5 name is Melanie Chapel, and she provides that 6 pharmacy support to these patients as they are 7 reached in their home. There's home 8 assessments. They can be treated at their 9 home. They can be connected to various 10 resources. And Melanie does a lot of work with 11 the pharmacy assessing the medications that 12 they have, making sure there's not 13 interactions, making sure they're getting the 14 things that they need. 15 And also, wanted to mention that we 16 have -- do a lot of community outreach through 17 our population health department. Here I 18 highlighted a couple of senior center 19 medication talks. Working in community health 20 education at Chesapeake Forum, at BAAM, and 21 other great partners across Talbot County.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 23</p> <p>1 for them. Again, right place, right time for 2 that patient. So that's really exciting. 3 That's something that will really help the 4 patients get the level of care that they need 5 at the right time. It's something that we're 6 really excited about. 7 Other counties have done it. So we're 8 proud that that's coming to Talbot County. 9 And then also, again, I know I mentioned 10 but really focusing on our regional 11 partnerships for behavioral health. We know 12 we've heard a lot about behavioral health 13 challenges in the news. So working on suicide 14 prevention, behavioral health crisis response, 15 and just really working with the law 16 enforcement and the health department and other 17 community providers to help meet our patients 18 where they are. 19 Two other programs that I want to 20 highlight. One is the mobile integrated health 21 or the mobile integrated community health. We</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 25</p> <p>1 We've done outreach events with our 2 community health workers, blood pressure 3 screenings, and working on advanced directives. 4 So those are just a few things that we're 5 doing across Talbot County. 6 MR. KOZEL: These are really designed to 7 help us reduce unnecessary emergency department 8 visits. So the fewer ER visits we have, the 9 easier the flow of the patient through the 10 process is. It's again, right care, right 11 location, right time. 12 MS. WILSON: And then as I mentioned when 13 I started, just really focusing on workforce 14 development and our pipeline. Great 15 partnership with Chesapeake College. 16 We do a lot of recruitment for our nursing 17 and surge tech, lab tech, rad tech, 18 phlebotomy. But also, active with the ITCH 19 program, which is the Introductions to Careers 20 in Health Care, trying to reach middle and high 21 school students and get them excited about</p>

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<p>1 careers in health care.</p> <p>2 And in not just doctors and nurses, which</p> <p>3 are really important, but explaining that there</p> <p>4 are a lot of jobs within health care that go</p> <p>5 beyond, from IT and HR and communications and</p> <p>6 all sorts of things, and just getting them</p> <p>7 excited about a career in health care.</p> <p>8 So I know that was a little bit rapid</p> <p>9 fire, but we'd also be happy to take questions</p> <p>10 if you have any for myself or for Ken.</p> <p>11 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Great.</p> <p>12 Council, questions?</p> <p>13 MR. STEPP: None here. Appreciate the</p> <p>14 review. Thank you.</p> <p>15 MR. KOZEL: Sure.</p> <p>16 MR. CALLAHAN: I just had one. The urgent</p> <p>17 care visits, 13,000. Was that on all three of</p> <p>18 them or just one?</p> <p>19 MS. WILSON: 13,000, that was just for</p> <p>20 Talbot.</p> <p>21 MR. CALLAHAN: That was just for Talbot.</p>	<p>1 of staff, which is Clay, we meet all the time.</p> <p>2 And you bring us up to speed on a lot of things</p> <p>3 every month. Every month, twice a month we do</p> <p>4 meetings twice I think a month at the hospital.</p> <p>5 So just to let the public know, there's a</p> <p>6 lot of communication with Ken and Lara.</p> <p>7 And you're doing a great job. So anything</p> <p>8 we can do to help you, please let us know.</p> <p>9 MR. KOZEL: Will do. Thank you.</p> <p>10 MR. CALLAHAN: And we appreciate you.</p> <p>11 Good job.</p> <p>12 MR. KOZEL: Thanks for your support.</p> <p>13 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup.</p> <p>14 MR. LESHER: One question. I believe the</p> <p>15 last time you were in, you addressed the</p> <p>16 concerns over the frequency with which the</p> <p>17 emergency room is full and has to turn away</p> <p>18 incoming ambulances or others to other places.</p> <p>19 Is that something that you've been able to</p> <p>20 move the needle on?</p> <p>21 MR. KOZEL: It is. And thank you for the</p>
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<p>1 Okay.</p> <p>2 MS. WILSON: Yeah. The number of ER</p> <p>3 visits across all five counties was 45,000.</p> <p>4 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Got you. Yeah.</p> <p>5 Okay. Thanks.</p> <p>6 MS. WILSON: You're welcome.</p> <p>7 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Well, great job.</p> <p>8 MR. KOZEL: Thank you.</p> <p>9 So one of the slides talked about our</p> <p>10 vision, and I must say that I have to thank all</p> <p>11 of our community partners who have really been</p> <p>12 helpful and instrumental in us executing on our</p> <p>13 vision. We named a few here. There's too many</p> <p>14 to name by name, but we would not be the health</p> <p>15 care system that we are without our community</p> <p>16 partners. So incredibly important, and we're</p> <p>17 going to continue to make strong relationships</p> <p>18 there on behalf of our community.</p> <p>19 MR. CALLAHAN: Well, we really do</p> <p>20 appreciate everything you're doing.</p> <p>21 And like me and Ken and the mayor and some</p>	<p>1 question.</p> <p>2 And there's really two reasons why I say</p> <p>3 it's improving.</p> <p>4 The first has to do with a new program</p> <p>5 that we established. We like to call it the</p> <p>6 rapid assessment zone. So the rapid assessment</p> <p>7 zone is designed for those patients that come</p> <p>8 into the emergency room but don't need a bed,</p> <p>9 don't need to be seen and put in a bed where</p> <p>10 they'll stay for hours before the disposition</p> <p>11 is made.</p> <p>12 They can come in, into a newly-designated</p> <p>13 space, get triaged, get treated quickly, and</p> <p>14 discharged safely within, at most within two</p> <p>15 hours. So that really does improve the flow of</p> <p>16 patients because before that, they were coming</p> <p>17 in, we were being triaged, and sent right to a</p> <p>18 bed. That was bottlenecking everything up.</p> <p>19 So that rapid assessment zone actually</p> <p>20 sees about 40 percent of the patients that come</p> <p>21 through the ED. So it is having an effect on</p>

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<p>1 reducing backlogs and delays in the ED.</p> <p>2 The second thing I think is important that</p> <p>3 we've done recently, as of October 7th, is we</p> <p>4 have hired a new hospitalist group that is</p> <p>5 going to take care of our inpatients.</p> <p>6 Now, you might ask what's that got to do</p> <p>7 with ER and throughput. It's directly</p> <p>8 connected.</p> <p>9 And in this case, in the case of Shore, we</p> <p>10 hired the same hospitalist group company that</p> <p>11 runs our emergency department. So they cover</p> <p>12 both. So one company covering both our ER docs</p> <p>13 and our inpatient docs so that they work</p> <p>14 together much more collaboratively. They have</p> <p>15 common goals. They have shared expectations</p> <p>16 and metrics. So they are working much more</p> <p>17 collaboratively than two separate and distinct</p> <p>18 groups that are only interested in their own</p> <p>19 area of expertise.</p> <p>20 This allows for better communication,</p> <p>21 better patient flow. And while it's only</p>	<p>1 requesting for a zoning text amendment from</p> <p>2 attorney Zach Smith on behalf of his client,</p> <p>3 Althea Dulin.</p> <p>4 She currently has a reserve land agreement</p> <p>5 with the county for an agricultural piece of</p> <p>6 land. She wants to place the property in a</p> <p>7 MALPF easement, but MALPF will not allow her to</p> <p>8 do that while the county agreement is in place.</p> <p>9 However, the current county code, that</p> <p>10 agreement can only be released if there's a</p> <p>11 change in the zoning classification, which</p> <p>12 doesn't apply here.</p> <p>13 So Brennan Tarleton and I met with</p> <p>14 Mr. Smith and Ms. Dulin and suggested that they</p> <p>15 pursue a text amendment so that the Council, if</p> <p>16 it so desires, could amend the code to permit</p> <p>17 her to do what she's looking to do, which would</p> <p>18 actually -- and I believe that Mr. Smith is</p> <p>19 here, can explain a little bit more. But I</p> <p>20 think it would actually put some stricter</p> <p>21 protections on the use of that property.</p>
Page 31	Page 33
<p>1 started October 7th with our new hospitalist</p> <p>2 group, we've already seen dramatic improvements</p> <p>3 in throughput and in length of stay of our</p> <p>4 patients, which also helps move patients out of</p> <p>5 the ED.</p> <p>6 So we're going to give this a little bit</p> <p>7 more time to make sure it's having the effect</p> <p>8 that we expect, but those two things are having</p> <p>9 a dramatic impact on our emergency department</p> <p>10 throughput.</p> <p>11 MR. CALLAHAN: That's great.</p> <p>12 MR. LESHER: Thank you.</p> <p>13 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay, guys. Thank you.</p> <p>14 MR. KOZEL: Okay. Thank you. Appreciate</p> <p>15 it.</p> <p>16 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Next on the agenda</p> <p>17 is discussion on a zoning, with Planning and</p> <p>18 Zoning and Commission on a text amendment.</p> <p>19 Mr. Thomas, you want to go ahead and go</p> <p>20 over that for us, please?</p> <p>21 MR. THOMAS: Yes. We so received a</p>	<p>1 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.</p> <p>2 MR. THOMAS: So I see Mr. Smith is here.</p> <p>3 I'll let him come up and give you a little bit</p> <p>4 more information.</p> <p>5 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup.</p> <p>6 MR. SMITH: Good evening.</p> <p>7 MR. CALLAHAN: Good evening.</p> <p>8 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Council. Zach</p> <p>9 Smith on behalf of Robert and Althea Dulin, a</p> <p>10 local farm family here in Cordova.</p> <p>11 And I think Mr. Thomas described the</p> <p>12 issue.</p> <p>13 It's just that this bill, if adopted, the</p> <p>14 language we propose would essentially give the</p> <p>15 County Council the authority to consider</p> <p>16 releasing land from either reserve land</p> <p>17 agreement or a reservation of development</p> <p>18 rights agreement in instances where a property</p> <p>19 owner wants to participate in the MALPF</p> <p>20 program.</p> <p>21 So importantly, that will give the Council</p>

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<p>1 another tool to help support our local farm 2 family, I think encourage agricultural 3 preservation, and encourage property owners to 4 participate in the program. And the benefit 5 for the property owner is they would be able to 6 get paid on the entirety of their undeveloped 7 land through that ag preservation program. 8 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Any questions, 9 Council? 10 MR. LESHER: Mr. Smith, Mr. Thomas made 11 reference to obviously with the remaining land 12 agreement, there's a level of protection in 13 place there. It can't be further subdivided 14 and so forth. But he alluded to further 15 protections that MALPF would afford that the 16 remaining lands agreement. 17 Could you describe those? 18 MR. SMITH: So I think if you look at the 19 documents side by side, the conservation 20 easement essentially removes all property 21 rights other than agricultural use from a</p>	<p>1 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. So at this point, 2 we... 3 MR. THOMAS: We just need direction from 4 the Council, if it so desires, to refer the 5 proposed amendment to the Planning Commission 6 for review and recommendation back to Council. 7 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. 8 MR. LESHER: Should that come in the form 9 of a motion? 10 MR. THOMAS: Yes, please. 11 MR. LESHER: I will move that we refer 12 this request to the Planning Commission for a 13 recommendation. 14 MS. HAYTHE: Second. 15 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We got a motion and 16 second. Madam Secretary, could you call the 17 vote. 18 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan. 19 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye. 20 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp. 21 MR. STEPP: Aye.</p>
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<p>1 property. So that's essentially all you can 2 ever do with the land from that point forward 3 is to farm it, which is somewhat different than 4 the reservation of development rights, which 5 just limits residential development on the 6 property moving forward. 7 MR. LESHER: But if it's zoned 8 agricultural, what other options are there on 9 the remaining? 10 MR. SMITH: I mean commercial hunting 11 perhaps. Always have the right to petition for 12 a zoning change that could then allow for 13 future development. Zoning changes, zoning 14 laws can change. So there's a possibility 15 that -- 16 MR. LESHER: Sure. 17 MR. SMITH: -- something else could 18 happen. It's not perpetual, like a 19 conservation easement. 20 MR. LESHER: Okay. Thank you. 21 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Council.</p>	<p>1 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner. 2 MR. LESHER: Aye. 3 SECRETARY: MS. Mielke. 4 MS. MIELKE: Aye. 5 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe. 6 MS. HAYTHE: Aye. 7 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. 8 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Council. 9 MR. CALLAHAN: Thanks, Zach. 10 Okay. Next on the agenda, we have Bill 11 1623 eligible for vote tonight. Madam 12 Secretary, could you go ahead and read it into 13 the record. 14 SECRETARY: Bill Number 1623, a bill to 15 amend Chapter 11 of the Talbot County Code, 16 alcoholic beverages, for the purposes of 17 permitting on-premises consumption of beer, 18 wine, and liquor at alcohol dispensary bistros, 19 expanding the seating capacity for alcohol 20 dispensary bistros, exempting class I licenses 21 issued for an urban location from the market</p>

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<p>1 test set forth in section 11-8(D)(2) if the</p> <p>2 municipality in which the urban location is</p> <p>3 located does not have an existing alcohol</p> <p>4 dispensary bistro holding a valid class I</p> <p>5 license, and exempting Oxford Conservation Park</p> <p>6 from the 500-foot distance restriction for new</p> <p>7 off-sale licenses.</p> <p>8 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thank you, Madam</p> <p>9 Secretary. Okay. I'll open this up for</p> <p>10 discussion.</p> <p>11 MS. HAYTHE: Yeah. No questions. We had</p> <p>12 the public hearing last Tuesday night.</p> <p>13 And I think with that, I will entertain a</p> <p>14 motion to approve.</p> <p>15 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Is there a second?</p> <p>16 MR. STEPP: (Indiscernible.)</p> <p>17 MR. LESHER: It's eligible for a vote. I</p> <p>18 don't think you need a motion for that.</p> <p>19 MR. STEPP: I think we just call.</p> <p>20 MR. LESHER: Once we've discussed it, you</p> <p>21 can call the roll.</p>	<p>1 Council, I would like your consideration</p> <p>2 for the appointment of Mr. William Belding to</p> <p>3 the Administrative Charging Committee.</p> <p>4 MR. STEPP: Make a motion.</p> <p>5 MR. LESHER: Second.</p> <p>6 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We got a motion and</p> <p>7 second. Madam Secretary, could you call the</p> <p>8 vote.</p> <p>9 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.</p> <p>10 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.</p> <p>11 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.</p> <p>12 MR. STEPP: Aye.</p> <p>13 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.</p> <p>14 MR. LESHER: Aye.</p> <p>15 SECRETARY: MS. Mielke.</p> <p>16 MS. MIELKE: Aye.</p> <p>17 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.</p> <p>18 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.</p> <p>19 MR. STAMP: And Council, I'd like your</p> <p>20 consideration to appoint Council Member David</p> <p>21 Stepp as a representative to the Local Drug and</p>
Page 39	Page 41
<p>1 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Madam Secretary, can</p> <p>2 you call the roll.</p> <p>3 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.</p> <p>4 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.</p> <p>5 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.</p> <p>6 MR. STEPP: Aye.</p> <p>7 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.</p> <p>8 MR. LESHER: Aye.</p> <p>9 SECRETARY: MS. Mielke.</p> <p>10 MS. MIELKE: Aye.</p> <p>11 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.</p> <p>12 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.</p> <p>13 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Sounds good.</p> <p>14 MR. STAMP: There you go.</p> <p>15 MR. CALLAHAN: There you go. All right.</p> <p>16 Next on the agenda is Clay's stuff.</p> <p>17 MR. STAMP: Thank, you Mr. Council</p> <p>18 President, Members of the Council.</p> <p>19 Under county manager report this evening,</p> <p>20 I have several items. The first being board</p> <p>21 and committee appointments.</p>	<p>1 Alcohol Committee, the LDAC.</p> <p>2 MR. LESHER: I will so move.</p> <p>3 MS. HAYTHE: Second.</p> <p>4 MR. CALLAHAN: Madam Secretary, could you</p> <p>5 call the vote, please.</p> <p>6 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.</p> <p>7 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.</p> <p>8 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.</p> <p>9 MR. STEPP: I guess I should abstain.</p> <p>10 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.</p> <p>11 MR. LESHER: Aye.</p> <p>12 SECRETARY: MS. Mielke.</p> <p>13 MS. MIELKE: Aye.</p> <p>14 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.</p> <p>15 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.</p> <p>16 MR. STAMP: And thank you, Council.</p> <p>17 I'll ask Emily Gilmer to come forward.</p> <p>18 She is your director of Park & Recreation.</p> <p>19 She's here this evening to request</p> <p>20 Council's consideration to enter a joint use</p> <p>21 agreement between the Town of Trappe, a</p>

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<p>1 Maryland municipal corporation, and Talbot 2 County, Maryland, and the Maryland Department 3 of Natural Resources, acting on behalf of the 4 State of Maryland for the Home Run Baker Park. 5 And she'll explain what this is about. 6 And what she can't explain, Patrick Thomas 7 is here and fill in anywhere else we need into. 8 MS. GILMER: So the Town of Trappe has 9 applied for a community parks and playground -- 10 MR. CALLAHAN: Can you -- 11 MS. GILMER: Emily Gilmer, director of 12 Parks & Recreation. I'll get it one day. 13 MR. CALLAHAN: There you go. 14 MS. GILMER: The Town of Trappe has 15 applied for a community parks and playground 16 grant. They have been awarded that grant. 17 And so we've been working with Patrick on 18 getting a joint use agreement because they are 19 doing improvements on Home Run Baker Park, 20 which is a county-owned facility. 21 So they will be adding a dedicated</p>	<p>1 been something that's been approved by the Park 2 Board as well. 3 MR. LESHMER: Terrific. 4 MR. STAMP: And I just add. This is 5 similar to how we've worked with the Town of 6 St. Michael's with the Perry Cabin Park in the 7 past. So it's a unique opportunity to display 8 how municipal government and county government 9 works well together. 10 MR. LESHMER: Hooray. Well, with that, I 11 will move to approve. 12 MR. STEPP: Overwhelming second. 13 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We got a motion and 14 second. Madam Secretary, could you call the 15 vote, please. 16 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan. 17 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye. 18 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp. 19 MR. STEPP: Aye. 20 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshmer. 21 MR. LESHMER: Aye.</p>
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<p>1 softball field for girls, softball field 2 dedicated for girls softball. They are going 3 to be running electric to the already-installed 4 scoreboard out there. And then they're also 5 going to be adding restrooms. 6 So it will be great improvements to that 7 park. So we appreciate them doing this, and we 8 just need to go ahead and enter a -- we're 9 requesting to enter a joint use agreement. 10 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. 11 MR. LESHMER: Ms. Gilmer, I understand that 12 the county owns the land. The town is uniquely 13 eligible for community parks and playgrounds 14 funding from the State. The county would not 15 be eligible for that funding. So for the town 16 to apply for that, they can't put those 17 improvements from that grant onto this parkland 18 without this use agreement in place. 19 MS. GILMER: Yes. Correct. 20 MR. LESHMER: That's our job here. 21 MS. GILMER: Yes. Yup. And this has all</p>	<p>1 SECRETARY: MS. Mielke. 2 MS. MIELKE: Aye. 3 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe. 4 MS. HAYTHE: Aye. 5 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. 6 MR. STAMP: And while Emily is sitting 7 here, I just want to thank her for all the work 8 that she and her team are doing out there, an 9 absolutely amazing job. 10 Number one, she gets an A for patience 11 because that hospital project is like big 12 brother is moving in, encroaching a little bit. 13 But so they're very patient with that. 14 But I mean some of the programs that 15 they're running over the holidays are just 16 absolutely wonderful. 17 Can you just take a minute and talk about 18 Skating with Santa? 19 MS. GILMER: Yes. So Skate with Santa is 20 my favorite event that we run each year. 21 I actually got to hand over the reigns</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 46</p> <p>1 this year to our program coordinator, Ellie, 2 and she did a wonderful job. 3 It's always sold out every single year. 4 We take 100 kids plus their parents and whoever 5 else comes with them. So the place winds up 6 being packed. 7 And everybody gets to meet with Santa. 8 Santa brings them a gift, a personalized gift 9 for each depending on their gender and their 10 age. We wrap all of those presents. We 11 actually have Dave, Dave Larrimore. He is our 12 parks staff member. He comes in and he plays 13 Christmas music and he wraps all these 14 presents. And he does a wonderful, wonderful 15 job. 16 So it's definitely a team effort. Johnny 17 Brown, he decorates the whole place up and 18 we've got Christmas lights galore. So it's a 19 good time of year to be at the Community 20 Center. 21 MR. CALLAHAN: That's great. Appreciate</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 48</p> <p>1 are sufficient funds in the FY26 budget. 2 Brian is here to talk about that, and I'll 3 fill in wherever I need to. 4 MR. LeCATES: Thank you, Mr. Stamp. 5 So as Mr. Stamp alluded to, this is a 6 request to recommend the bid of 25-07 for a 7 storage facility for Emergency Services, 8 Sheriff's Department, Technical Services, and 9 Facilities Maintenance. It's a joint venture 10 with all four county departments and also 11 supports our volunteer fire department. 12 So we have large storage needs for 13 response equipment and different items that 14 throughout the year. 15 And right now, we're leasing a building on 16 the other side of town. 17 By awarding it to this property, it's 18 right across the street from our new Public 19 Safety Complex. So it's not only more 20 convenient, but it's also strategically located 21 for any future growth.</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 47</p> <p>1 all the hard work you're doing. 2 MS. GILMER: Yup. 3 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup. 4 MR. STAMP: Thank you, Emily. 5 MS. GILMER: Thank you. Have a great 6 Christmas. 7 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. You have a good 8 Christmas, too. 9 MR. STAMP: Thank you, Council. 10 Next I'd ask Brian LeCates to come up. 11 Council, we're asking your consideration, 12 we're recommending that you award Bid Number 13 25-07. These are requests for proposals for 14 real property for Talbot County public safety 15 storage facility. 16 You'll note in your packet that Emergency 17 Services is recommending award of this bid to 18 El Jefe, LLC in the amount of \$1,850,000 for 19 real property located at 8845 Mistletoe Drive 20 in Easton. 21 A total of five bids were received. There</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 49</p> <p>1 So there is some office space that's 2 attached to this building. 3 And what we have a plan for is maybe 4 putting in a future EMS station once call 5 volumes dictate because we always make our 6 decisions by data. So once the data really 7 shows that we need another paramedic unit here 8 in Easton, we've already got a landing pad for 9 that station to be built. 10 So I'm happy to answer any questions or 11 elaborate if there's anything further. 12 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. 13 MR. LESHAR: So the location on this is 14 right because it's next to the new Public 15 Safety Complex. 16 MR. LeCATES: Yes, sir. 17 MR. LESHAR: The fact is it's already 18 built. So we don't need to do new 19 construction, which I think at one point we had 20 contemplated for a storage building. 21 MR. LeCATES: Correct.</p>

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<p>1 MR. LESHER: And this allows us to</p> <p>2 consolidate out of a leased space.</p> <p>3 It compares in size? This is larger than</p> <p>4 the leased space or comparable to it?</p> <p>5 MR. LeCATES: The interior storage space</p> <p>6 is comparable. Maybe slightly larger.</p> <p>7 But what is larger is the outside</p> <p>8 fenced-in area. So a lot of our trailers don't</p> <p>9 necessarily need to be inside or temperature</p> <p>10 controlled. And a lot of the Sheriff's</p> <p>11 Department stuff doesn't need to be necessarily</p> <p>12 inside. So it gives us -- parking lot goes</p> <p>13 from about ten spaces to about 40 spaces. So</p> <p>14 it gives some room for future growth as well.</p> <p>15 MR. LESHER: And reviewing the documents,</p> <p>16 it looked like we have a reasonable payback</p> <p>17 period for this. What, 14 years or something</p> <p>18 like that, over the current lease payments?</p> <p>19 MR. LeCATES: I believe it was 17. Yes,</p> <p>20 17 years we would break even. And we certainly</p> <p>21 plan to keep this building for probably 20 or</p>	<p>1 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.</p> <p>2 MR. LESHER: Aye.</p> <p>3 SECRETARY: MS. Mielke.</p> <p>4 MS. MIELKE: Aye.</p> <p>5 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.</p> <p>6 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.</p> <p>7 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.</p> <p>8 MR. LeCATES: Thank you, all, for your</p> <p>9 support, as always.</p> <p>10 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thank you.</p> <p>11 MR. LeCATES: Have a great day, and Happy</p> <p>12 Holidays.</p> <p>13 MR. STAMP: Thank you, Brian.</p> <p>14 Thank you, Council.</p> <p>15 I'd ask Ray Clarke, your county engineer,</p> <p>16 to come forward, please.</p> <p>17 Ray is here this evening to request your</p> <p>18 consideration to utilize FY26 capital outlay</p> <p>19 funding for the purchase of equipment for the</p> <p>20 Klondike Road biosolids septage facility. Ray.</p> <p>21 MR. CLARKE: Thank you. Council, again,</p>
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<p>1 30 years, if not longer.</p> <p>2 MR. LESHER: Sure. Well, that seems to</p> <p>3 be -- I appreciate all the thought that's gone</p> <p>4 into this, the planning. It seems to me that</p> <p>5 you've hit on a really good solution for this</p> <p>6 storage challenge that your department but also</p> <p>7 other departments face.</p> <p>8 MR. LeCATES: Yes, sir. That's the way we</p> <p>9 feel as well. It was really a gift that this</p> <p>10 bid came in.</p> <p>11 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Any other questions?</p> <p>12 Okay.</p> <p>13 MR. LESHER: If not, I'll move to approve.</p> <p>14 MR. STEPP: And a second.</p> <p>15 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We got a motion and</p> <p>16 second. Madam Secretary, could you call the</p> <p>17 vote.</p> <p>18 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.</p> <p>19 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.</p> <p>20 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.</p> <p>21 MR. STEPP: Aye.</p>	<p>1 just to kind of give you a little brief</p> <p>2 background. Ultimately, we had \$81,189 that</p> <p>3 was appropriated as part of the capital fund</p> <p>4 for the biosolids facility.</p> <p>5 We went and researched off the blanket</p> <p>6 purchase orders for the State of Maryland. And</p> <p>7 ultimately, we found a price from Atlantic</p> <p>8 Tractors ultimately for 56,600.22. And so we</p> <p>9 are making a recommendation to go ahead and</p> <p>10 award that.</p> <p>11 At the same time, since there are funds</p> <p>12 available, we were also trying to seek a Gator.</p> <p>13 It would help our guys be able to travel from</p> <p>14 let's say the biosolids office area out to the</p> <p>15 spray spigots and not have to take a truck or</p> <p>16 anything out there like that.</p> <p>17 So we're also requesting I guess that we</p> <p>18 go ahead and purchase a Gator for \$14,480.44 as</p> <p>19 part of this.</p> <p>20 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.</p> <p>21 MR. STAMP: So just to clarify. So</p>

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<p>1 \$56,600.22 from Atlantic Tractor. And this is 2 to purchase a tractor boom lift. 3 MR. CLARKE: Right. 4 MR. STAMP: And then \$14,480.44 for a 5 Gator. 6 And both of these items will be purchased 7 using a blanket Maryland State purchase order 8 piggybacking off a Maryland State contract. 9 And there are funds in place for this. 10 MR. LESHER: Council, I've had the 11 opportunity to tour this facility twice, once 12 new to Council and once this past year as part 13 of the Public Works Advisory Board. 14 It is perhaps the county's most powerfully 15 aromatic facility and a necessary one. This is 16 where the restaurant grease goes from the 17 traps, this is where the septic sludge goes 18 from pump-outs of all those rural systems. 19 I think it's one of those things that we 20 wish we didn't have to have, but this is 21 something that's absolutely necessary, performs</p>	<p>1 effort to come to the aid of The Preserve at 2 Wye Mills, we're here, Ray is here this evening 3 to request Council's consideration to award Bid 4 Number 25-15, Talbot County Region IV 5 wastewater treatment plant improvement plan for 6 The Preserve at Wye Mills. 7 Ray. 8 MR. CLARKE: Again, I would ask the 9 Council for upon their approval, that this be a 10 contingent approval based upon MDE approving 11 the bids. 12 This is actually going to be a replacement 13 wastewater treatment facility for The Preserve 14 at Wye Mills. We've got a bid in. The low 15 bidder was from Premiere Service Group, which 16 is actually a local contractor. And it was for 17 \$1,800,000. 18 Right now, we are looking at really trying 19 to maintain our current rate, which is \$1,800 20 per year. So that basically by awarding this, 21 that would put us in that position of doing</p>
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<p>1 an important function for us. 2 I'll move to approve. 3 MS. MIELKE: Second. 4 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We got a motion and 5 second. Madam Secretary, could you call the 6 vote. 7 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan. 8 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye. 9 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp. 10 MR. STEPP: Aye. 11 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner. 12 MR. LESHER: Aye. 13 SECRETARY: MS. Mielke. 14 MS. MIELKE: Aye. 15 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe. 16 MS. HAYTHE: Aye. 17 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. 18 MR. CLARKE: Thank you. 19 MR. STAMP: Thank you, Council. 20 And Ray will stay here. We have cause to 21 celebrate this evening. After a long, a long</p>	<p>1 that. 2 One of the things we're also working with 3 is Co Combs. They have I believe it was about 4 16 -- I'm sorry. Thirteen building permits 5 they would like to pursue. We can't pursue 6 that until we've started construction on this 7 project. 8 So with this facility, I believe 12 9 building permits is something that they would 10 like to seek within the next year. And that 11 would generate about \$180,000 of capital 12 charges. So about ten percent of the cost. 13 MR. CALLAHAN: Good job. 14 MR. CLARKE: And this is one of the things 15 we had to do as part of the consent agreement 16 with MDE. 17 MR. LESHER: And Mr. Clarke, are we 18 getting some MDE funding to offset -- 19 MR. CLARKE: Yes, yes. I believe we're 20 getting close to 73 to 75 percent grant funding 21 through the Bay Restoration Fund.</p>

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<p>1 The reason we're getting that is because</p> <p>2 we are moving away -- we are moving to -- it</p> <p>3 was a BNR facility to now an ENR MBR facility.</p> <p>4 And so MDE looked at that and has provided us</p> <p>5 with a very nice amount of grant funding for</p> <p>6 the project.</p> <p>7 So I can't tell you the numbers right off</p> <p>8 the bat. I think it was roughly about 1. --</p> <p>9 maybe about 1.4 to \$1.5 million. Or</p> <p>10 1.3 million. I'm sorry.</p> <p>11 MR. LESHER: And for the public, by going</p> <p>12 from a BNR to an ENR, this is a higher standard</p> <p>13 of treatment.</p> <p>14 MR. CLARKE: Correct.</p> <p>15 MR. LESHER: This is the state-of-the-art</p> <p>16 sewage treatment such as we have at</p> <p>17 St. Michaels.</p> <p>18 MR. CLARKE: Correct.</p> <p>19 MR. LESHER: Such as Easton has, such as</p> <p>20 Lakeside has, for that matter.</p> <p>21 This will be the same standard of</p>	<p>1 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Motion and second.</p> <p>2 Madam Secretary, could you call the vote.</p> <p>3 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.</p> <p>4 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.</p> <p>5 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.</p> <p>6 MR. STEPP: Aye.</p> <p>7 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.</p> <p>8 MR. LESHER: Aye.</p> <p>9 SECRETARY: MS. Mielke.</p> <p>10 MS. MIELKE: Aye.</p> <p>11 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.</p> <p>12 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.</p> <p>13 MR. STAMP: Thank you, Ray.</p> <p>14 MR. CLARKE: Appreciate it.</p> <p>15 MR. CALLAHAN: Thank you, Ray.</p> <p>16 MR. CLARKE: Merry Christmas.</p> <p>17 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup.</p> <p>18 MR. STAMP: And lastly. Well, not lastly.</p> <p>19 But anyway, next I'll ask Sarah to come</p> <p>20 forward.</p> <p>21 We have a request from our Office of</p>
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<p>1 treatment even though this is a relatively</p> <p>2 small plant or relatively small, serving a</p> <p>3 relatively small development.</p> <p>4 MR. CLARKE: That is correct.</p> <p>5 And it will be utilizing the MBR, which is</p> <p>6 a micro membrane type reactor. Ultimately, it</p> <p>7 allows us to even probably get down to almost</p> <p>8 zero or non-detects for total phosphorus. Our</p> <p>9 hope is really to be about one milligram per</p> <p>10 liter or less for total nitrogen.</p> <p>11 Typically a BNR facility is eight</p> <p>12 milligrams per liter for total nitrogen. ENR</p> <p>13 is three. Our goal is really to drive those</p> <p>14 numbers down to about one or less.</p> <p>15 And this is also spray irrigated. So it's</p> <p>16 not going into a river. It's actually going</p> <p>17 onto crops that we have out there.</p> <p>18 MR. LESHER: Yeah.</p> <p>19 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Is there a motion?</p> <p>20 MR. LESHER: I'll move to approve.</p> <p>21 MR. STEPP: Second.</p>	<p>1 Communication to apply for and accept a grant</p> <p>2 from the Maryland 250 Commission Once in a</p> <p>3 Generation grant program. And Sarah is here to</p> <p>4 speak to you about that this evening.</p> <p>5 MS. KILMON: Hey, guys. So my name is</p> <p>6 Sarah Kilmon, and I am communications manager</p> <p>7 but also one of the administrators for our</p> <p>8 Talbot 250 Commission, which is why I'm here</p> <p>9 today.</p> <p>10 I think it's fitting that we're at the</p> <p>11 very last meeting talking about the 250th</p> <p>12 anniversary because next year is the official</p> <p>13 year. It is not only the 250th birthday</p> <p>14 anniversary celebration of our nation, but also</p> <p>15 Talbot County's 365th anniversary, which is an</p> <p>16 exciting point to make as we go forward.</p> <p>17 So I wanted to let you know there is --</p> <p>18 we're very excited to know about a grant coming</p> <p>19 from the Maryland 250 Commission, which Pete</p> <p>20 Leshner is actually a member on as well. And</p> <p>21 essentially what they have decided to do is</p>

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<p>1 provide up to \$15,000 per county to create a 2 celebration to highlight the nation's 3 anniversary. And in our case, we're also going 4 to apply it to our Talbot County's 365th 5 anniversary as well.</p> <p>6 And so it's detailed in the letter 7 specifically what we'd like to use the funding 8 for.</p> <p>9 I would like to note that that could shift 10 a little bit depending on where our commission 11 decides to take this.</p> <p>12 The current plan is to use this for Talbot 13 Day, which is a long-standing, well, I guess a 14 third year tradition that we have. And we want 15 to amp it up a little bit this year and add 16 potentially either a parade or a community 17 festival. We're working through the details to 18 decide exactly what that will look like. But 19 this funding will very much help us in making 20 that celebration a reality.</p> <p>21 I'd also like to note because it's been</p>	<p>1 We have basically an event happening every 2 single month next year leading up to July 4th.</p> <p>3 So in January, on January 14th, we will be 4 doing a special screening of the American 5 Revolution, which is a documentary that was put 6 together by Ken Burns and friends. And it is 7 free to the public. It will be a 45-minute 8 screening as well as a discussion. And so we 9 welcome you to come out to that.</p> <p>10 If you'd like to watch the whole 11 documentary, it's like 14 hours. So if you 12 want just a little touch of Ken Burns, please 13 come to this event. It will be a lovely time.</p> <p>14 In February, on February 21st, we will do 15 Native American Heritage Day. This event will 16 be with the Waterfowl Festival as well as the 17 Talbot Historical Society. We're bringing 18 together our farming community and our 19 indigenous communities to talk about items that 20 you may find on your grounds, such as 21 arrowheads and all that kind of stuff, as well</p>
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<p>1 asked by the commission, the Maryland 250 2 Commission, if we're planning to do something 3 for 4th of July. And I know our community will 4 also be asking.</p> <p>5 The current plan is to amp up and support 6 what our towns do.</p> <p>7 One thing that we have that is very unique 8 in Talbot County is that all of our towns and 9 municipalities really get into 4th of July. We 10 have three fireworks shows at least, right, 11 every year. And they all coordinate them so 12 they're on different days. So it makes for a 13 very nice long 4th of July weekend.</p> <p>14 So we'd like to support them through those 15 efforts. We will support them, but we are not 16 planning to do a separate Talbot 250 event at 17 this time. We're just going to support what 18 the towns are doing.</p> <p>19 I did also want to highlight at this time 20 some of our events that we have upcoming. And 21 this is for the public as well as the Council.</p>	<p>1 as doing some demonstrations that day. So it 2 will be really great.</p> <p>3 We're also planning later in the year. 4 April, of course, is when we celebrate Talbot 5 Day. We will do the citizens service awards 6 will be on Thursday, April 23rd.</p> <p>7 So you'll see coming out in January our 8 nomination forms for our citizens service 9 awards as well as our annual poster contest. 10 So be prepared for that.</p> <p>11 We'll also have, like I mentioned, a 12 community-based celebration, either a parade or 13 a festival on Sunday, April 26th. We made sure 14 to mention that Oxford Day is the 25th. So 15 that's why we're not doing it on the Saturday. 16 We will do it on a Sunday. We'll make a whole 17 weekend worth of celebration.</p> <p>18 May 6th we will be traveling to D.C. on a 19 bus trip where we will be visiting The 20 Smithsonian to celebrate their America 250 21 exhibits. They have their history museum will</p>

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<p>1 be a three-floor 250-related exhibit. So we're 2 very excited about that. Tickets are available 3 now. You can purchase them on the Parks & Rec 4 website. 5 We also have the Maryland House and Garden 6 Pilgrimage, which is a biannual event through 7 the Talbot Garden Club, Talbot County Garden 8 Club. And they have asked us to support them 9 in that initiative. And so we will be 10 following up and promoting that as well as 11 probably providing some volunteers along the 12 way. 13 So that's where we are right now. I 14 highly anticipate there will be more events to 15 add to the schedule, but those are the big ones 16 to call out right now. 17 MR. CALLAHAN: That sounds great. Good 18 job, good job. 19 Any questions, Council? 20 MS. MIELKE: No. 21 MR. LESHER: Just a note that Ms. Kilmon</p>	<p>1 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner. 2 MR. LESHNER: Aye. 3 SECRETARY: MS. Mielke. 4 MS. MIELKE: Aye. 5 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe. 6 MS. HAYTHE: Aye. 7 MR. STAMP: Thank you, Sarah. And thank 8 you, Council. 9 Just want to make an announcement. County 10 offices will be closed on Wednesday, 11 December 24th; Thursday, December 25th; and 12 Friday, December 26th, for the Christmas 13 holiday. 14 And then finally, Council, since this is 15 the last meeting of the year, I'd like to take 16 the opportunity to thank you on behalf of the 17 staff for your support of all that we've 18 accomplished this last year, which it is a lot. 19 And moving into next year, it's going to 20 be an exciting year because we're going to be 21 able to allow you to cut ribbons on things that</p>
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<p>1 mentioned that I'm on the State 250 Commission. 2 Of course, if this grant comes up as a 3 recommendation for funding, I will be recused 4 from that vote. 5 MS. KILMON: Dam it. 6 MR. LESHNER: I will not be able to vote on 7 that level. But what that means is that I can 8 vote on this level. So I will not recuse 9 myself from this vote. This is something I can 10 support at this level. 11 MR. CALLAHAN: That's good. 12 MR. LESHNER: I will move to apply for and 13 accept the grant funding. 14 MS. MIELKE: Second. 15 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We got a motion and 16 second. Madam Secretary, could you call the 17 vote. 18 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan. 19 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye. 20 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp. 21 MR. STEPP: Aye.</p>	<p>1 you initiated in the last three years. Things 2 like the update to Chapel School, the unveiling 3 of the new 911 Center at Marys Court, the 4 north EMS Station, the Library, public safety 5 storage facility, and our roads projects. So 6 there's a lot of things that are coming to a 7 conclusion next year that you all started when 8 you started three years ago. 9 So thank you for a good last year, this 10 year, and look forward to next year. 11 MS. MIELKE: Thank you. 12 MR. CALLAHAN: Thank you. Okay. 13 Next on the agenda is public comment. 14 MR. LESHNER: And we have one person who 15 signed up in advance. And that is Wendy 16 Palmer. 17 MS. PALMER: Good evening. 18 MR. CALLAHAN: Good evening. 19 MS. PALMER: Thank you for your time this 20 evening. 21 MR. CALLAHAN: No problem.</p>


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<p>1 MS. PALMER: Wendy Palmer. Address is</p> <p>2 4351 Grove Road in Trappe.</p> <p>3 And I am the director of health</p> <p>4 interventions for the YMCA of the Chesapeake</p> <p>5 and I oversee all of the impactful programs</p> <p>6 that help our citizens stay healthy and strong</p> <p>7 in the face of chronic disease.</p> <p>8 Rock steady boxing is my first and</p> <p>9 foremost love because I'm a coach and a leader</p> <p>10 in that program and have been since 2018. It</p> <p>11 serves people living with Parkinson's disease</p> <p>12 at all stages of their illness.</p> <p>13 We meet them the minute they're diagnosed</p> <p>14 or if they've been living with the illness for</p> <p>15 many years.</p> <p>16 We are at the Y at Washington, which is an</p> <p>17 older facility faced with many challenges</p> <p>18 entering that facility. And some of our</p> <p>19 commissioners have come to visit and seen</p> <p>20 that's the case.</p> <p>21 We also serve the live strong cancer</p>	<p>1 So I can answer any questions based on the</p> <p>2 programs. And if you want to visit again, we'd</p> <p>3 be happy to have you back.</p> <p>4 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. I appreciate it.</p> <p>5 Any questions, Council?</p> <p>6 MR. LESHER: Thank you.</p> <p>7 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thank you.</p> <p>8 MS. PALMER: Thank you so much for having</p> <p>9 me tonight.</p> <p>10 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thank you.</p> <p>11 MS. PALMER: Merry Christmas and Happy</p> <p>12 Holidays.</p> <p>13 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. You, too. Okay.</p> <p>14 Anybody else would like to come up for</p> <p>15 public comment?</p> <p>16 Okay. Council comment. Mr. Stepp.</p> <p>17 MR. STEPP: We've heard it many times</p> <p>18 tonight. We've heard Merry Christmas and Happy</p> <p>19 Holidays to everyone.</p> <p>20 So I'll keep in that same lane. Merry</p> <p>21 Christmas to everyone, Happy Holidays, Happy</p>
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<p>1 survivor program, which is very impactful. And</p> <p>2 I was really happy to hear Ken Kozel mention</p> <p>3 community partners that help and aid with the</p> <p>4 health of people facing cancer diagnosis. And</p> <p>5 we are, in fact, doing so.</p> <p>6 And another program, enhanced fitness,</p> <p>7 which is a balance and stability program for</p> <p>8 our seniors that many people participate in,</p> <p>9 find community in, and keep them living</p> <p>10 independently in their homes for many years</p> <p>11 versus seeing falls and having</p> <p>12 hospitalizations.</p> <p>13 So we're really hopeful that what we</p> <p>14 presented to you is a request for some land</p> <p>15 here. And we provided you with some great</p> <p>16 testimonial letters and that kind of thing to</p> <p>17 support the need for a health intervention</p> <p>18 center well beyond what the current facility</p> <p>19 can provide for our future and the future of</p> <p>20 our citizens, many of which are speaking up for</p> <p>21 that support.</p>	<p>1 New Year, and looking forward to a great 2026.</p> <p>2 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup.</p> <p>3 Mr. Leshner.</p> <p>4 MR. LESHER: I had the privilege of</p> <p>5 attending the winter MACo conference, Maryland</p> <p>6 Association of Counties conference last week,</p> <p>7 which is really my best opportunity for</p> <p>8 continuing education as a Council member.</p> <p>9 A number of, a number of sessions on</p> <p>10 changes up until now and proposed for the</p> <p>11 Blueprint for Maryland's Future, our State's</p> <p>12 education plan, which, of course, impacts our</p> <p>13 schools and our budget. A session looking</p> <p>14 forward with our State legislators, some of our</p> <p>15 legislative leaders looking forward to the</p> <p>16 State's budget situation as we move into the</p> <p>17 2026 session.</p> <p>18 And a really informative session on</p> <p>19 adequate public facilities ordinances, which is</p> <p>20 a topic that has been raised here before and</p> <p>21 one that perhaps we should be looking into. In</p>

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<p>1 fact, we did have a workshop on this. I can't</p> <p>2 remember whether it was this past year or prior</p> <p>3 to. But certainly some talk about how we pay</p> <p>4 for county facilities moving forward as a</p> <p>5 consequence of growth in the county.</p> <p>6 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thank you. Good</p> <p>7 job.</p> <p>8 MS. MIELKE: I had the privilege of</p> <p>9 attending the lighting of the first candle for</p> <p>10 Hanukkah on Sunday at the Temple. And it was a</p> <p>11 very entertaining and pleasant event.</p> <p>12 And so in addition to wishing Merry</p> <p>13 Christmas and Happy New Year, I want to wish a</p> <p>14 Happy Hanukkah, too.</p> <p>15 MR. CALLAHAN: That's good.</p> <p>16 MS. HAYTHE: So just want to echo what my</p> <p>17 colleagues said. And Merry Christmas and Happy</p> <p>18 New Year and blessings and prosperity over this</p> <p>19 community in 2025 and 2026.</p> <p>20 MR. CALLAHAN: Great.</p> <p>21 And I'll say the same thing. I wish</p>	<p>1 MS. HAYTHE: Just under 400. So it's</p> <p>2 great to be a part of a team.</p> <p>3 We've got special people that work for us</p> <p>4 and do hard work.</p> <p>5 And, you know, kudos to the Roads</p> <p>6 Department for last couple of days, on Sunday</p> <p>7 Monday and helping our roads.</p> <p>8 And, you know, when we're there in the</p> <p>9 mornings and just getting up, they've been</p> <p>10 working for several hours making sure it's safe</p> <p>11 and stuff. So we really appreciate Brian and</p> <p>12 his team, Brian Moore and his team helping us</p> <p>13 out. So really appreciate the good year with</p> <p>14 helping us, too.</p> <p>15 And Patrick, I really appreciate the good</p> <p>16 year your helping Council with all your hard</p> <p>17 work and making sure that we say the right</p> <p>18 things and we stay in line, you know.</p> <p>19 MR. THOMAS: Thank you.</p> <p>20 MR. CALLAHAN: And you keep us out of</p> <p>21 trouble.</p>
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<p>1 everybody a Merry Christmas, Happy New Year.</p> <p>2 And, you know, sort of jump on what Clay</p> <p>3 was saying, that like I said, you guys have</p> <p>4 really done well this year making us look</p> <p>5 really good.</p> <p>6 We've worked great as a team. We've</p> <p>7 worked great as a Council. What is great, we</p> <p>8 all don't agree on everything. But at the end</p> <p>9 of the day, we bring it home. That's for sure.</p> <p>10 And we do a lot of great work together,</p> <p>11 just what Clay was saying about ribbon cuttings</p> <p>12 and stuff like that. I mean we do a lot for</p> <p>13 this community, and I'm proud to be part of it.</p> <p>14 You guys do so much for us as staff. And</p> <p>15 it's -- we employ -- we had breakfast this</p> <p>16 morning with staff with 100 people, roughly, or</p> <p>17 more.</p> <p>18 MR. STAMP: More.</p> <p>19 MR. CALLAHAN: More. But we employ, help</p> <p>20 me out, three, 400 people?</p> <p>21 MR. STAMP: Yeah. Just under 400.</p>	<p>1 MR. THOMAS: Thank you.</p> <p>2 MS. HAYTHE: Tries.</p> <p>3 MR. CALLAHAN: Tries.</p> <p>4 MS. MIELKE: Does his best.</p> <p>5 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah, he does his best.</p> <p>6 So saying that.</p> <p>7 MR. LESHAR: The County Council's next</p> <p>8 meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 12th,</p> <p>9 beginning at 5 o'clock. The Council will be</p> <p>10 convening in open session at 2:30 p.m. for a</p> <p>11 work session with the Department of Economic</p> <p>12 Development and Tourism to discuss their</p> <p>13 strategic plan. Then adjourning into closed</p> <p>14 session, as listed on the statement for closing</p> <p>15 that meeting.</p> <p>16 Therefore, is there a motion to adjourn</p> <p>17 this meeting and reconvene as noted?</p> <p>18 MS. HAYTHE: So moved.</p> <p>19 MS. MIELKE: Second.</p> <p>20 MR. CALLAHAN: We got a motion and second.</p> <p>21 Madam Secretary, could you call the vote.</p>

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1 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.
2 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.
3 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.
4 MR. STEPP: Aye.
5 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.
6 MR. LESHER: Aye.
7 SECRETARY: MS. Mielke.
8 MS. MIELKE: Aye.
9 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.
10 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.
11 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thanks a lot.
12 Merry Christmas, everybody.
13 (Meeting concluded at: 6:05 p.m.)
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1 STATE OF MARYLAND
2 I, Diane Houlihan, a Notary Public in and
for the State of Maryland, County of Talbot, do
3 hereby certify that the within named, Talbot County
Council Audio, personally appeared before me at the
4 time and place herein set according to law, was
interrogated by counsel.
5
6 I further certify that the examination was
recorded stenographically by me and then transcribed
from my stenographic notes to the within printed
7 matter by means of computer-assisted transcription
in a true and accurate manner.
8
9 I further certify that the stipulations
contained herein were entered into by counsel in my
presence.
10
11 I further certify that I am not of counsel
to any of the parties, not an employee of counsel,
nor related to any of the parties, nor in any way
12 interested in the outcome of this action.
13 AS WITNESS my hand Notarial Seal this 19th
day of December, 2025, at Easton, MD.
14
15 
16 _____
Diane Houlihan
Notary Public
17
18
19 My commission expires September 16, 2029
20
21

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