

COUNTY COUNCIL OF TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

Council Meeting

May 27, 2025; 5:00 p.m.

Council Chambers, Easton, Maryland

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Chuck F. Callahan

Pete Leshner

Keasha N. Haythe

Lynn L. Mielke

Dave Stepp - Via Telephone

Reported by

Diane Houlihan

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Let's go ahead and get started with the meeting tonight. I appreciate everybody coming.

So if everybody could go ahead and stand so we can say the prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance of the Flag.

(Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.)

MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Let's go ahead and get started. So we've got the agenda before us. Is there any deletions, additions, or corrections to the agenda?

MS. MIELKE: I have an amendment.

MR. CALLAHAN: Yup. Sure.

MS. MIELKE: The item under the county manager's report regarding Easton Airport, the request to apply for federal aid Aviation Administration airport improvement project will be postponed until our next meeting on June 10th.

1 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

2 MR. LESHER: I'll second for the removal
3 of that item.

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. Next on the agenda
18 is the minutes of April 15th and April 22nd.
19 Council has had a chance to take a look at
20 that. Is there any additions, deletions, or
21 corrections to the minutes?

1 MS. HAYTHE: No.

2 MR. CALLAHAN: At this time? Okay.

3 Hearing none, the chair moves that the minutes
4 be accepted as unanimous consent.

5 Okay. Next is the disbursements of
6 May 20th and May 27th. We've had a chance to
7 take a look at it. Is there any additions,
8 deletions, or corrections to the disbursements?
9 Okay. Hearing none, the chair moves that the
10 disbursements be accepted as unanimous consent.
11 Okay.

12 So next on the agenda is a proclamation
13 for 40th Anniversary of Chesapeake Music.
14 Okay. Come on up. Here we go.

15 Chesapeake Music. You want to go ahead
16 and do the drums and all that stuff? Okay.

17 MR. LESHER: You want to have her read
18 this into the record?

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup. I was getting ready
20 to.

21 You want to read that into the record.

1 You want to hand this to them?

2 MR. LESHER: Sure.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

4 SECRETARY: Proclamation, 40th Anniversary
5 of Chesapeake Music.

6 Whereas, Chesapeake Music, based in
7 Easton, Maryland, brings renowned musicians to
8 delight, engage, and surprise today's audiences
9 and educate, inspire, and develop tomorrow's.

10 And whereas, Chesapeake Music was
11 organized and hosted its first concert at the
12 Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in 1985.

13 And whereas, Chesapeake Music quickly grew
14 to a much-anticipated two-week June music
15 festival.

16 And whereas, Chesapeake Music created the
17 international Chesapeake chamber music
18 competition for young ensembles with a top
19 prize of \$10,000, helping to launch the
20 professional careers of multiple talented
21 musicians and ensembles.

1 And whereas, Chesapeake Music further
2 broadened its impact with youth reach
3 programming in partnership with Talbot Arts and
4 Talbot County Public Schools by providing
5 master classes for middle school band students
6 with graduate music students from the
7 University of Maryland.

8 And whereas, Chesapeake Music now provides
9 year-round programming with interlude concerts
10 featuring talented musicians, including rising
11 stars from the field of classical, jazz, and
12 crossover music in Easton's Ebenezer Theater.

13 And whereas, Chesapeake Music brings world
14 class music to a growing audience of all ages
15 on Maryland's Eastern Shore and beyond, while
16 exporting something of the Chesapeake's
17 uniqueness to musicians who take part in the
18 festival, competition, and interlude concerts.

19 And whereas, Chesapeake Music will offer
20 its 40th anniversary Chamber Music Festival
21 from June 6th to the 14th, 2025, at the

1 Ebenezer Theater in Easton themed on reflection
2 and celebration, bringing together nine
3 accomplished musicians long associated with the
4 festival, three new acclaimed prize-winning
5 musicians, and the Juilliard string quartet to
6 again surprise and delight audiences.

7 Now, therefore, we, the County Council of
8 Talbot County, do hereby congratulate and
9 commend the board, staff, volunteers, and
10 musicians of Chesapeake Music on this occasion
11 and encourage the music-loving community to
12 support and enjoy the 40th Chesapeake Chamber
13 Music Festival.

14 Given under our hands in the great seal of
15 Talbot County this 27th day of May in the year
16 of our Lord, 2025.

17 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thank you, Madam
18 Secretary.

19 Welcome.

20 SPEAKER: Thank you.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: It's all yours.

1 SPEAKER: Well, there's a lot of text
2 already in there, and I really don't have too
3 much else to add.

4 It's an exciting chapter for us. I think
5 that while there are a lot of clauses and
6 accomplishments and elements of growth over 40
7 years, I think at our heart, you know, we're
8 just all about bringing music and music
9 education of the highest level to Talbot County
10 and to the Eastern Shore.

11 And we're looking for new ways to serve
12 our community. So we're hopeful that this next
13 chapter of ours is going to be full of service
14 to that community.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

16 Mr. Leshner.

17 MR. LESHNER: Well, I've been enjoying the
18 festival since the first year when I was, when
19 I was a summer employee at Chesapeake Bay
20 Maritime Museum and got to witness one of those
21 first concerts and have been following the

1 organization ever since.

2 The way it has, the way it has grown and
3 continued to serve more and more of this
4 community is, is truly impressive.

5 And thank you. And congratulations on
6 this milestone, and we look forward to what you
7 will continue to do in this community in the
8 years to come.

9 SPEAKER: Thank you.

10 MR. CALLAHAN: Council? Good? Everybody
11 good?

12 MS. HAYTHE: Oh, I thought Lynn was going.

13 But I just echo what Pete said.

14 Congratulations on 40th anniversary of
15 Chesapeake Music. And we certainly look
16 forward to the future and another 40 years.

17 Thank you for being here tonight.

18 SPEAKER: Thank you.

19 MS. MIELKE: Ditto that. Great
20 contribution to our community.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup. We appreciate it.

1 Come on up.

2 MR. LESHER: I will, I'll move the
3 proclamation.

4 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

5 MS. MIELKE: Second.

6 MS. HAYTHE: Second.

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. Yup.

18 MR. LESHER: Congratulations.

19 SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

20 MS. KILMON: All right. Ready? One, two,
21 three. Perfect.

1 SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Thank you
2 very much.

3 MS. MIELKE: Thank you.

4 MS. HAYTHE: Thank you.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Next on the agenda,
6 Madam Secretary, Bill 1585.

7 SECRETARY: Bill Number 1585, an act to
8 establish the 2025-2026 annual budget and
9 appropriation ordinance.

10 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Welcome.

11 MS. SPARKS: Thank you.

12 MR. CALLAHAN: This is it. This is it.

13 MS. SPARKS: Good evening, Council.

14 Martha Sparks, finance director for Talbot
15 County. And I have with me.

16 MS. FOSTER-CLARK: Kaitlin Foster-Clark,
17 assistant finance director.

18 MS. SPARKS: So we start talking about the
19 amendments?

20 SECRETARY: Yup.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup.

1 MS. SPARKS: So we have an amendment that
2 has been offered by Councilman Leshner regarding
3 amendment one.

4 Does that have to be introduced before I
5 explain?

6 MR. THOMAS: Yes.

7 MR. LESHNER: So you want a show of hands
8 to introduce?

9 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup.

10 MR. LESHNER: So introduced by Haythe and
11 Leshner.

12 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp, do you wish to
13 introduce amendment one?

14 MR. STEPP: No, ma'am.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

16 MS. SPARKS: So a description of amendment
17 one and what it includes. It is decreases in
18 the FY26 capital outlay budgets in the amount
19 of \$1,030,700 for several departments. This is
20 a result of capital outlay items that were able
21 to be purchased in FY25 using fourth quarter

1 transfers in FY25.

2 This also includes restoring funding back
3 to the original request for Upper Shore Aging
4 and the library. This also includes retirement
5 costs of our community colleges in the amount
6 of \$12,858, an additional \$440,098 for
7 teachers' pensions. Both of those items were
8 liabilities of the State of Maryland that were
9 passed down to the counties. And these amounts
10 reflect Talbot County's share.

11 This amendment also includes 1,100,000 in
12 additional appropriation for Talbot County
13 Public Schools for critical needs based upon
14 their revised request. \$500,000 in salary
15 increases for teachers and support staff. And
16 the other portion is 600,000 for nine high
17 priority positions; two social workers, six
18 instructions assistants for multi-lingual
19 learners and special ed students, and one
20 special ed teacher.

21 This amendment includes an education

1 supplement of 1.5 cents and additional revenues
2 related to that education supplement of
3 \$1,540,098.

4 Also, there were minor amendments in the,
5 in sections two and three. Excuse me.
6 Sections two and 16 of the amendment that are
7 related to grants. A lot of our grants were
8 not -- they received their notice of funding
9 available at a late time and we weren't able to
10 get the accurate numbers when we introduced
11 Bill 1585.

12 So these are just tweaks, and they're
13 revenue neutral for Talbot County taxpayers.

14 MS. HAYTHE: Okay.

15 MR. LESHER: So discussion on this one?

16 MR. CALLAHAN: Go ahead.

17 MR. LESHER: This, this, this is the, this
18 would fulfill the school budget's reduced
19 request plus the items that we've identified.

20 Knowing that the Blueprint is going to
21 require us to increase, what, 4.9 million next

1 year, this would be a small step in that
2 direction. And frankly, it will make next
3 year, an election year, a lot easier for all of
4 us up here and a lot easier for our taxpayers.
5 It will be a smaller increase, mandated
6 increase next year if we, if we bite off this
7 slightly larger additional piece.

8 I just think that this is prudent and
9 takes the long view into consideration. And
10 I'd urge, I'd urge support for this.

11 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Yeah. Go ahead.

12 MS. HAYTHE: So while Mr. Leshner and I may
13 not agree about the long view because a lot of
14 the information that we hear about the future
15 is estimated, so we're not quite sure what it's
16 going to look like next year.

17 MR. CALLAHAN: Right.

18 MS. HAYTHE: But the reason why I agreed
19 with the introduction was because of the salary
20 increases and the new positions. So that seems
21 to be vital in the request that came to us.

1 And for that reason is why I stood along
2 Mr. Leshner in introducing this amendment.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

4 MS. MIELKE: No comment.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Hey, Dave. Anything you
6 want to say?

7 MR. STEPP: No comments from me on this
8 one. Thank you.

9 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. So at this time, you
10 want to go ahead and make a motion?

11 MR. LESHNER: Well, it's on the table. I
12 think you can call the roll on amendment one.

13 MR. CALLAHAN: Call the roll.

14 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: No.

16 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

17 MR. LESHNER: Aye.

18 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

19 MR. LESHNER: No.

20 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

21 MS. MIELKE: No.

1 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

2 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Let's do the second
4 amendment.

5 MS. SPARKS: The second amendment was
6 requested by Council President Callahan. And
7 that includes many of the items that I listed
8 in the first amendment, but I will repeat them.

9 Decreases in the FY26 capital budget
10 outlays of \$1,030,700 for several departments
11 as a result of capital outlay items that were
12 purchased in FY25 through fourth quarter
13 transfer.

14 This also includes restoring funding back
15 to the original request for Upper Shore Aging
16 and the library, retirement costs of community
17 colleges in the amount of \$12,858, \$440,098 for
18 teachers's pension. Both of those items were
19 liabilities of the State of Maryland that were
20 passed down to the counties. And those amounts
21 reflect Talbot County's share.

1 This amendment also includes \$600,000 in
2 additional appropriation for Talbot County
3 Public Schools for nine priority positions; two
4 social workers, six instructional assistants
5 for multi-lingual learners and special ed
6 students, and one special ed teacher. This
7 includes an education supplement and 1.06 cents
8 and projected revenues from the education
9 supplement of \$1,040,098.

10 It also includes the adjustments that I
11 mentioned to the grant-related revenues and
12 expenses.

13 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Well, thank you.

14 So I do obviously support this. I thought
15 the other -- we had that work session and --
16 huh?

17 MS. HAYTHE: Don't we have to introduce
18 the amendment? Don't you have to introduce it?

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah. I guess we should.

20 MS. HAYTHE: We did for the first one.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: Raise our hands.

1 MS. MIELKE: Introduce it?

2 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup.

3 MR. LESHER: To introduce.

4 MS. HAYTHE: Yeah.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup.

6 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp, do you wish to
7 include amendment number two?

8 MR. CALLAHAN: Dave, did you hear us?
9 We're introducing amendment number two. Do you
10 agree with that?

11 Yeah. He might have fell off.

12 MS. MORRIS: Yes.

13 MR. LESHER: Having joined these meetings
14 by phone myself, it is always suboptimal.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Exactly.

16 MS. MORRIS: Dave?

17 MR. STEPP: Hey, Jess. Thank you for
18 calling back.

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Can you hear me, Dave?

20 SECRETARY: The question was do you wish
21 to introduce amendment number two?

1 MR. STEPP: Yes, please.

2 SECRETARY: Okay.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

4 MR. LESHER: And introduced by Council?

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Yes.

6 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Council.

7 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. So I thought we had
8 a great conversation with the school.

9 And I kind of felt that, you know, I think
10 there is a big need for teachers. That's for
11 sure. So that's why I supported it.

12 And I think this Council really supports
13 getting more teachers and, you know, just
14 trying to help things along.

15 We had the other 440 for the pensions.

16 But I would ask, I would ask that the
17 School Board use the money that we give you for
18 teachers. I would like to see that and not for
19 something else. So I would like to see it for
20 the teachers.

21 Anybody else?

1 MS. MIELKE: Yes. I'd just like to say
2 that I was originally on board with this
3 amendment, but I need more security that, in
4 fact, if we do this budget amendment for this
5 purpose, that it will, in fact, be used for
6 that purpose. And I'm not advised that it
7 necessarily would be.

8 So for that reason, I couldn't support it.

9 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Okay.

10 MS. HAYTHE: No. I mean I've said it
11 before. I believe that, you know, the teachers
12 are important to our community as well as the
13 students.

14 And we just need to make sure that the
15 funding is getting down into the classroom to
16 the teachers and that the appropriate
17 increases, which we don't have control over,
18 are across for the board, for teachers and
19 administration across the board, same
20 percentage.

21 So willing to support this because we know

1 that this is important to the school system in
2 hiring those new positions that they asked for
3 that Martha mentioned.

4 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup.

5 MR. LESHER: Well, folks, they say sausage
6 making and legislation are two things that you
7 don't want to watch being done, but here we
8 are.

9 I will support this. I think we should be
10 going farther. But this goes some distance,
11 and certainly I will support this amendment
12 since the first one was defeated.

13 MR. CALLAHAN: And I just will add one
14 thing. I think, Ms. Mielke, I think we've got
15 a phenomenal relationship with the school. And
16 I trust that what they asked for, that's what
17 they'll use the money for.

18 So I have no -- I don't have any, one way
19 or the other, of they wouldn't use it for
20 teachers. And because they've been great to us
21 and we've been great to them, we've got a

1 phenomenal working relationship with them. So
2 I would ask you to come along with us on that,
3 please.

4 MS. MIELKE: I hear you.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Dave, would you like to say
6 anything?

7 MR. STEPP: Yeah. Mr. President, thank
8 you.

9 I'll add here, too, I will too be
10 advocating here for this amendment. It was
11 heard loud and clear that the positions, that
12 nine positions that we're losing due to the
13 lack of federal funding because of the COVID
14 funds, we heard loud and clear that those
15 positions are going away and that we'd like to
16 retain them.

17 So that's the reason I'll be voting yes
18 for this amendment.

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thank you,
20 Mr. Stepp.

21 Okay. Ready for the vote? Madam

1 Secretary.

2 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

4 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

5 I did it again.

6 MR. LESHER: Aye.

7 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

8 MR. STEPP: Aye.

9 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

10 MS. MIELKE: No.

11 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

12 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

13 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We're good.

14 MR. LESHER: And now we're down to the
15 legislation itself as amended.

16 MR. CALLAHAN: I think so.

17 MR. LESHER: I'd love to comment --

18 MS. HAYTHE: I thought we had another
19 amendment. Don't we have another amendment?

20 MR. CALLAHAN: We don't have to because
21 this one already passed.

1 MR. LESHER: This has passed. Right.

2 MS. HAYTHE: Okay. Got it.

3 MS. MIELKE: Yup.

4 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

5 MS. HAYTHE: Makes sense.

6 MR. LESHER: Comments on the legislation?

7 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah. Go ahead.

8 MR. LESHER: Well, I'll start with a
9 number of thank yous first to the county
10 manager and his staff for presenting a tight
11 and balanced budget to this Council.

12 Second to our finance staff for leading us
13 through the smoothest ever process that allowed
14 the Council to focus on real issues without
15 losing focus on the details. And there are a
16 lot of details in \$160 million budget.

17 This process was as open and transparent
18 as any budget process I've yet participated in,
19 and your help with that made it so.

20 And I want to thank my colleagues on this
21 Council for deliberating with civility and

1 integrity.

2 I don't agree with everything in this
3 budget. I think we're shortsighted on the
4 school's budget in a way that will only make
5 next year more painful, but there's much to be
6 proud of here.

7 This Council continues to fund public
8 safety as its top priority without neglecting
9 the third critical leg of the public safety
10 stool, our correctional officers. In addition,
11 we are poised to complete a new Public Safety
12 Building with full facilities for our Sheriff's
13 Department and then install our 911 Center
14 there, leaving the existing facility as a
15 backup.

16 We are making investments that we
17 prudently need to make in IT and other critical
18 services across the county.

19 This budget lives up to our commitments,
20 to prudent fiscal management, and for
21 committing that additional penny on the

1 property tax to public safety.

2 And for that reason, that is a budget that
3 I'm prepared to support.

4 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thank you,
5 Mr. Leshner.

6 Yup.

7 MS. MIELKE: Generally I support the
8 budget. It was with deep regret that I
9 couldn't vote to support it only because of
10 having some assurances on the record that, in
11 fact, the money that was going to be
12 appropriated for the priority positions, which
13 I think are extremely important, I just needed
14 more, more assurances that it, in fact, could
15 go to that position. Not that I don't trust
16 the Talbot County Board of Education, because I
17 do. But I just wanted to make sure that it
18 was, in fact, going to be used for that
19 purpose.

20 But I do support the schools, and I'm glad
21 that I was the only one that voted no.

1 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

2 MS. HAYTHE: Well, I want to thank Clay
3 and staff and Martha and Kaitlin for getting us
4 through this process.

5 This is our third budget. And I must say
6 to me, this was the most challenging budget
7 that I've ever sat through. The decisions were
8 very hard on some items.

9 The decisions were extremely hard for
10 Talbot County Public Schools. Because as a
11 supporter of education, like Mr. Leshar said,
12 we did initially believe that the 1.1 should
13 have been given, various different reasons
14 between the two of us, but we felt it was
15 important to do the 1.1 million. So we had to
16 compromise.

17 My colleagues made this budget a little
18 bit easier for me, and I truly appreciate that.

19 And I want to thank Talbot County Public
20 Schools as well for answering the questions
21 that I had.

1 Thank you, Dr. P. Thank you, Cindy and
2 Andy as well because it was, it was a lot of
3 questions that were flying because it was a
4 challenge to get down to the nitty-gritty and
5 get to a point where the money was allocated to
6 the school system. So I just want to say thank
7 you to you guys as well.

8 And we will certainly do our best and
9 continue to support Talbot County Public
10 Schools. So thank you for the partnership,
11 thank you for the transparency, and thank you
12 for the continued partnership as well.

13 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thank you.

14 Dave.

15 MR. STEPP: Yeah. I'll just, I'll
16 continue in the vain of thanks here.

17 Just thanks to all the staff. Thanks to
18 all of our departments. Thanks to all of our
19 agencies who are part of this and make this
20 happen.

21 Like you said, it was definitely a heavy

1 lift this year. But everyone buckled down, and
2 we made it happen here. Just want to extend
3 the thanks. Great job, everyone.

4 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Good.

5 And I'll say the same thing what my
6 colleagues did.

7 First of all, guys, thanks so much, Martha
8 and Kaitlin. You made it easy for us really.
9 And I really thought what Keasha was saying
10 about this is our third budget together with
11 this Council. And I thought it went very, very
12 good.

13 We did a little bit different style this
14 year. And I thought staff did a good job
15 really doing their homework and bringing
16 everything to us. You know, cutting down a
17 little bit of the time and stuff with the
18 department heads and stuff.

19 And it wasn't nothing against them, but I
20 have to reach out to them and tell them they
21 did a great job, too, prepping for it, give us

1 all the information that we needed. So I think
2 they -- I think Brian Moore was kind of mad
3 that he didn't get up in front of us. Right?
4 You know what I mean? So he wanted to come
5 really bad I'm sure.

6 But all kidding aside, this is tough to
7 do. And I can say, Clay, you did a phenomenal
8 job because we were underbudget this year, and
9 a lot of people don't realize that. And you
10 worked real hard and Council worked real hard
11 to get us under budget. And I think it was
12 close to a million bucks, somewhere in that
13 range.

14 And I really want to thank Dr. P and Andy
15 and your staff and the school, too, for, you
16 know, being transparent, coming in here and
17 talking through it. You know, we got a tough
18 job to balance things.

19 And Andy, I really appreciate you not
20 going crazy with the signs. You know what I
21 mean? I love that, you know. And you were

1 good. You were respectful. And we were
2 kidding around, but that does mean a lot to us,
3 it really does, you know. Because we are all
4 partners. You know what I mean? And you guys
5 are passionate about what you do.

6 And you know, me and Keasha, we went to
7 Easton High. We went to public school here.
8 So it means a lot to us, too.

9 So you guys keep up the good work. We're
10 here for you. So you need to know that.

11 But Mr. Stepp, do you want to say a few
12 words?

13 MR. STAMP: Mr. Stepp?

14 MR. CALLAHAN: I said it again; didn't I?
15 I've done that twice now.

16 Sorry, Dave. I didn't want to do that to
17 you, you know.

18 Mr. Stamp. God.

19 MR. STAMP: Council, I'd just like to say
20 a couple of things real quick.

21 The department heads, they were highly

1 supportive of the process that we had this
2 year.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah.

4 MR. STAMP: They respected it. They felt
5 good about it. So we did check in with them on
6 that.

7 Again, kudos to you, Council, for the time
8 that you put in. I think that Talbot County,
9 with your efforts and the efforts of our staff,
10 I agree, Kaitlin, Martha, Jessica, the team
11 came together and worked really hard this year.

12 And you know, we recognized -- we built on
13 a foundation of conservative budgeting that we
14 inherited from previous Councils. And it's
15 served this county well over the years.

16 And we are in a bit of uncharted waters
17 right now. You know, the fiscal or the
18 economic landscape out there is a bumpy ride
19 right now. When Thomas Barkin was here from
20 the Fed, he used the analogy of driving a car
21 in the fog. You slow down, you put your

1 flashers on, you may even have to pull over.

2 So this year, we knew that we needed to
3 flatten the budget out, we needed to live
4 within our means. This on the back side of
5 investing largely in education and public
6 safety. And we're at a place right now where
7 we can level off.

8 This Council has seen that we've built a
9 good rainy day fund and set a reserve policy,
10 which is fiscally prudent. And this was all
11 confirmed by our recent rating by both Moody's
12 and Fitch.

13 Fitch reaffirmed our AAA rating, and
14 Moody's reaffirmed our AA1 rating as well. And
15 that's something that you all can be very proud
16 of and the people of Talbot County.

17 So thank you for your leadership. Thank
18 you, staff, for everything that we're doing.

19 I think we're in the right place at the
20 right time, and we're doing the job for the
21 people. So thank you.

1 MR. CALLAHAN: Thank you.

2 And I want to mention one thing.

3 Mr. Thomas, I really appreciate all you've done
4 because you're the one putting sort of the
5 blueprint here together. So you did a great
6 job, and we really appreciate you working with
7 staff and getting all that straight for us,
8 too. So we appreciate you, too.

9 MR. THOMAS: Thank you very much.

10 MR. CALLAHAN: You're welcome. Okay.

11 SECRETARY: Ready to vote?

12 MR. CALLAHAN: I'm ready to vote.

13 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

14 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

15 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

16 MR. STEPP: Aye.

17 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

18 MR. LESHNER: Aye.

19 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

20 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

21 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

1 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

2 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Sounds good. All
3 right. Thank you.

4 MS. HAYTHE: Thank you.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Appreciate it.

6 MR. STAMP: Thank you, Council.

7 MR. CALLAHAN: All right. Next on the
8 agenda is an update and a recommendation of
9 Talbot County Department of Economic
10 Development and Tourism and Easton Utilities.
11 Okay.

12 We got two big deals coming up.

13 MS. VANHOOSER: Oh, yeah.

14 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah. How are you guys
15 doing?

16 MS. VANHOOSER: Good.

17 MR. CALLAHAN: Good, good.

18 MS. VANHOOSER: Good evening, Council.

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Good.

20 MS. VANHOOSER: We're going to turn the
21 narrative on its head.

1 MR. CALLAHAN: Uh-oh.

2 MS. VANHOOSER: Just a little bit.

3 Cassandra Vanhooser, director of economic
4 development and tourism.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: There you go.

6 MS. VANHOOSER: For Talbot County.

7 And my partner, John Horner from Easton
8 Utilities, president and CEO.

9 And we're here to talk about the FY24
10 homestretch difficult to serve properties grant
11 that we received.

12 So we're going to turn the narrative on
13 its head a little bit, in that instead of
14 asking for money, we're asking for permission
15 to turn back some money to the Maryland
16 Department of Housing and Community
17 Development.

18 So we received a \$1.1 million grant. And
19 we applied in late 2023 and were awarded the
20 grant in February of 2024. And this is for
21 properties that are difficult to serve with

1 broadband. And as you know, we have a ongoing
2 project that is going to set us up for the
3 future and deliver broadband access to every
4 citizen in Talbot County.

5 And the difficult to serve properties were
6 those that were a little bit more difficult to
7 fund. And the State of Maryland had a pot of
8 money. They decided to divide it equally and
9 to make it available to jurisdictions.

10 So the reason we're here talking about
11 this is because we're the grant holder and not
12 our partner, Easton Utilities.

13 So in the recent visit with Jake Day, the
14 secretary of Department of Housing and
15 Community Development, their deputy director
16 for the Office of Statewide Broadband was
17 there. And they mentioned to us that they
18 would like for us to consider, if we were going
19 to have any unused funds by the end of the
20 project, and if we might be able to share with
21 other counties.

1 And so I'm going to turn it to John here
2 to describe to you what the thinking was, the
3 logic, and what the recommendation is.

4 So John.

5 MR. HORNER: Sure. Good evening, Council.

6 When we were first asked about this by the
7 Department of Housing and Community
8 Development, we sharpened our pencils, took a
9 look at all of the grant funding we still have
10 available. And this source of grant funding,
11 frankly, is the one source that is the least
12 cost effective to those that would benefit from
13 it.

14 In other words, there's more strings
15 attached to this particular type of grant
16 funding than there are to some of the other
17 ones that remain out there.

18 As an example, the USDA reconnect program
19 offered to us an additional \$1.5 million in
20 basically grant funding that we could use for
21 all purposes associated with broadband,

1 including the drops for customers in the
2 grant-funded area.

3 This particular type of grant funding
4 we're limited in the amount of funding we can
5 use per property. And there is a large match
6 associated with using this limited amount of
7 grant funding for each property.

8 So we took a look at all the funding we
9 have left, and there was an opportunity for us
10 to return \$400,000 of the 1.1 million.

11 This does not change the fact that we are
12 the first county to be fully funded to provide
13 broadband to all of those who are unserved.
14 And we still intend to complete the project by
15 or before the end of next calendar year.

16 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. All right.

17 MR. HORNER: One more thing, if you don't
18 mind.

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Yes.

20 MR. HORNER: Mr. Callahan.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: Yes.

1 MR. HORNER: We also did not want to get
2 to the end of this project and have not
3 sharpened our pencils and have \$400,000 in
4 funding left and be asked the question when we
5 asked you earlier why didn't you consider
6 returning the funds then.

7 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah.

8 MR. HORNER: So I'm just putting that out
9 there as well.

10 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

11 MS. VANHOOSER: So it won't affect the
12 project at all. And you have a letter before
13 you to consider our recommendation, which is to
14 return \$400,000 of a \$1.1 million grant.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Mr. Leshner.

16 MR. LESHNER: Well, congratulations I
17 guess. Thank you.

18 The good news here, of course, is that the
19 project is moving ahead with, with -- in fully
20 funded fashion and on schedule. And for that,
21 you have a lot of happy new customers, and

1 those same people are happy constituents to me.
2 And for that, I owe you a lot of thanks, you
3 and your team and your contractors who are
4 making this happen out there all across the
5 county.

6 Thank you for doing this.

7 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Yup.

8 MS. MIELKE: And in this day and age, to
9 have a basis for some conservative use of funds
10 is very impressive.

11 So appreciate your gesture and what you're
12 doing. Thank you.

13 MS. HAYTHE: Yeah. I echo what my
14 colleagues said. To return money is probably a
15 first.

16 But certainly agree with your
17 recommendation. So thank you for bringing this
18 to our attention.

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Right.

20 Mr. Stepp.

21 MR. STEPP: Hey. Thank you, sir. I'll

1 keep it very short and very sweet. Excellent
2 work and excellent stewardship, everyone.
3 Thank you.

4 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup. And I'll say the same
5 thing. It just shows you the transparency and
6 the trust between the town and the county.
7 That's what it shows. And we really, really
8 appreciate you coming to us and letting us know
9 that.

10 And I think it shows, it shows our merit
11 to the State, you know. It shows that we're
12 all as a team. And when we need help, you
13 know, we might tell them to keep that \$400 over
14 here just in case we need it, you know.

15 But it just shows you we're all trying to
16 work together and make everything work.

17 But John, you've done a great job with
18 everybody, like Pete said, with all your
19 contractors and all the stuff that you're doing
20 and really pretty much on time and under
21 budget, so to speak. Really good job.

1 MR. HORNER: Thank you.

2 MR. CALLAHAN: Very proud of what you're
3 doing. That's for sure.

4 MR. HORNER: It's a team effort.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah.

6 MR. HORNER: You know, I personally
7 haven't installed any fiber or run any conduit.

8 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah.

9 MR. HORNER: So yeah. It's an amazing
10 team effort, great partnership with the State,
11 with the federal government, with the county,
12 certainly the town, and all of the team back at
13 Easton Utilities and our contractors. It takes
14 everyone to get it done.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: So Secretary Day, you tell
16 him to come in here and we want to hand him
17 that big check, you know. Everybody sees that.
18 You know what I mean?

19 MR. HORNER: That's right. Cut a check
20 back.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: Exactly. Okay.

1 MR. LESHER: Mr. Callahan, I'll move the
2 return as recommended.

3 MS. HAYTHE: Second.

4 MR. HORNER: 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 MS. VANHOOSER: Thank you very much.

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Thank you, guys. I
20 appreciate it.

21 MR. HORNER: Have a great night.

1 MR. STAMP: Good job.

2 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Next up, update on
3 the Neighborhood Service Center.

4 Mr. Stepp, you want to update us on that.

5 MR. LESHER: Stamp.

6 MS. HAYTHE: Stamp.

7 MR. STAMP: Council Member Stepp, the
8 Council president referred to me as Councilman
9 Stepp.

10 MR. CALLAHAN: Again. You know, it's this
11 dyslexia stuff going on. Sorry.

12 MR. STAMP: You're fine.

13 MS. MIELKE: It's a step up.

14 MR. STAMP: Dave is quiet. Dave is being
15 quiet.

16 MR. CALLAHAN: Starting to get
17 embarrassing now. God.

18 MR. STAMP: Council, yes. This is in
19 response to a question that we were asked at
20 the April 15th Council meeting.

21 And with an attempt to bring clarity to

1 what the relationship is between Talbot County
2 government and the Neighborhood Service Center
3 as the community action agency.

4 And I'm going to review a memo that I gave
5 to you. Of course, you've seen it, but I want
6 to go over it so that the public has an
7 opportunity to hear what that relation is.

8 MR. CALLAHAN: Right.

9 MR. STAMP: And also, I just want to, out
10 of respect, make sure that you recognize
11 Marilyn Neal is here, the executive director of
12 the Neighborhood Service Center, as well.

13 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup.

14 MR. STAMP: So bear with me, if you don't
15 mind.

16 In 1964, the Economic Opportunity Act was
17 launched known as the war on poverty and
18 created community action agencies across the
19 country to address poverty through community
20 driven solutions funded directly from the
21 federal government.

1 And then in 1981, the Community Services
2 Block Grant Act replaced the direct federal
3 funding with block grants to States,
4 consolidating various programs, while
5 maintaining the core mission of the community
6 action agencies, reducing poverty and promoting
7 self sufficiency.

8 State of Maryland, under the Housing and
9 Community Development Article 8-104 of the
10 Maryland law, counties may designate a
11 community action agency. However, such
12 designation does not obligate the county to
13 provide funding.

14 Designated community action agencies must
15 meet State oversight requirements, including
16 annual reporting to the Maryland Department of
17 Housing and Community Development, to ensure
18 fiscal and programmatic compliance.

19 Talbot County. In January of 1985, the
20 Talbot County Council designated the
21 Neighborhood Service Center as the official

1 community action agency. Although not legally
2 required, the county has provided funding
3 support, which averaged \$83,000 annually
4 between 2008 and 2020, then increased each year
5 to about \$374,473 in FY2025. This is both for
6 operating and capital funding.

7 Most of the Neighborhood Service Center's
8 funding is derived from federal, State, and
9 private sources. County involvement is limited
10 to its authority to designate a community
11 action agency and have representation on the
12 Neighborhood Service Center Board, as outlined
13 in its bylaws.

14 And the Neighborhood Service Center is a
15 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization governed by
16 bylaws with representation from local
17 government, community organizations, and
18 individuals who support its mission. It
19 operates independently of the Talbot County
20 government.

21 As a designated community action agency,

1 the Neighborhood Service Center reports to the
2 Maryland Department of Housing and Community
3 Development and the US Department of Health and
4 Human Services.

5 So hopefully that sheds some light on the
6 relationship between Talbot County government
7 and the Neighborhood Service Center as our
8 community action agency.

9 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Great. Any
10 questions, Council?

11 MS. MIELKE: No.

12 MR. CALLAHAN: Does that clear some things
13 up for us?

14 MS. HAYTHE: Yup. No questions.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Good, good.

16 MS. HAYTHE: Thank you, Clay.

17 MS. MIELKE: Thank you, Clay.

18 MR. CALLAHAN: Mr. Stepp, do you have any
19 questions or anything?

20 MR. STEPP: No questions here. Thank you.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: Thank you, Mr. Stamp.

1 Appreciate it.

2 MR. STAMP: You're welcome, sir.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: You're starting to look up
4 when I say Stamp, though. You know what I
5 mean?

6 Okay. Next, Mr. Stamp, you're up.

7 MR. STAMP: Okay. Under county manager
8 report this evening, I have several items for
9 your, Council, for your consideration.

10 The first is appointments to boards and
11 committees.

12 This would be the Public Works Advisory
13 Board. We're requesting Council consideration
14 for the reappointment of Cory Buxton to the
15 Public Works Advisory Board.

16 And this recommendation is supported by
17 Ray Clarke, the county engineer.

18 And Mr. Buxton has served well over his
19 time on that board, which I'm sure Pete Leshner,
20 as liaison, could attest to as well.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

1 MR. LESHER: I'll move the reappointment.

2 MS. HAYTHE: Second.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: We got a motion and second.

4 Madam Secretary, could you call the vote.

5 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

6 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

7 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

8 MR. STEPP: Aye.

9 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

10 MR. LESHER: Aye.

11 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

12 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

13 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

14 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

15 MR. STAMP: Council, next item I have, a
16 request to designate Richard Culotta as the
17 official town crier for Talbot County,
18 Maryland.

19 As you read in your agenda packet,
20 Mr. Culotta is requesting a letter of support
21 from the Talbot County Council to designate him

1 as an official town crier of Talbot County.

2 He has received a similar endorsement from
3 the Town of Easton and the Colonel Tench
4 Tilghman Chapter of the SAR.

5 Mr. Culotta is seeking the letters so he
6 can join the American Guild of Town Criers.

7 MR. LESHER: We've made a lot of
8 appointments, but this one is a first.

9 I'll move to grant the request.

10 MS. MIELKE: Second.

11 MR. CALLAHAN: All right. We got a motion
12 and second. Madam Secretary, could you call
13 the vote.

14 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

16 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

17 MR. STEPP: Aye.

18 SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.

19 MR. LESHER: Aye.

20 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

21 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

1 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

2 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

4 MR. STAMP: Council, the next item I have
5 is a request from the Roads Department.
6 They're seeking Council approval to contract
7 with David A. Bramble, Incorporated.

8 This is amending an existing contract to
9 pave the remaining half of Glebe Road that is
10 maintained by Talbot County at a cost of
11 \$193,000.

12 There are sufficient funds for this
13 project.

14 And again, we're asking your permission to
15 expend those funds for that purpose.

16 MS. HAYTHE: Motion to approve the
17 request.

18 MS. MIELKE: Second.

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We got a motion and
20 second it. Madam Secretary, could you call the
21 vote.

1 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

2 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

3 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

4 MR. STEPP: Aye.

5 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

6 MR. LESHNER: Aye.

7 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

8 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

9 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

10 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

11 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

12 MR. STAMP: Thank you, Council.

13 I ask Cassandra to come forward. She has
14 a request for you. And I'll let her run with
15 it. And I'll fill in anything that I'm able to
16 help with.

17 MS. VANHOOSER: Hello again.

18 MR. CALLAHAN: Hey there.

19 MS. VANHOOSER: I'm disappointed you
20 didn't say hear ye, hear ye when you were
21 talking about the crier. Just saying.

1 So Cassandra Vanhooser, director of
2 Economic Development and Tourism.

3 I'm here to ask you to award a bid for the
4 tourtalbot.org website redesign to a company
5 called Destination by Design in the dollar
6 figure of \$70,000.

7 So we were awarded a grant from the
8 Economic Development Administration through the
9 Maryland Department of -- Maryland Office of
10 Tourism Development.

11 And this was a non-compete grant. So this
12 same \$112,320 grant was awarded to every county
13 in the State of Maryland or every DMO in the
14 State of Maryland. There are 25. Baltimore
15 City and Ocean City have their own DMO, and
16 then every county.

17 And we all had access to this money based
18 on a successful application for a successful
19 project.

20 And ours is the redesign of our website.

21 And our longtime web developer has had to

1 step off for personal reasons. And we're
2 looking for a new web developer.

3 And our number one criteria was that we're
4 looking for a specialist in destination
5 marketing. And we had two companies that met
6 that criteria. We interviewed them both.

7 And we have selected Destination by
8 Design. We are very excited about this.

9 We love our current website. I want to be
10 clear about that. But we need a web developer,
11 and this is going to take us into the future
12 with a company that specializes in what we do.

13 So we are asking you to award this bid to
14 that company.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Any questions,
16 Council?

17 MS. HAYTHE: I just have one question.

18 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup.

19 MS. HAYTHE: So Cassandra, the website is
20 just for the tourism side or the economic
21 development and tourism side?

1 MS. VANHOOSER: So as you can see, we put
2 tourtalbot.org website redesign.

3 But we have additional funds. So in our
4 discussions with this company, they do
5 government websites, they do economic
6 development, specialize in economic development
7 and tourism.

8 And so there may be an opportunity for us
9 to link them both. And we discovered that
10 after we put out our RFP.

11 So we did not request that in the RFP, but
12 we may have the additional funds to make that
13 happen. So it's possible.

14 MS. HAYTHE: Okay. So this is just
15 specifically for --

16 MS. VANHOOSER: This is specifically for
17 tourism.

18 MS. HAYTHE: -- right now.

19 MS. VANHOOSER: At this point.

20 MS. HAYTHE: Okay.

21 MS. VANHOOSER: That's what our

1 application was.

2 MS. HAYTHE: Okay.

3 MS. VANHOOSER: But we can amend that
4 after we see, you know, down the road if that's
5 what we want to do.

6 MS. HAYTHE: So I guess I'm oblivious to
7 this.

8 So there's two separate websites, one for
9 economic development --

10 MS. VANHOOSER: Yes.

11 MS. HAYTHE: -- and one for tourism?

12 MS. VANHOOSER: Yes.

13 The tourism website is visitor focused.
14 And that's where, you know, we use that to
15 market to people who want to visit the area or
16 who live here and want to know what to see and
17 do. And it's very much outwardly focused.

18 And our Talbot Works website --

19 MS. HAYTHE: That's it.

20 MS. VANHOOSER: -- is where all of our
21 business information for our local businesses

1 is or site selectors.

2 We have a wonderful new AI site selector
3 tool that we have implemented in the last
4 couple of years.

5 So that side is all business information.
6 This is for visitors.

7 MS. HAYTHE: Okay. Yeah. I knew I had
8 been on one of them. So I was trying to figure
9 that out.

10 MS. VANHOOSER: Yeah. You've probably
11 been on both.

12 MS. HAYTHE: Yeah, I have, now that you
13 say that. Okay.

14 MS. VANHOOSER: We also have several other
15 websites. Frederickdouglassbirthplace.org is
16 one of our websites. So we have several.

17 And there is a possibility that we could
18 integrate all of them into this project.

19 MS. HAYTHE: Okay. Thank you.

20 MS. VANHOOSER: But this specific --

21 MS. HAYTHE: Tourism.

1 MS. VANHOOSER: Tourtalbot.

2 MS. HAYTHE: Got it.

3 MS. VANHOOSER: .org.

4 MS. HAYTHE: Thank you.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: One question. Off the top
6 of your head, do you have about how many hits
7 do you have a year on that website roughly?

8 MS. VANHOOSER: Oh, my. So I just gave a
9 presentation to the Tourism Board. And we
10 looked at the number that over -- since 2017
11 with a specific contractor. And driven by that
12 contractor alone, it was I believe
13 1.34 million.

14 MR. CALLAHAN: Wow.

15 MS. VANHOOSER: In that last five-year
16 time period.

17 So we, you know, spend our marketing money
18 to drive people to that website. That's our
19 storefront.

20 MR. CALLAHAN: Yes.

21 MS. VANHOOSER: So we're getting a lot of

1 visitors.

2 MR. CALLAHAN: That's great.

3 MS. VANHOOSER: I can get you the exact
4 number for a year.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: No, no. That's all I need.
6 That's fine. I don't want you to go through a
7 million of them. That's for sure. No problem.
8 I was just curious. You know what I mean?

9 MS. VANHOOSER: Yeah. Well, I'll get you
10 that exact number.

11 MR. CALLAHAN: That just shows you. What
12 is that, five years? That's a couple of
13 hundred thousand.

14 MS. VANHOOSER: Yeah.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah.

16 MS. VANHOOSER: We get really good traffic
17 to our website.

18 MR. CALLAHAN: You do. That's cool.

19 MS. VANHOOSER: And you know, people are
20 spending more than three minutes on our
21 website. That's huge.

1 That's a metric that we look at. It's
2 three minutes and 36 seconds I believe is the
3 average user is coming to that website.

4 So again, this is our number one asset
5 when it comes to marketing Talbot County.

6 MR. CALLAHAN: Got you.

7 MS. VANHOOSER: And the bridge between
8 economic development and tourism, particularly
9 for a website, is that it's showcasing the
10 quality of life that we have here, which is one
11 of the primary reasons that people bring their
12 business here.

13 MR. CALLAHAN: Got you. Good job, good
14 job.

15 Any other questions, Council?

16 MS. HAYTHE: No.

17 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. So is there --

18 MS. HAYTHE: Motion to approve the
19 request.

20 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup.

21 MS. MIELKE: Second.

1 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We got a motion and
2 second. Madam Secretary, could you call the
3 vote.

4 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

6 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

7 MR. STEPP: Aye.

8 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

9 MR. LESHNER: Aye.

10 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

11 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

12 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

13 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

14 MS. VANHOOSER: Thank you so much.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thank you.

16 MR. STAMP: Thank you, Cassandra.

17 And I'll ask Ray Clarke, your county
18 engineer, to come forward. He has a request
19 regarding a construction project on Glebe. I'm
20 sorry. Goldsborough Neck Road.

21 And he will fill you in on that at this

1 point. Ray.

2 MR. CLARKE: Thank you. Council, Ray
3 Clarke, county engineer.

4 Very quickly. We're coming before you to
5 request the closure of Goldsborough Neck Road.
6 Primarily, this is the detour map that we'll be
7 utilizing.

8 We are currently looking at I guess
9 widening up the culvert just southwest of Villa
10 Road. And then once we've done that, David A.
11 Bramble is the contractor. So I just wanted to
12 let y'all know, too, that we'll be coordinating
13 with David A. Bramble associated with the
14 closure of the road, as well as the Glebe Road
15 roadwork as well.

16 So we're going to do as much as we can to
17 minimize any impacts as the road is closed and
18 they're doing any resurfacing.

19 Again, we were trying to do this between
20 June 15th, when the permit allows us to start
21 work, up to Labor Day at this point in time.

1 What I will be honest with you is that we
2 just met with Easton Utilities and Verizon to
3 try and wrap up our utility relocations this
4 morning. And we're hoping at this point in
5 time that we can still proceed with the
6 June 15th.

7 But if we are not able to do that and we
8 have to slide it out further, let's say
9 June 21st or 22nd, we'll do that.

10 We're not going to close the road just to
11 close the road. So it will be closed when
12 we're ready to do the work.

13 But we're coming before you all to begin
14 the process of providing notices to the various
15 agencies and departments as well as providing
16 public notice as well.

17 MR. STAMP: And Council, this is -- Ray, I
18 mean you can speak to this. This is part of a
19 larger project.

20 MR. CLARKE: It is.

21 MR. STAMP: That started sometime ago,

1 which includes the overlay on Airport Road and
2 Goldsborough Neck, the widening of Goldsborough
3 Neck Road that occurred some years ago.

4 And of course, you know, it narrowed back
5 down at Villa up to Glebe Road because of that
6 culvert area. And this would complete this
7 project.

8 It will be an inconvenience clearly to a
9 lot of folks because that's a well-used piece
10 of roadway.

11 But as you see on the map up there, the
12 detour would be through Mistletoe Drive back
13 out to Goldsborough Neck beyond the
14 construction site.

15 Ray, the question is is this -- once you
16 start the project, will the closure be
17 permanent or will there be days it might be
18 open or not?

19 MR. CLARKE: Unfortunately, it's going to
20 be best for us to close the road completely so
21 we can stage out there. So the key would be

1 for us to stage.

2 One of the things we are going to be doing
3 on the upstream side of the culvert just
4 southwest of Villa, we're going to actually
5 have to pour the wing walls. So we're going to
6 have to have forms set up and concrete
7 delivered and whatnot.

8 So we will have to close that section of
9 roadway. We're hoping for as minimal time as
10 possible.

11 So if we can get that road reopened and go
12 to a single lane closure, we'll do that.

13 So I would anticipate right now, probably
14 on looking at about a six-week time frame for
15 full closure. But if we can keep it less than
16 that, we will do so.

17 MR. CALLAHAN: That's great.

18 MR. CLARKE: And I guess real quick.

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah.

20 MR. CLARKE: This is also part of that
21 rural economic investment fund that we're

1 receiving \$750,000 towards that project. So we
2 have to get this done before December. So
3 that's the other reason we're pushing.

4 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

5 MS. MIELKE: So I just have one question.

6 So Villa Road will remain open but it may
7 be limited to one lane?

8 MR. CLARKE: We will be doing --

9 MS. MIELKE: -- correctly?

10 MR. CLARKE: We will be doing work on
11 Villa Road. Right now Villa will be open. It
12 will be open.

13 But when we do work on Villa Road, it will
14 be a single lane closure. We are not closing
15 access on Villa Road.

16 MS. MIELKE: Okay.

17 MR. CALLAHAN: Ray, does it make sense,
18 because a lot of that Mistletoe Drive will be
19 local traffic.

20 MR. CLARKE: Correct.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: Most of it. You know what

1 I mean?

2 Does it make sense to, like when they're
3 on St. Michaels Road and they do cut-through,
4 to detour to Easton and then the bypass?

5 MR. CLARKE: We're going to probably do
6 what we did the last time.

7 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

8 MR. CLARKE: We did this about two years
9 ago at the end of 2023. We did a road closure
10 for Glebe Road and Goldsborough Neck when we
11 replaced that culvert.

12 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah.

13 MR. CLARKE: So we'll probably put signage
14 out at Airport Road.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Right.

16 MR. CLARKE: So we'll let them know not to
17 go down that way, the road is closed.

18 MR. CALLAHAN: Yes.

19 MR. CLARKE: So that a lot of the let's
20 say people who are doing the St. Michaels
21 bypass.

1 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah.

2 MR. CLARKE: Coming in off of US Route 50
3 will go down to 322 and take that.

4 MR. CALLAHAN: Right. Correct.

5 MR. CLARKE: And that's going to -- what
6 we're hoping for is we'll probably identify
7 that detour route for that traffic.

8 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah.

9 MR. CLARKE: But, you know, we're hoping
10 the local traffic, they'll be able to use the
11 best routes that they find.

12 MR. CALLAHAN: Right.

13 MR. STAMP: Are you going to do the same
14 for the other side of traffic coming out of
15 St. Michael's making a left on --

16 MR. CLARKE: That will -- yeah. We'll
17 probably keep that simple for let's say a
18 lot -- let's say unsuspecting traffic or
19 non-local traffic. We'll probably send them
20 down Mistletoe and then have them cut back in.

21 Hopefully they'll recognize 322 is

1 probably a little easier to do.

2 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah.

3 MR. CLARKE: But we were just going to try
4 it.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: That's what I was thinking.
6 Okay. All right.

7 MR. STAMP: So of course, we'll need
8 Council's approval to move forward for the road
9 closure.

10 MR. CLARKE: (Indiscernible.) Yes.

11 MR. LESHER: Mr. Clarke, is there an
12 opportunity to continue our stormwater ditch
13 retrofit as part of this project?

14 MR. CLARKE: At this point, we're doing
15 everything we can to widen that ditch on the
16 Talbot I guess Commerce Park side. We're doing
17 what we can over there, yes.

18 We're not going to get as wide as we had
19 purchased land on Goldsborough Neck Road on the
20 other side. So we'll be limited in what we can
21 do over there. But we're going to do our best

1 to do something.

2 MR. LESHER: Thank you very much.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: Mr. Stepp, you have any
4 questions?

5 MR. STEPP: None here. Thank you.

6 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

7 MR. LESHER: I'll move to approve the road
8 closure.

9 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

10 MS. MIELKE: Second.

11 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We got a motion and
12 second. Madam Secretary, could you call the
13 vote.

14 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

16 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

17 MR. STEPP: Aye.

18 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

19 MR. LESHER: Aye.

20 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

21 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

1 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

2 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

3 MR. LESHER: We're just winning all kinds
4 of friends with road closures on this side of
5 the county.

6 MR. CLARKE: We don't like them either,
7 but it has to happen.

8 MR. CALLAHAN: Exactly.

9 MR. STAMP: So Council, I'll ask Ray to
10 stay here.

11 I'm looking forward to, as well as you,
12 cutting a ribbon on the north EMS station
13 sometime hopefully later this year.

14 So Ray has an update. I think we have a
15 green light on several issues related to
16 starting construction on that project.

17 We do have one ask of you this evening,
18 which is a change order involving adding a
19 sprinkler system in the garage area. But Ray
20 will go over that with you.

21 MR. CLARKE: Council, again, this is a

1 change order associated with the review of the
2 fire marshal. Unfortunately, we have to
3 actually have sprinklers inside the garage bay,
4 which is a four-bay garage.

5 That's now requiring us to put in a
6 25,000-gallon holding tank for that sprinkler
7 system.

8 So we had originally thought it was going
9 to cost about \$404,000.

10 We've worked with the fire marshal. We've
11 worked on a solution. It's now -- bad news is
12 it's going to only cost us \$253,800, but that's
13 going to be the change order to do that.

14 Again, the original project had the
15 sleeping area and I'll say the office area
16 sprinklered. But we're being required to
17 basically sprinkle the entire building. So
18 that's where we are.

19 MR. STAMP: So just clarification.

20 Ray, I'm looking --

21 MR. CLARKE: I apologize. This is 166. I

1 was looking at change order number
2 (indiscernible).

3 It's even cheaper than that. It's
4 166,800. I apologize. So I'm just --

5 MR. STAMP: So we're requesting Council
6 approve change order number three, Bid Number
7 24-14, to Industrial Engineering Company, IEC,
8 in the amount of \$166,800 for the sprinkler
9 system.

10 And this should be hopefully the last time
11 we come back to you.

12 MR. CLARKE: I hope so.

13 MR. STAMP: Before we cut a ribbon.

14 And there are sufficient funds in the
15 budget for this.

16 MR. LESHER: I'll move approval of change
17 order number three to Bid 24-14.

18 MS. HAYTHE: I'll second.

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We got a motion and
20 second. Madam Secretary, could you call the
21 vote.

1 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

2 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

3 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

4 MR. STEPP: Aye.

5 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

6 MR. LESHNER: Aye.

7 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

8 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

9 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

10 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

11 MR. CLARKE: And just to give you an
12 update. We are hopefully in the process.
13 We'll be starting construction on the entrance.
14 We do have to work with the MTA.

15 I can get the licensing agreement out of
16 the assistant AG's office with MDOT. So that's
17 where we're stuck right now, but we'll do our
18 best to get that out of there.

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

20 MR. STAMP: And Ray, you want to move on
21 the next item.

1 The Department of Public Works is
2 requesting Council approval to apply and accept
3 FY26 Bay Restoration Funds septic system
4 upgrade program funding.

5 MR. CLARKE: Yes. Council, this is --
6 each year we -- and I apologize. We just
7 received notice from MDE on this from last week
8 that ultimately the application is due
9 June 6th.

10 This is primarily to request funding
11 through the Bay Restoration Funds grants for
12 septic systems.

13 As part of this, we do receive grants to
14 assist in sewer connections on a one-by-one
15 scenario. So we have roughly I think it was --
16 let me look here. I think it was -- how many
17 did we have?

18 MR. STAMP: \$2,125,300.

19 MR. CLARKE: I think it was ten, ten sewer
20 connections and 40 connections is what we're
21 looking at or ultimately -- I'm sorry. It was

1 30 (indiscernible) and 20 connections.

2 So this is, again, a grant request of I
3 think \$2 million, if I'm not mistaken, is
4 actually the application. But typically each
5 year we receive between 900 and a million
6 dollars out of this program.

7 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

8 MR. STAMP: So Council, we're asking for
9 permission to apply for and accept up to 2.1 --
10 \$2,125,300 for Bay Restoration funding.

11 MS. HAYTHE: Motion to approve the
12 request.

13 MS. MIELKE: Second.

14 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We got a motion and
15 second. Madam Secretary, could you call the
16 vote.

17 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

18 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

19 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

20 MR. STEPP: Aye.

21 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

1 MR. LESHER: Aye.

2 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

3 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

4 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

5 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

6 MR. STAMP: Thank you, Ray.

7 MR. CLARKE: Thank you.

8 MR. STAMP: Council, I have two more
9 requests from the Department of Technical
10 Services.

11 The first is they're requesting Council
12 approval to procure 36 Dell computer monitors
13 and accessories at a cost of \$85,054.85 using
14 national cooperative purchasing alliance
15 contract, which is a group purchasing contract.

16 There are sufficient funds in the budget
17 for this purchase.

18 MR. LESHER: I'll move to approve.

19 MS. HAYTHE: Second.

20 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We got a motion and
21 second. Madam Secretary, could you call the

1 vote.

2 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

4 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

5 MR. STEPP: Aye.

6 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

7 MR. LESHER: Aye.

8 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

9 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

10 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

11 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

12 MR. STAMP: Thank you, Council.

13 Finally, the Department of Technical
14 Service is requesting Council approval to
15 purchase network infrastructure devices at a
16 cost of \$260,010.49 from E-Plus Technology,
17 Incorporated by piggybacking on State of
18 Maryland contract.

19 There are sufficient funds in the budget
20 for this purchase.

21 MS. HAYTHE: Motion to approve the

1 request.

2 MR. LESHER: Second.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We got a motion and
4 second. Madam Secretary, could you call the
5 vote.

6 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

7 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

8 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

9 MR. STEPP: Aye.

10 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

11 MR. LESHER: Aye.

12 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

13 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

14 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

15 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

16 MR. STAMP: Council, thank you. That
17 completes your county manager report for this
18 evening.

19 MS. MIELKE: Thank you.

20 MR. CALLAHAN: Sounds great. Good job.

21 MS. HAYTHE: Do we have a list?

1 MS. KILMON: (Indiscernible.)

2 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. She forgot.

3 Come on up.

4 MS. KILMON: My name is Sarah Kilmon,
5 communications manager for Talbot County.

6 I didn't make the official agenda. So I
7 will give this update now.

8 Talbot 250 Commission has been working on
9 a lot of projects. You would have -- you
10 should have received the quarterly report,
11 which kind of gives an overview of what we've
12 got going on.

13 But I did want to make the public aware of
14 our next event that we are very excited about.
15 It's called Talbot Treasures. And essentially
16 it is a community road show show-and-tell kind
17 of event.

18 So how it works is you register an item
19 and then you're going to bring it to the
20 Waterfowl Building on the second weekend of
21 June. And we're going to have basically an

1 exhibit of people's family memorabilia,
2 letters.

3 I've heard of a lot of exciting things
4 coming, including deeds of special houses in
5 the area, lots of things. We have a top hat
6 from the Talbot Historical Society that was
7 worn by one of the original founding members of
8 the Quaker Meeting House. There's some really
9 exciting stuff that maybe you don't usually get
10 to see because it's not on display.

11 So what I am encouraging everyone to do is
12 look through their attic and see if they can
13 find something that has a story to tell. We
14 would love to see it, and we'd love to share it
15 with the community.

16 If you would like more information, you
17 can go to talbot250.org, and you'll find a page
18 called Talbot Treasures. And that will have
19 information about the event and how to
20 register. You will also see a list of items
21 that have already been registered.

1 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thank you. Good
2 job. All right. Antique Road Show.

3 MS. HAYTHE: There we go.

4 MR. CALLAHAN: There we go. All right.

5 MS. HAYTHE: That's good. Anybody else?

6 MR. LESHER: And apparently we have nobody
7 signed up for public comment.

8 MR. CALLAHAN: We don't? Okay. No public
9 comment. No public comment. Got nothing.

10 MR. RIGGIN: Be happy to talk about
11 anything.

12 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. All right.

13 We've got Council comments next. Okay.
14 Mr. Stepp, we're going to let you go. You want
15 to say anything?

16 MR. STEPP: Nothing here, Mr. Callahan.
17 Thank you so much.

18 Have a great evening, everyone.

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thanks a lot for
20 being here.

21 Mr. Leshner.

1 MR. LESHER: Congratulations to the
2 graduates of Chesapeake College, their
3 families, faculty, and administrators,
4 including those graduates of the nursing
5 program who received their pins just last week.

6 And congratulations in advance to the
7 Easton High School class, which is graduating
8 tomorrow, in their commencement ceremonies. I
9 will be there to support them.

10 To, likewise to St. Michaels High School
11 graduates on Thursday to, again, those
12 graduates, but also all of those who have
13 supported them, their families, faculty, and
14 administrators.

15 And to all Talbot County families and
16 graduates supporting their family members who
17 have graduated anywhere across the country, we
18 have a wide reach in this county. This is a
19 time of celebrations and transitions.

20 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thank you.

21 MS. MIELKE: Thank you. This Friday,

1 May 30th, there will be a Memorial Day
2 celebration or ceremony, excuse me, hosted by
3 the VFW on Glebe Road starting at three and
4 running until four. I urge everybody to turn
5 out to commemorate our fallen, local fallen
6 heros.

7 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

8 MS. HAYTHE: Amen to that.

9 Following in the same vein as Councilman
10 Leshner, had the opportunity attend the
11 Chesapeake College commencement last week where
12 former Senator Cardin was the commencement
13 speaker. But it was a great turnout of those
14 that walked the stage at Chesapeake College.
15 And they did an amazing job. So
16 congratulations to them.

17 And then likewise, as my colleague stated,
18 we both will be attending the Easton High
19 School graduation tomorrow and then
20 St. Michael's on Thursday. So congratulations
21 to all the families. It takes a village to get

1 everyone across that finish line to graduate.

2 And I'm so thankful. I only have two more
3 years left for our last one to graduate
4 college.

5 So God bless all of those that's going on
6 to college and spending all of that money and
7 using that Maryland 529 plan.

8 MR. CALLAHAN: Thank you. And once again,
9 we want to thank staff and --

10 MS. SPARKS: Not Mr. Stepp.

11 MR. CALLAHAN: I was thinking that. You
12 know what I mean?

13 But Martha and --

14 MS. MIELKE: That's Mr. Stepp.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup, yup. Martha and
16 Kaitlyn. Just with the whole budget. It's a
17 big deal. And just thanks so much because, you
18 know, you spent so much time on it, you know,
19 for what five months, roughly. So I do want to
20 pat you guys on the back and really appreciate
21 it.

1 MS. SPARKS: Thank you.

2 MR. STAMP: Good team.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup. Good team.

4 So all right, you want to?

5 MR. LESHER: The County Council's next
6 meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 10th,
7 beginning at 5 o'clock p.m.

8 The Council will be convening in open
9 session at 2:30 p.m. for a joint work session
10 with the Planning Commission on a proposed text
11 amendment concerning short-term rentals and the
12 Short-Term Rental Review Board and then
13 adjourning into closed session, as listed on
14 the statement for closing that meeting.

15 Therefore, is there a motion to adjourn
16 this meeting and reconvene as noted?

17 MS. HAYTHE: So moved.

18 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Got a motion and
19 second. Madam Secretary, call the vote.

20 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

1 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

2 SPEAKER: He's gone.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: I think Mr. Stepp's gone.

4 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

5 MR. LESHER: Aye.

6 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

7 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

8 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

9 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

10 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thanks a lot.

11 (Meeting concluded at: 6:09 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 Baltimore City,
4 do hereby certify that the within named, Talbot
5 County Council Audio, personally appeared before me
6 at the time and place herein set according to law,
7 was interrogated by counsel.

8 I further certify that the examination was
9 recorded stenographically by me and then transcribed
10 from my stenographic notes to the within printed
11 matter by means of computer-assisted transcription
12 in a true and accurate manner.

13 I further certify that the stipulations
14 contained herein were entered into by counsel in my
15 presence.

16 I further certify that I am not of counsel
17 to any of the parties, not an employee of counsel,
18 nor related to any of the parties, nor in any way
19 interested in the outcome of this action.

20 AS WITNESS my hand Notarial Seal this 3rd
21 day of June, 2025, at Easton



Diane Houlihan
Notary Public

My commission expires September 16, 2025

[1,030,700 - accurate]

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