OF TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

Council Meeting

October 13, 2026; 5:00 p.m.

Council Chambers, Easton, Maryland

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Pete Lesher
Keasha N. Haythe
Lynn L. Mielke
Dave Stepp

Reported by
Diane Houlihan

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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

MR. LESHER: Good evening and welcome. I will call the meeting to order.

Would we all please rise for opening remarks, the opening prayer, and the Pledge.

(Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.)

MR. LESHER: Good evening. Council President Chuck Callahan is out of town, and so I'm sitting in in his place.

Council, we have an agenda before us. Are there any additions or corrections to the agenda?

MR. STEPP: Mr. Vice President, if I may, I have one. Could I add another agenda item right after, let's see, right after number six, as a new item number seven for the disbursement of micro grant funds through LDAAC?

MR. LESHER: So that's LDAAC grant request is the new item number seven. We have a motion to approve the agenda with that addition.

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Do we have a second?

MS. MIELKE: Second.

MS. HAYTHE: Second.

MR. LESHER: Would you please call the roll.

SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.

MR. LESHER: Aye.

SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

MR. STEPP: Aye.

SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

MS. MIELKE: Aye.

SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

MR. LESHER: Okay. The agenda is approved as amended.

Council, we have minutes of September 22nd and October 5th before us. Are there any additions or corrections to the minutes?

MR. STEPP: None here.

MR. LESHER: Hearing none, the chair moves that the minutes be approved with unanimous consent.

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Council, we also have disbursements from October 6th and October 13th. Are there any questions on the disbursements?

MS. HAYTHE: No.

MR. STEPP: None here.

MR. LESHER: Hearing none, the chair moves that the disbursements be approved with unanimous consent.

And we now have a proclamation for Colonel Tench Tilghman Week. Would the secretary please read the proclamation into the record.

SECRETARY: Yes. Colonel Tench Tilghman Week, October 19th through the 24th, 2026.

Whereas, Tench Tilghman was born in Talbot County on December 25, 1744, on Fausley Creek. Now known as Glebe Creek, a branch of the Miles River.

And whereas, Tench Tilghman received his early education in Easton and St. Michaels and his formal education at the College Academy and

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Charitable School of Philadelphia, founded by Benjamin Franklin and civic leaders, which became the University of Pennsylvania, after which he went into business with his uncle Tench Francis, Jr., who served as a trustee for the College Academy and Charitable School of Philadelphia.

And whereas, Tench Tilghman dissolved his business partnership with his uncle upon the breaking out of the troubles to share the fate of his country and from 1775 to 1776 was commissioned as a captain of an independent company known as The Flying Camp, formed by George Washington and comprised of a group of militia men from the colonies of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware to serve and protect citizens in case of an invasion.

And whereas, Tench Tilghman served as General George Washington's Aide-de-camp and personal secretary for seven years, from 1776 to 1783, refusing compensation for nearly five

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years of his service to General Washington but standing by his side in nearly every battle in which General Washington participated.

And whereas, Tench Tilghman was entrusted to carry the official word of Lord Cornwallis' surrender in Yorktown, Virginia, on October 19, 1981, to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he arrived on October 24, 1781, for which Congress awarded him a horse properly caparisoned and an elegant sword in testimony of their high opinion of his merit and ability.

And whereas, Tench Tilghman sacrificed his time, energy, fortunate, family, and health in support of the cause of the American independence and freedom.

Now, therefore, we, the members of the County Council of Talbot County, do hereby declare October 19th through the 24th, 2026, as Colonel Tench Tilghman Week in Talbot County and encourage citizens to honor his

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accomplishments and to remember his contributions to the cause of establishing a new nation based upon the principles of liberty and freedom, which the residents of Talbot County continue to enjoy 250 years later.

Given under our hands and the great seal of Talbot County this 13th day of October in the year of our lord, 2026.

MR. LESHER: Thank you.

Council, do we have a motion to approve the proclamation?

MS. MIELKE: So moved.

MR. STEPP: And a second.

MR. LESHER: Would you please call the roll.

SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.

MR. LESHER: Aye.

SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

MR. STEPP: Aye.

SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

MS. MIELKE: Aye.

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SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

MR. LESHER: Mr. Hagood, would you like to tell us what all we're doing to celebrate Colonel Tench Tilghman Week this year?

MR. HAGOOD: I absolutely will, Pete. And I understand you're going to be with us for all of the three events that we have scheduled.

MR. LESHER: I most certainly will.

MR. HAGOOD: Thank you so much.

So let me just start by saying Vice President Lesher, Members of the Talbot County Council, thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak with you about the third annual celebration of Colonel Tench Tilghman Week. I'd also like to thank you for the proclamation that Jessica read that you issued for the third time in as many years declaring October 19th to 24th as Colonel Tench Tilghman Week.

This year being the 250th anniversary of

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the founding of our country, we scheduled the following three events to celebrate Colonel Tench Tilghman Week.

Number one, a parade on October 24th beginning at 9 o'clock here in front of the Talbot County Courthouse where the Talbot Resolves were declared on May 24, 1774, to honor Colonel Tilghman, his uncle, Matthew Tilghman, and all of our patriot ancestors.

The second event is a grave-marking and a wreath-laying ceremony beginning at 9:45 on the same day at Spring Hill Cemetery in honor of Solomon Barrott, the last living member of Maryland's Revolutionary Army who is buried there.

And then finally, we have a special guest speaker, historian and best-selling author Patrick K. O'Donnell, who will share the story of the Maryland 400 soldiers who became known as Washington's immortals due to their heroic actions that occurred 250 years ago, just a

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couple of months ago, during the Battle of Brooklyn, where they saved George Washington's Continental Army from near certain destruction. O'Donnell's presentation will begin at 11 o'clock at the Avalon Theater. He's also agreed to weave in some stories about African American and Native American soldiers who were part of Maryland's Revolutionary War Army.

Now I'd like to talk briefly about each of the three men that we're honoring.

Tench Tilghman. As you know and as Jess just read, he was both a local and a national hero who was George Washington's longest serving Aide-de-camp, or personal secretary, who helped Washington manage the war effort. And let me tell you, it was a crushing burden the bore together.

In addition to his duties as an Aide-de-camp, and most people are unaware of this, Tilghman did whatever Washington needed. For example, he helped negotiate a treaty with

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an Indian tribe to gain their neutrality and their support when needed during the war. And in fact, one of the tribes that supported the cause of liberty actually prevented the Americans from starving to death during the winter at Valley Forge.

And because Tilghman spoke French fluently, he acted as an interpreter when Washington needed to talk with French generals and admirals who were instrumental in our military victories over Great Britain's Army and Navy.

MR. LESHER: Including Lafayette.

MR. HAGOOD: Absolutely. That's right.

Tilghman also served as an intelligence officer. He interrogated captured British prisoners. Soldiers I should say.

He also was sent into the countryside to purchase desperately-needed food for the Continental Army, again, to prevent them from starving to death.

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He was, as Jessica said, by Washington's side in nearly every battle in which Washington was engaged. He often had to enter the battle field to convey Washington's orders to the field commanders, placing himself at risk of injury and death.

And after the disastrous battle of Brooklyn that occurred, as I said 250 years ago, August 27, 1776, Tilghman led men in battle in subsequent engagements because the soldiers were afraid to fight unless their officers led from the front.

Now I'd like to move onto Matthew Tilghman. Matthew was Tench Tilghman's uncle and eventual father-in-law. He was known as the father of the revolution in Maryland and the patriarch of Maryland for his roles before, during, and after the war.

Before the war, he was appointed to draw up Maryland's protest against the Stamp Act that was eventually overturned.

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He also served as the chairman of the committee of correspondents in 1774, communicating with all the other colonies about what was going on, and as chairman of the committee of safety in 1975 to keep the population safe in the event the British invaded, which the soldiers did. Of course, we know that.

He was likely the lead author of the Talbot Resolves, which were quoted on one of the two historical markers in front of the courthouse.

After the British shut the port of Boston in 1774 to punish the Sons of Liberty for the Boston Tea Party, all the colonies faced a crisis. Each county sent representatives to Annapolis to decide how to respond. The representatives from across Maryland elected Matthew Tilghman as the president of the Annapolis Convention.

He also served in the Maryland House of

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Delegates and he was the speaker of House from 1973 to 1775, during which time he issued the Declaration of the Association of Free Men of Maryland on June 26, 1775, declaring Maryland was firmly persuaded that it is necessary and justifiable to repel force by force and do approve the opposition of arms to the British troops. And of course, this was just a couple of months after the initial battles up in Massachusetts, right, and just a few days before the Declaration of Independence.

Maryland also sent Matthew Tilghman to Philadelphia as one of its representatives to the Continental Congress and he served for two years from 1774 to '76. He helped create the Declaration of Independence, but he didn't sign it because he was called back to Maryland to draft Maryland's very first State Constitution.

He was elected to the State Senate in Maryland in 1777 and was reelected to a second term.

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He died on May 4, 1790, and is believed to be buried in his family's cemetery at his home called Rich Neck in Easton.

Clearly, Tilghman is another man worthy of our remembrance and honor.

And finally, I'd like to say a few words about Solomon Barrott.

He was born in 1763 in Easton. At age 16 in the spring of 1779, he enlisted in Captain James Gray's company under John Eager Howard, which, of course, is where we get the name Howard Street up in Baltimore.

However, after Howard was captured by the British on Long Island, Barrott was reassigned to Captain Perry Benson's company, where he served for the rest of the war, primarily as a fifer. He fought in numerous battles, including Camden, Cowpens, Horseshoe, Utah Springs, and Gilford Courthouse. Almost all those were in the southern campaign.

He remained under Captain Benson's command

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until General Cornwallis surrendered his British Army at Yorktown, Virginia.

After the war, he returned to Easton and married Susan Robinson and operated a tavern here on Washington Street.

After the war of 1812, he would lead a parade during the 4th of July through the streets of Easton playing his fife, while young boys dragged the canon that General Perry Benson and others used to prevent the British from invading St. Michaels during the second war with Britain.

Barrott died in 1851 at age 88, almost 70 years after the war ended. He was the last living member of the Maryland Line, meaning Maryland's Revolution War Army.

So clearly, he's a third man worthy of our remembrance.

And I'd just like to finish by saying I'd like to invite all the Council members, if they're available, to walk in the parade to

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honor Colonel Tench Tilghman, Matthew Tilghman, and all of our patriot ancestors, present a wreath, if they choose to do so, at the grave of Solomon Barrott during our wreath laying ceremony, and attend our presentation by our special guest speaker, historian and best-selling author Patrick K. O'Donnell.

Thank you for considering my request.

MR. LESHER: Thank you so much.

That's approved.

Any questions or comments for Mr. Hagood?

And you have Ms. Newman here as well.

MR. HAGOOD: She wanted to say a few words as well, yes.

MR. LESHER: Very good.

MS. NEWMAN: I would just say that libraries believe in the importance of preserving stories.

This 250 honors Tench Tilghman, Tench Tilghman Week, honors Tench Tilghman and his perseverance, his duty.

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And we are so happy to be a part of that celebration and support Tench Tilghman Week.

So I think Wes has said it very well.

MR. LESHER: Well, thank you for being a valuable partner for this program.

Anyone else?

MS. HAYTHE: No.

MS. MIELKE: Just thank you for all your efforts to preserve our history.

MR. HAGOOD: You're welcome, Lynn. Thank you.

MR. LESHER: All right. If you'd like to come forward for the proclamation.

MS. KILMON: Keasha, could I have you -- perfect. She knows the drill.

All right. Ready? One, two, three. Perfect.

MR. LESHER: Well, and the good news continues with another proclamation for Support Your Local Chamber of Commerce Day. Would the secretary please read the proclamation into the

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record?

SECRETARY: Yes. Support your Local Chamber of Commerce Day, October 21, 2026.

Whereas, Chambers of Commerce serve as catalysts for stronger communities by fostering economic growth, creating connections, supporting local businesses, and advancing prosperity.

And whereas, the Talbot County Chamber of Commerce, representing more than 600 members throughout Talbot County and the midshore, has been serving the community for 60 years, continuing to strengthen the local business community through advocacy, connection, collaboration, leadership development, and workforce initiatives.

And whereas, the Chamber strengthens connections between business and community by bringing together employers, community leaders, government, educators, and nonprofit organizations to address shared opportunities

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and challenges.

And whereas, the Talbot County Chamber of Commerce supports the development of a strong local workforce, and through the Talbot Chamber Foundation, invests in apprenticeships, career pathway, workforce development, and entrepreneurship and opportunities that connect people with meaningful careers and local employers.

And whereas, the strength of our local economy depends upon businesses of every size, from entrepreneurs and small businesses to major employers. And the Chamber provides a collective voice and a place for those businesses to connect, collaborate, and contribute to the community.

And whereas, Support Your Local Chamber of Commerce Day provides an opportunity to recognize the important contributions of Chambers of Commerce and the businesses, volunteers, community partners, and leaders who

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work together to strengthen our local economy and community.

Now, therefore, we, the County Council of Talbot County, do hereby recognize October 21, 2026, as Support Your Local Chamber of Commerce Day and encourage our community to recognize and support the businesses and organizations whose investment, innovation, and engagement help make Talbot County a strong place to live, work, and do business.

Given under our hands and the great seal of Talbot County this 13th day of October in the year of our Lord, 2026.

MR. LESHER: Thank you.

I need a motion and second to approve the proclamation.

MR. STEPP: So moved.

MS. HAYTHE: Second.

MR. LESHER: Madam Secretary, would you please call the roll.

SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.

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MR. LESHER: Aye.
SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.
MR. STEPP: Aye.
SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.
MS. MIELKE: Aye.
SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.
MS. HAYTHE: Aye.
MR. LESHER: And Ms. Kreiner, welcome.
MS. KREINER: Thank you. Thank you, Councilman Lesher and Members of the County Council for recognizing Support Your Local Chamber of Commerce Day.
And I'm joined here today by Liz Connelly. She's vice chair of our Chamber Board of Directors.
I want to say on behalf of the Chamber and our Board and more than 600 members, we're grateful for this recognition.
The Chamber's work is about strengthening our local economy by supporting businesses, building relationships, and advocating for our

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members, and creating opportunities for businesses in this community to thrive.
We're fortunate to have such an engaged business community here in Talbot County. We're proud to play a role in its continued success, and we're grateful for the community partnerships that we have and continue to build and grow.
And so thank you, again, for recognizing the importance that Chambers of Commerce play in the business community.
MR. LESHER: Thank you.
Any questions or comments for -- and Ms. Connelly, did you have anything to add?
MS. CONNELLY: No. I think that was very eloquently said.
MR. STEPP: No. None here. Thank you.
MR. LESHER: Go ahead.
MS. HAYTHE: I just want to say you did a great job organizing the ribbon cutting for Vetagro last week.

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And I appreciate all the work that the Chamber does, the Chamber members attending events like that.
So you are vital to our business community. So thank you for the work, and we're happy to celebrate this Chamber of Commerce Day.
MR. LESHER: My email inbox is testimony to the impact that you have, the way that you are connecting people and businesses around this county, and empowering us to do better and to be more prosperous.
Thank you for all that you do for the community.
MS. KREINER: Thank you. Sometimes a lot of emails is not a good thing, but I take it as a good sign. We're doing a lot of things.
MR. LESHER: Indeed, indeed it is. In this case, it is a good thing.
If you'd like to come forward, Ms. Haythe has a proclamation for you.

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MS. KILMON: All right. Ready? Lynn, can I have you scoot just a tad that way? Perfect. Thank you. One, two, three.
All right. Let me get one with the other camera.
SPEAKER: Thank you.
MR. LESHER: That's what happens when you send your camera person forward.
MS. KILMON: Ready? One, two, three. Got it.
MS. KREINER: Thank you.
MR. LESHER: And now we are up to that added item on our agenda, which is a grant request from our Local Drug and Alcohol Abuse Council. Sheriff Gamble.
SHERIFF GAMBLE: Thank you, Councilman Lesher.
MR. LESHER: Welcome.
SHERIFF GAMBLE: So as chairman of the Local Drug and Alcohol Coordinating Council, we met today. We've been going over for several

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months a number of applicants for the micro grant through the ORF funds, the Opioid Restitution Funds, to submit to you our recommendations.

We finally were able to narrow it down. We had about -- we had $100,000 under the State plan that we could use in the Opioid Restitution Funds to use. We received over that amount of grant requests, about $127,000 in grant requests.

So we went through those, voted on what our recommendation would be to you.

And those include St. Michael's community Center for a youth program there that they're doing with the podcast.

Mariah's Mission, who you all know has been doing great work in our community for years for $18,000. She provide clothes, bicycles for those that are suffering from substance use that are in recovery and does a lot more work in the recovery space.

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Chesapeake College has asked for 20,000. We narrowed that down to 18,500 for an EMT paramedic training devices, actually equipment for them, which would help with opioid, in the opioid field as far as resuscitation efforts, those types of things.

Not My Child asked for 20,000. We cut that down to 18,000. And they provide a lot of substance use support, some peer support issues.

Grace Street at $10,000. We all know what Grace Street, the amazing work they've been doing there with helping people with substance use. It is also our Safe Station, is the word I was trying to find.

Channel Marker asked for more than 5,000. We're recommending 5,000 to Channel Marker for some efforts they're doing with Talbot Goes Purple. Requested 20. We narrowed that down to 18 to fit in the budget.

This year we used some of those

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restitution funds to bring Chris Herren into the middle schools and high schools, public and private, every school in the county. And we look to use some of that money for next year to set up similar type events in the high schools to help educate our kids.

And the Tilghman Area Youth Association, which has been a very valuable part of the Tilghman community, we left that at 10,000.

So those are our recommendations to you.

There was one that we decided that we did not believe that it fit. It was an Arizona-based company that wanted to do some stuff that we're already doing through Mid-Shore Behavioral Health, Grace Street, those types of things. So we eliminated that 20,000 ask from our recommendations to you, but I'd be happy to comment on any of that if there was any questions.

MR. LESHER: Well, you answered my question already, which was what the universe

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of requests was. And that was a very clear explanation. Thank you for that.

MR. STEPP: I'll just, as our liaison to the LDAAC, I'll just say that there was a lot of work that was put into this, some great dialogue, and I think some great decisions made on behalf of a lot of organizations that will offer some great assistance in our community.

So I think these funds are well spent or being considered spent well as indicated.

So I appreciate the committee and your leadership on that committee, Joe.

SHERIFF GAMBLE: And thank you for your partnership there. And Mr. Lesher sat on that committee as well for a number of years. The commitment of the Council is evident with the LDAAC.

And specifically, we looked at what gaps we need to fill in our community. That's the reason that we present this to you, that there are gaps that the government is not covering

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that need to be filled. And these are the gaps that we feel -- we just finished the two-year strategic plan for the next two years, which included a lot of this, the needs that you see in these grants.

So we're excited that hopefully these people will be able to receive these grants and use them to fill in some of those gaps.

MR. LESHER: Other questions?

MS. HAYTHE: No. He answered the question that I had.

MS. MIELKE: He answered mine, too.

MR. LESHER: Terrific. Very good.

With that, we can proceed with a motion for approval.

MR. STEPP: I'll make a motion that we approve as stated at the values associated here in front of us.

MS. MIELKE: Second.

MS. HAYTHE: Second.

MR. LESHER: We have a motion and second.

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Madam Secretary, would you please call the roll.

SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.

MR. LESHER: Aye.

SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

MR. STEPP: Aye.

SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

MS. MIELKE: Aye.

SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

MR. LESHER: Thank you very much. That stands approved. And go forth and do good work.

SHERIFF GAMBLE: Thank you.

One more thing. We voted today to have Sarah Cloxton from the Health Department to take over as chair. I've been chair for a number of years since Mr. Stamp left that position to me and I inherited from him.

So Sarah Cloxton will be taking over. You'll see her taking over in January, as well

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as Tammy Stoffa from the Public Defender's Office will be vice chair.

I'll still be engaged and a member, but just when you see a new face next year doing the ORF grant and stuff, that will be them.

Thank you so much. Thanks for fitting me in.

MS. HAYTHE: Thank you.

MS. MIELKE: Thanks so much for all you do.

MR. LESHER: Thank you.

Next up we have the presentation of the Government Finance Officers Association Award for 2024, fiscal 2024, to the Talbot County Finance Office.

Martha Sparks and your trustee assistant Kaitlin, thank you.

MS. SPARKS: My compadre. Good evening, Council. Martha Sparks, finance director for Talbot County.

The Government Finance Officers

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Association of the United States and Canada, also known as the GFOA, has awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to Talbot County, Maryland, for its annual comprehensive financial report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2025.

The report was reviewed by an impartial panel and judged to meet the high standards of the program, including demonstrating a constructive spirit of full disclosure that clearly communicates the county's financial story and encourages users to engage with the report.

The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting. Its attainment represents a significant accomplish (sic.) by Talbot County and its management.

Talbot County has received this award for the past 25 years continuously since 2001, which is a remarkable and sustained

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achievement.
This award would not be possible without the consistent dedication and professionalism of all staff in the Finance Office. Their commitment to excellence supports not only our residents and businesses but also the Council, the County Manager's Office, and our departments.
I'm incredibly proud of the work they do every day. And I'm grateful for the opportunity to work alongside of each of them.
MR. LESHER: Thank you.
Any comments from Council?
MR. STEPP: I'll kick it off. Well said, well deserved.
We go through an awful long budgetary process with the both of you each and every year, and I know there's a lot behind with staff, too.
So I'll just say thank you, well deserved, and let's keep up the good work. Let's keep

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that award coming year in and year out. Thank you.
MS. SPARKS: Thank you.
MS. MIELKE: And just for the record, would you tell the public how long you have been in your position and how long Kaitlin has been in hers?
MS. SPARKS: Sure. I've been with Talbot County since July of 2022, and Kaitlin came in...
MS. FOSTER-CLARK: February.
MS. SPARKS: February of 2023, yes.
MS. MIELKE: So you play a role in the award each year for the last five years.
MS. SPARKS: Yes, for the last -- since '22 was the first audit under my -- so I came in July when the audit started. And that's always fun for any new finance director because it's not our books and records. Heck, we don't even know the account coding. You always start with the previous year's financial report as

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your guide or your map.
So we've been through that process, and we have made our -- put our own touch on that and made our improvements to the process.
And we still have a list of things that we're going to tackle. But each year, we're able to make an improvement in that process.
So that process involves the audit, the gathering of the financial statements, the uniform financial report that gets filed with the State and then a number of other partners, MDE, Mid-Shore -- yes. There's a very long list of people that receive our report.
MS. MIELKE: You're doing a great job.
MS. SPARKS: Thank you so much.
MS. HAYTHE: Yeah, Martha and Kaitlin. You guys have done a wonderful job, especially with the improvement of the budget from the first year to now. And certainly appreciate all that you do.
So continue to keep up the good work and

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getting those auditing, those good audits. So thank you.
MR. LESHER: Mr. Stamp, you've put a great team into place.
MR. STAMP: Well, yeah. Thank you for letting me have a moment.
So obviously I'm very proud of all 14 of our department heads and over 400 employees.
But in this moment, I just really want to take the opportunity to thank Martha and Kaitlin for the work that they do. They certainly keep our fiscal house in order.
Martha brings a great deal of experience to the table over the years, medicine we needed four years ago and we're reaping the benefits of that.
And she's a fine mentor when it comes to Kaitlin. And they're a great partnership. I think the two terms that come to mind are rigor in the area of our financial matters is in place and fiscal responsibility. And those are

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two priorities that are tenets that we follow and they carry it out. So thank you.

MS. SPARKS: I would like to take a moment to say that not all county finance offices experience the relationship, the good mentoring, the good relationship that we have with our county manager and our Council.

It's just, it enables us to focus on the work. The work is hard enough as it is without having extra to have to worry about. And you guys, when you give us extra, it's always in the good way, it's always the encouragement or the push forward for the excellence that we attain, we try to attain every day.

So thank you, also.

MR. LESHER: Well, thank you, Ms. Sparks, Ms. Foster-Clark.

Not only do we see the sterling audit results, we get to experience this at budget time every year with the clarity of the way the data is presented and the way you also turn

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around and that present that to the public.

And I think that you deserve a lot of credit for the increased transparency and clarity with which you present the data and for which you are today being recognized. So congratulations and thank you.

MS. SPARKS: Thank you.

MS. MIELKE: I'd just like to add that you hear so much in the news about fiscal irresponsibility by so many government agencies and government. And it's just good for Talbot County for us to have you. You've done a good job, and Talbot County residents ought to be proud and happy that we're in a good financial shape.

MS. SPARKS: Thank you. Every time we read one of those articles in the newspaper, we break out in sweat. It's not even us, but, you know, there's a lot of firing on all around us.

MR. LESHER: Well, thank you very much.

MS. SPARKS: Thank you.

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MR. LESHER: Well, Council, we've managed to time this perfectly. The public hearings are to start at 5:30, and we are now past that threshold.

Madam Secretary, would you please read the title of Resolution 396 into the record.

SECRETARY: A resolution to amend the Talbot County comprehensive water and sewer plan to reclassify and remap certain real property located at 27414 Ferry Bridge Road, Easton, Maryland, shown on tax map 24 as parcel 205, lot one. From unprogrammed to S-1, immediate priority status, pursuant to an application filed by Catherine G.W. Murphy.

MR. LESHER: Okay. Mr. Thomas, can you give us an overview of this?

And I see that we have our county engineer, Mr. Elliott, here as well.

MR. THOMAS: I will defer to Mr. Elliott to give an overview of the application.

MR. ELLIOTT: All right. Good evening,

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Council. I'll try to be brief here.

This resolution proposes to reclassify 27414 Ferry Bridge Road from unprogrammed to S-1, immediate priority status, to allow the property to abandon its on-site disposal system and connect to public sewer with an allocation of one EDU.

The property is 25.718 acres and is zoned rural conservation.

Portions of the existing septic system are situated within 100 feet of the shoreline in an area of high ground water where system components penetrate the water table, as noted by the Talbot County Environmental Health Department.

Connection is straight forward. Has an existing force main. Runs directly adjacent to the parcel with a dedicated valve already in place. And the application satisfies all requirements under Resolution 394.

The Public Works Advisory Board

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recommended approval of the resolution, and the Planning Commission found it consistent with the county's Comprehensive Plan.

And Elisa Deflaux is here from the Planning Department if y'all have any questions on their findings.

MR. LESHER: Any questions for Mr. Elliott or any of the other staff?

And we did establish when this was introduced that this property is not eligible for further subdivision. So that one EDU taking the septic off line should be all that this property will ever receive, at least under zoning as the county has it currently?

MR. ELLIOTT: Yes.

MR. LESHER: Okay. The public hearing we can open up now. If you wish to speak on Resolution 396, you have three minutes if you are speaking as an individual, five minutes if you are the only person speaking on behalf of an organization.

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If you would like to testify on this, please come forward to the table and introduce yourself.

Welcome, Mr. Showalter.

MR. SHOWALTER: Thank you, Members of Council. Ryan Showalter appearing on behalf of the applicant, Catherine Murphy.

I think Mr. Elliott covered the request very well.

The only thing I'd like to just highlight is that the three properties, one to the south and two to the east of this parcel, were the subject of a water and sewer plan amendment a couple of years ago. And the force main that was constructed in Ferry Bridge Road actually runs across the front of this parcel. It has a T in it. So it's stubbed out to serve this parcel.

Ms. Murphy was not ready to connect to it at the time it was initially constructed, but it was anticipated that this parcel would be

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served at some point.

So we appreciate your support. Thank you.

MR. LESHER: Thank you.

MS. MIELKE: Thank you.

MR. LESHER: Anyone else on Resolution 396?

Hearing none, I'll close the public hearing on Resolution 396 and open the floor for discussion among the Council.

MS. MIELKE: No comment.

MR. LESHER: Any discussion on this?

MS. HAYTHE: No.

MR. LESHER: I was present for the Public Works Advisory Board meeting as well. And certainly this received its support there, as we've heard from Mr. Elliott.

Resolution Number 396 is eligible for a vote. Madam Secretary, would you please call the roll.

SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.

MR. LESHER: Aye.

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SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

MR. STEPP: Aye.

SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

MS. MIELKE: Aye.

SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan left an absentee ballot I believe.

MR. THOMAS: Aye.

MR. LESHER: That carries without opposition. Thank you all very much.

And we will move on to Resolution 397. Madam Secretary, would you please read the title of Resolution 397 into the record.

SECRETARY: A resolution to amend the Talbot County comprehensive water and sewer plan to reclassify and remap certain real property located at 5586 Leeward Lane, Tilghman, Maryland, shown on tax map 44 as parcel 35, lot seven, from unprogrammed to S-1, immediate priority status, pursuant to an

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application filed by Stephanie Allen.
MR. LESHER: Okay. Thank you.
Mr. Thomas, Mr. Elliott, I presume we're going to hear something similar to the last one.
MR. ELLIOTT: Yes, sir. This resolution proposes to reclassify 5586 Leeward Lane from unprogrammed to S-1, immediate priority status, to allow the property to abandon its on-site disposal system and connect to public sewer with an allocation of one EDU.
The property is 2.39 acres and is zoned village mixed. It's located within the Region V sanitary sewer district in Tilghman.
It is one of only six properties out of 28 on Leeward Lane not currently served by public sewer.
And while not bound by Resolution 394, the property satisfies its more stringent connection criteria supported by a letter from the Talbot County Office of Environmental

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Health.
And the Public Works Advisory Board recommended approval of this resolution, and the Planning Commission found it consistent with the county's Comprehensive Plan.
MR. LESHER: Council, any questions before we open the public hearing?
MS. MIELKE: No questions.
MR. STEPP: None here.
MR. LESHER: Thank you, Mr. Elliott.
And now for the public, if you wish to speak on Resolution 397, you will have three minutes speaking as an individual, five minutes on behalf of an organization. If anybody wishes to speak on this, please come forward to the table. But don't all come at once.
MR. DERHEIMER: My name is Ted Derheimer. I co-own the property with Stephanie Allen.
I don't have anything necessarily prepared, but I really do appreciate you guys considering us for connection to the city

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sewer.
My background is in environmental science.
We did purchase the house about five years ago. We knew it was on a septic system. I did not quite know that it was 40 years old. We had an inspection done, and they had improved it in 2001. And I knew that was there.
And I guess one of the things is, you know, I'm really looking forward to long-term ownership of this property. And could we use the reserve area. That's a question because there is another -- our neighbor did put a well in towards the back of our property, which actually wouldn't fit the setback criteria, either.
But the long-term solution for, for us as owners wanting to own this for a very long time because we love the area, we love the community, really is connection to the city sewer to do everything properly and make sure that the environment and our house is met.

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My background is in environmental science, like I said.
But just appreciate the conversation for this.
MR. LESHER: Thank you. And just for the record keepers, could you again state your name so they can clearly capture that?
MR. DERHEIMER: Yes. My name is Ted Derheimer.
MR. LESHER: Thank you.
MS. MIELKE: Thank you.
MR. LESHER: Anyone else on Resolution 397?
Seeing none, I'll close the public hearing on Resolution 397, open the floor to the Council for discussion.
Any discussion on this one?
MR. STEPP: None here.
MS. MIELKE: No.
MS. HAYTHE: No.
MR. LESHER: Resolution 397 is eligible

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for a vote. Madam Secretary, would you please call the roll.
SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.
MR. LESHER: Aye.
SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.
MR. STEPP: Aye.
SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.
MS. MIELKE: Aye.
SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.
MS. HAYTHE: Aye.
SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.
MR. THOMAS: Aye.
MR. LESHER: And Resolution 397 passes without opposition.
We will move on to Resolution 398. Madam Secretary, would you please read the title of 398 into the record?
SECRETARY: I'm going to get ready for it.
MR. STEPP: Take a deep breath.
MR. LESHER: Do you need a running start for this one?

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SECRETARY: A resolution to amend the Talbot County comprehensive water and sewer plan to reclassify and remap 21 parcels of real property, all of which are located on Goose Neck Road, Royal Oak, Maryland, and more particularly described as follows: 25869 Goose Neck Road, shown on tax map 46 as parcel 84; 25883 Goose Neck Road, shown on tax map 46 as parcel 23; 25911 Goose Neck Road, shown on tax map 47 as parcel 67; 25927 Goose Neck Road, shown on tax map 47 as parcel 92; 25977 Goose Neck Road, shown on tax map 47 as parcel 4; 25989 Goose Neck Road, shown on tax map 47 as parcel 8; 26009 Goose Neck Road, shown on tax map 47 as parcel 74; 26041 Goose Neck Road and 26043 Goose Neck Road, shown on tax map 47 as parcel 61; 26079 Goose Neck Road, shown on tax map 47 as parcel 9; 25882 Goose Neck Road, shown on tax map 47 as parcel 65, lot 2; 25900 Goose Neck Road, shown on tax map 47 as parcel 65; 25910 Goose Neck Road, shown on tax map 47 as parcel 79; 25932 Goose Neck Road, shown on tax map 47 as parcel 66; 25934 Goose Neck Road, shown on tax map 47 as parcel 120, lot 1; 25968 Goose Neck Road, shown on tax map 47 as parcel 54, lot 2; 25972 Goose Neck Road, shown on tax map 47 as parcel 63; 26020 Goose Neck Road, shown on tax map 47 as parcel 7; 26040 Goose Neck Road, shown on tax map 47 as parcel 59; 26048 Goose Neck Road, shown on tax map 47 as parcel 1; 26107 Goose Neck Road, shown on tax map 47 as parcel 10; and 26090 Goose Neck Road, shown on tax map 47 as parcel 57, from unprogrammed to S-1, immediate priority status.
MR. LESHER: Thank you.
Folks, I solemnly affirm that we don't do that to put you to sleep before the public hearing.
Mr. Elliott, Mr. Thomas, and Ms. Deflaux.
MR. ELLIOTT: All right. This one is 21 parcels. So we don't get off as easy this time. A little longer.

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This resolution proposes to reclassify 21 parcels along Goose Neck Road in Royal Oak from unprogrammed to S-1, immediate priority status, to allow the properties to abandon their on-site disposal systems and connect to the public sewer.
All subject properties are zoned rural residential and range in size from 2.0 to 6.3 acres.
While these properties are not bound by Resolution 394, each parcel satisfies its more stringent connection criteria, supported by individual positive recommendations from the Talbot County Office of Environmental Health.
The Public Works Advisory Board recommended approval of the resolution, with a few revisions.
First, they recommended adding 26040, 26048, and 26090 Goose Neck Road into the body of the resolution with all pertinent parcel information, as they were included in the title

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but inadvertently left out of the body text.
Second, the board recommended updating the body of the resolution to grant two EDUs to tax map 47 parcel 61 as it contains two single-family dwelling units.
With that adjustment, the total sewer allocation for the resolution comes to 22 EDUs. The title and text will be reconciled to reflect all 21 parcels.
Following those recommendations, the Planning Commission reviewed the matter and found the resolution and the proposed revisions to be consistent with the county's Comprehensive Plan.
Now, we do have a new addition that came to light today regarding tax map 47 parcel 9.
The applicant's letter had mentioned two septic systems, but staff originally evaluated the property as a single residence with an accessory dwelling because the county mapping system only showed one address.

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Under the current building ordinance, the situation wouldn't require an extra EDU. However, planning staff confirmed today that the parcel actually contains two distinct residences with two separate addresses, 26079 and 26080 Goose Neck Road. Meaning it would need two EDUs instead of one.
Because this was discovered today and was not reviewed by the Public Works Advisory Board or the Planning Commission, I'll defer to the county attorney to offer direction on this resolution.
MR. LESHER: Mr. Patrick.
MR. THOMAS: Yes. So with respect to the three properties that we inadvertently left out of the body, they were included in the title. So in my view, that doesn't require an amendment. That's really a typo, and I've added those properties in.
With respect to the one property that requires two EDUs, I think that would need to

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be -- that requires an amendment.
I realize Council President Callahan is not here tonight. He has left an absentee ballot. However, if the resolution were amended, that ballot wouldn't, we wouldn't be able to use that ballot.
So my recommendation would be that we go ahead and hold the public hearing but we table this until at least the next meeting and give some time as well to think through what to do with the additional property that requires an extra EDU, as neither the Planning Commission nor the Public Works Advisory Board considered that.
MR. LESHER: Thank you very much.
Any other questions for staff before we open the public hearing?
MR. STEPP: None here.
MR. LESHER: Okay. So again, folks, we will not be voting on this one tonight, but we will proceed with the public hearing.

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MS. MIELKE: (Indiscernible) motion?
MR. LESHER: Not yet, not yet.
So if you wish to speak on Resolution 398, please come forward to the table. I'll give you three minutes if you're speaking as an individual, five minutes if you're speaking on behalf of an organization.
Anybody wish to speak to Resolution 398? Nobody on 398?
MS. MIELKE: And the amendment.
MR. LESHER: Well, no amendment on the table yet. But it looks like we'll have an amendment coming when we next take this up.
Seeing none, I will close the public hearing on Resolution 398.
And since we need an amendment on this and will not be voting tonight, I'll simply move on to the next agenda item. Thank you.
And we'll put this on our, what is it, October 20...
MR. THOMAS: 27th. Two weeks from

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tonight.
MR. LESHER: Two weeks from tonight. Thank you very much.
And on to the next agenda item. Madam Secretary, would you please read the title of Bill 1653 into the record.
SECRETARY: A bill to amend Chapter 190, zoning, subdivision, and land development, of the Talbot County Code for the purpose of providing that notice of public hearings on new and renewal short-term rental licenses shall be provided to owners of all properties with a property line within 1,000, including line of sight within 1,000 feet across waterways of the short-term rental dwelling, or the 50 properties nearest to the short-term rental dwelling, whichever is less.
MR. LESHER: Okay. Thank you.
Mr. Thomas, would you like to bring us up to speed on this?
MR. THOMAS: Yes. This bill was requested

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by Council Member Stepp.
Currently, public hearing notices for new and renewal short-term rental license applicants are to be sent to owners of all properties with a property line within 1,000 feet, including in line of sight within 1,000 feet across waterways from the STR dwelling.
This proposed text amendment would permit those notices to be sent to those properties or to the 50 properties nearest to the short-term rental dwelling, whichever is less.
MR. LESHER: Okay. Any questions from Council before we open up the public hearing?
MS. MIELKE: No.
MR. STEPP: None here.
MS. HAYTHE: No.
MR. LESHER: Hearing none, if you wish to speak on Bill 1653, please come forward to the table. I'll give you three minutes if you're speaking as an individual and five minutes if

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you're speaking on behalf of an organization.
Anyone wish to speak to 1653? Thank you.
And just please state your full name and address for the record.
MR. MORRISON: Sure. I'm Bill Morrison. I live at 303 Manor Street in the Bentley Hay district adjacent to St. Michaels.
I am the constituent referred to by Councilman Stepp in a prior Council meeting that pleaded for a common sense addition to the code. And I want to thank you, and I appreciate this being on the floor today.
My wife and I are both retired. We bought our property in 2013. We made significant improvements to the property in 2016. And part of that was to have an ancillary unit suite that can be occupied by two people.
I went through the short-term rental application process in 2023 and the renewal process in 2024 and in 2026.
I have 213 neighbors within 1,000 feet.

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And I was required to notify all of them three times in the last four years. And so we've done that.
The recommended method to do those notifications is by Priority Mail. At $13 apiece, that would account for roughly $9,000.
I'm industrious enough to actually know a lot of my neighbors and was able to provide those notifications and acknowledgments from them to reduce that cost, but it is still a burden to go through that process every two years.
So I really appreciate the introduction of this legislation, and I would urge Council to please approve that. Thank you very much.
MR. LESHER: Thank you, Mr. Morrison.
Anyone else on Bill 1653? Please.
MS. STEEN: Hello. Good evening. I'm Leslie Steen and I'm from Tilghman.
And I appreciate the gentleman's problems with too many notices.

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When the issue first came up, I researched the list of new applications. And I found that 40 applications is about the norm. And that in the past year, five applications out of 29 were more than 50.

I also looked at the zoning where the excessive application notices were and found it very hard to believe that so many notices were required. In my opinion, they shouldn't have been required.

It seems to me it was -- the zoning for the lot sizes, you can't come up with that many notices with the lot sizes in the areas of those ones that had excessive notices.

I think this needs some serious looking at and review by the staff, the Planning Commission. I believe that there are administrative ways of dealing with notices that are excessive.

The, the 50, 50 houses, properties, I'm sorry, they're properties, they could be vacant

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properties. I think a lot of them have garages and sheds on them that got notices. That's certainly what happened in the Tilghman one that had an excessive number of notices.

I think it needs to be reviewed in a serious way as to how they happen, why they happen because 50, limiting it at 50 will be an administrative burden to the staff.

Thank you.

MR. LESHER: Anyone else on Bill 1653?

Seeing none, I will close the public hearing on Bill 1653. This, we will keep the public record on this open until Friday before our next meeting.

Any discussion from Council at this juncture?

MR. STEPP: None here.

MS. HAYTHE: I have something now that Leslie brought that up.

Do we have anything from staff that indicates whether this will increase or

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increase their workload?

SECRETARY: I don't believe so.

MR. STAMP: We do not, but we can get that for Council.

MS. HAYTHE: We can get that before. Okay. Thank you.

MR. LESHER: Okay. Bill 1653 will be eligible for vote on October 27th.

Madam Secretary, moving on to the next, would you please read the title of Bill 1654 into the record.

SECRETARY: A bill to amend Chapter 182, volunteer Emergency Services Longevity Award program of the Talbot County Code for the purposes of clarifying the definition of active volunteer member and amending certain provisions for consistency therewith, providing that qualifying active volunteer member shall receive monthly benefits in a minimum amount of $100 for life with the ability to earn additional monthly benefits, subject to certain

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conditions and amending certain provisions regarding records of volunteer members and the point system for qualifying for benefits.

MR. LESHER: Mr. Thomas, would you like to further amplify the purpose of this?

MR. THOMAS: Yes. This bill was requested by Council President Callahan.

Currently, active volunteer members who have reached 62 years of age and have completed at least 25 years of certified active volunteer service are eligible to receive monthly benefits of $100 per month for life, subject to the county's annual budget.

This bill would allow for additional benefits in the minimum amount of $50 per month for life for each additional five years of service up to a maximum minimum amount of $200 per month for life for 45 years or more of certified service.

The bill would also authorize the county to increase that amount as part of their annual

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budget.
The bill also makes some minor changes to the point system and timing for notice of certified members.
MR. LESHER: Mr. LeCates, do you have anything to add on this one?
MR. LeCATES: So I'd be happy to answer any questions, but we do have the president and vice president of the Talbot County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association, if you would like to call them up. And I'd be happy to answer any technical questions.
MR. LESHER: Please. Welcome, Mr. Starkey.
MR. STARKEY: Good evening.
SPEAKER: Good evening.
MR. LESHER: Anything in general that we should know on this or are you just up here for questions?
MR. STARKEY: No. It's a pretty basic program. We looked at this, it's been probably

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about -- we looked at this program about two years ago and we tried to figure out a way to help increase that program as the people volunteered more hours and years of service. And we came up with this plan.
And it's been a long process, but we're hopefully here at the finishing line. It will be a great benefit to the volunteers.
MR. LESHER: The challenge in particular that we're looking to overcome is how to retain.
MR. STARKEY: Retain.
MR. LESHER: Folks in the volunteer service.
MR. STARKEY: Yes.
SPEAKER: In a lot of cases, some members in I would think all of the companies, I know of some, they volunteer for 20 years and retain their life membership. And then they kind of drop off the map because there's nothing else for them and whatever.

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But we feel that there's still a lot of years left in those members, and this would be an incentive for them to stay on up to joining more years.
MR. LESHER: Outstanding.
MR. STARKEY: And to stay active. They get their 50 points in order to get --
SPEAKER: Yes. They still have to meet the same requirements.
MR. LESHER: In order to get the additional --
SPEAKER: In order to get the step, yup.
MR. STARKEY: Yup.
MS. MIELKE: I just had a question. Why is there no requirement to serve for a certain period of time in order to quality for the $100?
SPEAKER: There is a requirement. You have to have 25 years of --
MS. MIELKE: That's --
SPEAKER: -- time meeting the

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requirements --
MR. STARKEY: That was in -- I'm sorry.
SPEAKER: And then reach the age of 62 to be able to start getting that.
And a lot of members are getting their 25 years well in advance of 62, but that's the way it is. And I think that's fair.
MR. LESHER: And that's not a change. That's already in the system now.
MR. STARKEY: It's in the system.
You take a gentleman that joins a company at 20 years, 25 years, he's at 45. He's still got a lot of good years that he's going to be putting in, and he needs to be recognized for that continued service.
MS. MIELKE: I mean I just happened to read it from the standpoint that if you put in one year as a volunteer and then you get $100 a month for life, didn't make sense to me.
MR. THOMAS: No.
SPEAKER: No.

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MR. STARKEY: It's 25, 25 years.
SPEAKER: That would be a racket and it would not help with retention.
MS. MIELKE: That wouldn't help you. That's what I'm saying. Yeah.
MR. STARKEY: No.
MR. STEPP: I think just, too, in the retention itself. But just the amount, the amount of knowledge and training that went into someone who has been in for that long, that the -- we don't want to lose that knowledge and that training.
MS. MIELKE: Right.
MR. STEPP: That runs right along parallel with the retention effort itself.
SPEAKER: Unfortunately, the recruitment is a nationwide problem, and it's a real big problem in this county also and for a number of reasons.
But anything that you can help us do to get members and to keep them, it would be

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greatly appreciated.
MR. STARKEY: Yeah.
MR. LESHER: And we know that we have no paid firefighters in this county. We rely entirely on our volunteer companies.
MS. MIELKE: Exactly. We're so grateful for what they do.
SPEAKER: As you know, as property owners in Talbot County, we could not afford a paid service. It would be millions of dollars, millions, tens of millions probably.
MR. LESHER: Right.
SPEAKER: Not counting the equipment and everything else. Just the salaries and the benefit package.
So it's in our hearts, most of us that are in it, to keep the volunteer thing going.
MS. MIELKE: Absolutely.
SPEAKER: And it's part of our legacy and our history in this county.
MR. LESHER: Okay.

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MS. MIELKE: Ditto that. Yes. Good point.
MR. LESHER: Any other questions for our fire and rescue team?
If not, thank you very much.
And I will open the public hearing on Bill 1654. You will have three minutes to speak if you're speaking as an individual, five minutes if you're speaking on behalf of an organization. Please come forward and state your name and address.
MR. RIGGIN: My name is Phil Riggin. I live at 29736 Sullivan Drive here in Easton.
I'm not here to offer any sort of opinion regarding technical expertise as far as emergency management services are concerned, but I do know as a citizen that a gesture of goodwill and a gesture of recognition and anything that can be done to retain these volunteers in the respective positions is a very good thing.

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The principle of the legislation is sound in my opinion. The fact that people who are involved with emergency medical services now were engaged in the development of the legislation, as I understand, is also a good thing. And I just think conceptually it's a no-brainer in terms of, in terms of approving it. And it certainly is a bargain, if you will.
And somebody who achieves the years of service to reach $200 a month, I stand in awe of those individuals who have 45 years. And I think that's the number of service.
But again, great gesture, should be done, and I totally support it as a citizen. Thank you.
MR. LESHER: Thank you, Mr. Riggin.
Anyone else? Mr. Abbatiello, welcome.
MR. ABBATIELLO: Thank you. Good evening. Don Abbatiello at 29708 Tallulah Lane Easton, Maryland. And I want to thank you for the

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opportunity to come up and address you this evening.

I'm a 17-year veteran at the Easton Volunteer Fire Department, and I'm here to voice my support for Bill 1654, which will increase the LOSAP for the members of the volunteer fire service.

Not only will the improvement in LOSAP show our county's appreciation to the men and women who have given countless years of their free time to service to their neighbors, in service to their neighbors, but it will incentivize veteran firefighters to continue responding to calls. These veteran firefighters bring much-needed experience to the fire scene.

I also hope that this will not end here, that the Council will continue to examine other possible incentives in the future, incentives that will help volunteer fire service continue to bring in new members. New members are

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paramount in keeping the fire department in Talbot County volunteer.

And while more incentives might cost the county thousands in additional dollars, a fully-staffed career department, as was mentioned, will cost millions of additional dollars.

So with that, I want to thank you again for considering the change and ask for you to support it. So thank you.

MR. LESHER: Thank you.

MS. MIELKE: Question for Patrick, if he can answer it. Maybe these guys should -- could have answered it.

If someone had been a volunteer and quit volunteering five years ago, would they qualify for this $100 or do you have to be a volunteer at the time the legislation is passed?

MR. THOMAS: Let me check the code. He may know offhand.

MR. LESHER: We're bringing the experts

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forward.

MS. MIELKE: Sorry about that.

MR. THOMAS: No. That's okay.

MR. LeCATES: Good evening. Brian LeCates, director of Talbot County Emergency Services.

So just to clarify, you're saying if they've earned their hours but then gone away or their years of service and then they've gone away from the fire service?

MS. MIELKE: Uh-huh.

MR. LeCATES: Then they would still be eligible once they turn 62. So their years of service always stand.

MS. MIELKE: Okay. Thank you.

What is the number of years of service they have to have?

SPEAKER: Twenty-five.

SPEAKER: Twenty-five.

MS. MIELKE: Twenty-five.

MR. STAMP: And if they leave a volunteer

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fire company in Talbot County but come back, they can --

MR. LeCATES: Pick up right where they left off.

MR. STARKEY: Pick up right where they left off.

MR. STAMP: To achieve the 25.

MR. LeCATES: And that's really what we're hoping to achieve by this legislative change, is to be able to, those folks that have maybe kind of faded away but still have a lot of information and knowledge to impart on our younger folks, is to come back to the table and --

MS. MIELKE: (Indiscernible) that would happen.

MR. LeCATES: Yeah.

MR. STARKEY: And it also works if you have a gentleman or somebody that lives in Tilghman and they move to Cordova, it will automatically transfer under the county

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umbrella.
MR. LESHER: Service in any company counts?
MR. STARKEY: Right. Yup.
MR. LeCATES: Yes.
MR. LESHER: Okay. Thank you.
MS. MIELKE: Thank you.
MR. LeCATES: Thank you.
MR. LESHER: Is there anyone else who would like to testify on Bill 1654? Comment, yeah.
Okay. Hearing none or seeing none, I will close the public hearing on Bill 1654. And of course, as always, we leave the record open for public comment until the Friday before the next meeting.
Is there any discussion on Council before we move on?
MR. STEPP: None here.
MS. MIELKE: No.
MS. HAYTHE: No.

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MR. LESHER: This is, this is one of those things that in my mind is easy to support for all the reasons that we've heard tonight.
Bill 1654 will be eligible for a vote on October 27th.
MS. MIELKE: Okay.
MR. LESHER: Thank you, all.
And our next item is a request for abatement of fiscal year 27 county real property taxes. Martha Sparks.
MS. SPARKS: Good evening, again, Council. Martha Sparks, Finance Department.
Each year, the Talbot County Council receives requests for the abatement of property taxes from various not-for-profit organizations that own property in the county.
The Council is given this authority through the Maryland Code under the Property Tax Article section, specifically Sections 9-201, 9-301, and 9-322.
For the 2026-2027 tax year, the county has

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received 34 requests for property tax credits totaling $54,040.13 in a list, an itemized list that you have been provided.
These requests come from Chesapeake Audubon Society, Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage, Habitat for Humanity, Neighborhood Service Center, Spring Hill Cemetery Association, Talbot Agricultural Center, Tuckahoe Steam & Gas Association, Waterfowl Festival, and Talbot County.
And I request that Council approve the county real property tax credits on these properties as requested.
MR. LESHER: Thank you.
Ms. Sparks, of course, we tackle this every year. Can you remind us that, of course, I believe that the State Department of Assessments and Taxation already lists as some nonprofit-owned property as tax exempt. But these, for whatever reason, might be in some sort of limbo that aren't recognized by the

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State and, therefore, we need to take this action?
MS. SPARKS: Actually, no. Some of the items on our list are already specified in Maryland law, but they still need to come forward and request the tax abatement.
MR. LESHER: Okay.
MS. SPARKS: And tax abatements are different from tax exemptions. This is a separate.
An exemption, a tax exemption would be for a disabled veteran. They have to file that application with the State Department of Assessments and Taxation. There's also a property tax exemption for blind individuals, also for disabled veteran spouses. Those are some of the exemptions.
When Talbot County purchases a property that is strictly for government use, the Marys Court building is a good example of that, we put in an exemption request with SDAT. And we

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tell them that it is fully for a government functioning -- it's going to only serve government functions.

Gets a little complicated if you have a government property that you're going to rent office space, which is what we had when we had the Talbot County Business Park, the old Black & Decker, and we rented some of those offices. We did have to pay property tax on the square footage for those units.

So an exemption is different from a property tax abatement.

These are tax abatements, which means they are still on the tax roll. They receive a tax bill. They're in our system as a tax bill. And when Council votes to abate those taxes, we put those credits on their bill.

MR. LESHER: Okay. Thank you, Ms. Sparks.

Is there any discussion or further questions?

MS. MIELKE: No.

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MR. STEPP: None here.

MS. SPARKS: I apologize if that was more of an answer than you were looking for.

MR. LESHER: I appreciate the explanation.

If there's no discussion, is there a motion to approve the real property tax abatements as presented?

MS. MIELKE: So moved.

MR. STEPP: Second.

MR. LESHER: Madam Secretary, would you please call the vote.

SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.

MR. LESHER: Aye.

SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

MR. STEPP: Aye.

SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

MS. MIELKE: Aye.

SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

MR. LESHER: The motion carries without opposition.

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MR. STEPP: Thank you.

MR. STAMP: Thank you.

MR. LESHER: I will turn it over to Mr. Stamp for the county manager's report.

MR. STAMP: Thank you, Council. This evening, I have several board and committee appointments to bring before you.

The first is we're requesting the reappointment Mr. Michael Sullivan on the Trappe Town Council as a member of the Local Emergency Planning Committee.

MR. STEPP: I'll make a motion to approve.

MS. HAYTHE: Second.

MR. LESHER: We have a motion and second. Madam Secretary, would you please call the roll.

SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.

MR. LESHER: Aye.

SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

MR. STEPP: Aye.

SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

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MS. MIELKE: Aye.

SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

MR. LESHER: Motion carries. Mr. Stamp.

MR. STAMP: Thank you, Council.

Next would be requesting the appointment of Mr. Benny Mangor to the Police Accountability Board.

MS. HAYTHE: Motion to approve.

MS. MIELKE: Second.

MR. LESHER: We have a motion and second. Madam Secretary, would you please call the roll.

SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.

MR. LESHER: Aye.

SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

MR. STEPP: Aye.

SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

MS. MIELKE: Aye.

SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

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MR. STAMP: Thank you, Council.
We're requesting the appointment of Rabbi Jordan Goldson to the Social Services Board of Directors.
MS. HAYTHE: Motion to approve request.
MS. MIELKE: Second.
MR. LESHER: We have a motion and second. Madam Secretary, would you please call the roll.
SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.
MR. LESHER: Aye.
SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.
MR. STEPP: Aye.
SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.
MS. MIELKE: Aye.
SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.
MS. HAYTHE: Aye.
MR. STAMP: Thank you, Council.
Requesting the appointment of Katie Levitan to the Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board of Directors.

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MS. HAYTHE: Motion to approve.
MR. STEPP: Second.
MR. LESHER: We have a motion and second. Madam Secretary, would you please call the roll.
SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.
MR. LESHER: Aye.
SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.
MR. STEPP: Aye.
SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.
MS. MIELKE: Aye.
SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.
MS. HAYTHE: Aye.
MR. STAMP: Thank you, Council.
I'd invite Emily Gilmer, our director of Parks & Recreation, and Mayor Phil Starkey. He had to change hats back there to come forward for the next item.
The Town of Queen Anne is here requesting Council consideration to allocate Program Open Space acquisition funds for purchase.

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I'll let them explain, fill in where necessary.
MS. GILMER: I'm Emily Gilmer, director of Parks & Recreation.
And so this is a request from the Town of Queen Anne's for Program Open Space funds in order to purchase a piece of property in the Town of Queen Anne. That is in Talbot County.
We did take it to the Park Board, and the Park Board decided to allocate $75,000 of Program Open Space funds towards the purchase of this piece of property.
And he can talk more about the property.
MR. STARKEY: Phil Starkey, mayor of Queen Anne.
The piece of property, for those that might be familiar, it used to be Dave's Riverside Garage. It burned down a couple of years ago. It's been vacant. The owners elected not to rebuild due to some financial issues.

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So Town of Queen Anne approached them about purchasing the property. It's two, a little over two acres. 2.2 acres I think it is on the Tuckahoe River.
So the town approached them about purchasing. We had two appraisals done. And we went back and offered them a price of 118,000 for the two acres.
This parcel will join Roosevelt Park, which is our town park that sits in Queen Anne County and the riverfront that we own in front of the cannery. So it will join all -- so we own all the waterfront with this purchase.
And our plans is to put a kayak launch in there. It's a nice area. It will have plenty of parking, and it will be easy to build a ramp there for kayaks.
MR. STAMP: So this would be a total of $118,000 purchase. Their request is allocation from Program Open Space of $75,000 from the county's share.

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The Town of Queen Anne would put $18,000 toward it, correct?
MR. STARKEY: That's correct.
MR. LESHER: That's terrific.
Any questions from Council on this one?
MS. HAYTHE: No questions.
MS. MIELKE: No questions.
MR. LESHER: Great to see this addition to increase public access to the waters.
MR. STARKEY: Yup.
MR. LESHER: Is there a motion on the request for this county Open Space funding?
MR. STEPP: So moved.
MS. MIELKE: Second.
MS. HAYTHE: Second.
MR. LESHER: That's a request for approval, or a motion for approval. Madam Secretary, would you call the roll.
SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.
MR. LESHER: Aye.
SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

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MR. STEPP: Aye.
SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.
MS. MIELKE: Aye.
SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.
MS. HAYTHE: Aye.
MR. STAMP: Thank you, Council.
Thank you, Mayor.
MR. STARKEY: I want to thank you guys. Thank Emily for helping us out and, you, the Council for approving this.
It will be a great addition to the Town of Queen Anne. Thank you, guys.
MR. LESHER: Thank you.
MR. STAMP: We'll ask Emily to stay with us. She'd like to speak to you about dehumidifiers I believe. Right?
I'll go ahead and let you take off. I'll fill in where necessary.
MS. GILMER: So we have two dehumidifiers at the Talbot County Community Center, one is for the curling rink, the other one is for the

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main arena.
So we are going to right now go ahead and order, replace the main arena dehumidifier. And then we are going to order and have fabricated the curling rink dehumidifier, have that on the property in case of emergency. And then when funding becomes available, we'll have that installed as well.
We are also replacing all of the HVAC units in the curling rink as part of this project.
MR. STAMP: And Council, so this is a CIP project. They're interested in piggybacking off a Wicomico County contract with Electrical Automation Services, Incorporated to replace the main ice rink dehumidifier, $1,055,836; fabricate the curling rink dehumidifier unit, $172,914; and curling rink HVAC unit, $91,604. For a total of $1,320,354.
There are sufficient funds in the budget for this project, as Emily has explained.

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MS. HAYTHE: Motion to approve the request.
MR. STEPP: Second.
MR. LESHER: We have a motion and second. Madam Secretary, would you call the roll.
SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.
MR. LESHER: Aye.
SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.
MR. STEPP: Aye.
SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.
MS. MIELKE: Aye.
SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.
MS. HAYTHE: Aye.
MR. STAMP: Thank you, Council.
MR. LESHER: Easy $1.3 million just like that.
MR. STAMP: Yes. Council, I'd like to invite Josh Elliott, your county engineer, forward.
Josh is here this evening to request approval to purchase a screen rake assembly

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model from Sherwood-Logan & Associates.
And I will let him move forward, and I'll fill in where necessary.
MR. ELLIOTT: All right. The only thing more exciting than a dehumidifier is a drum screen at the solids facility.
This request is for approval of a sole source purchase from Sherwood-Logan & Associates in the amount of $58,273 to purchase replacement parts for the drum screen at the Talbot County biosolids utilization facility.
This rebuild of the Rotamat screen is budgeted in the fiscal 2027 operating budget and is an integral component of our existing biosolids treatment process.
And because the replacement parts must match and fit directly into the existing unit, the procurement must proceed as a sole source purchase.
I recommend approval of the purchase from Sherwood-Logan & Associates for $58,273 to be

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charged to the septage account 5971.
MR. STAMP: Quite comprehensive. Your county manager supports the request, Council.
MS. HAYTHE: Yeah. He is -- he gives us all the information that we need.
MR. STAMP: Isn't that something.
MS. HAYTHE: Can't help but to approve. So motion to approve the request.
MR. STEPP: I'll second that as long as you don't go into detail of exactly what unit does because --
MR. ELLIOTT: I thought about it, but then --
(Cross talk.)
MR. STEPP: -- so I'll make that second.
MR. LESHER: We've all had tours of the biosolids facility. And we probably want to, each of us want to stretch out the length of time before we return for our next tour. It's one of our more aromatic facilities around the county.

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MR. STEPP: It is indeed.
MR. LESHER: We have a motion and second. Madam Secretary, would you call the roll, please.
SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.
MR. LESHER: Aye.
SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.
MR. STEPP: Aye.
SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.
MS. MIELKE: Aye.
SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.
MS. HAYTHE: Aye.
MR. ELLIOTT: Thank you.
MR. STAMP: Thank you, Council.
Thank you, Josh.
And I'd invite Brian LeCates, your director of Emergency Services to come forward. He's interested in getting your approval to ordered a new ambulance that has been budgeted.
MR. LeCATES: Good evening, Council. Brian LeCates, director, Talbot County

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Emergency Services.
We're requesting to purchase a new 2027 Horton ambulance. This is part of a routine replacement. Every year we come before the Council and ask for another ambulance. And it's just one of those things. We're here. The time is right for us to purchase this.
It was planned in the FY27 budget and approved.
And the total cost of that is $378,350. And we are requesting to piggyback on an HGAC contract, which was competitively bid.
MR. LESHER: Mr. LeCates, I recall that when we approve this and you order it tomorrow, you don't get it the next day. There's some lead time involved in these big pieces of equipment; isn't there?
MR. LeCATES: Yes, sir. About 500 build days. So they will only guarantee us until like 500 days. So that's really one of the reasons we need to make sure these are planned

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purchases and we have some time before the old ambulance gives up.
MR. STEPP: 500 build days is actually an improvement from last time I checked.
MR. LeCATES: It is. Correct. Getting a little bit better.
MR. STEPP: Getting better.
MR. LeCATES: We're not pre-COVID numbers yet.
MR. LESHER: Wow. Do we have a motion for the ambulance?
MR. STEPP: We do indeed.
MS. HAYTHE: Second.
MR. LESHER: We have a motion and second. Madam Secretary, would you please call the roll.
SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.
MR. LESHER: Aye.
SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.
MR. STEPP: Aye.
SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

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MS. MIELKE: Aye.
SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.
MS. HAYTHE: Aye.
MR. STAMP: Thank you, Council. Thank you --
MS. MIELKE: Just for the record, there was a story on the news about the problems that, not particularly our department, but all departments across the country are having with replacements of fire trucks and ambulances and how expensive it is. And so kudos.
MR. LeCATES: It's a national problem. And luckily, ambulances are a little bit more readily available than fire engines. Last I heard, I think they're five-year build times. And the price can vary. They write it into their contract that any price increases you'll see at the end. And that's really hard to plan for.
So I'm glad I'm not sitting in that boat. We're able to get these in 500 days.

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MR. STAMP: Well, when I was sitting in his place, I was asking for ambulances that cost 150,000.
MR. LeCATES: They've gone up exponentially. That's for sure, because we're ordering the same exact ambulance from the same vendor. But over the years, they've just gone up.
MS. MIELKE: That's what the news report was about.
MR. LeCATES: Yeah.
MS. HAYTHE: You guys have been busy this weekend. I've been seeing the calls.
MR. LeCATES: We have been.
MS. HAYTHE: And the ambulances just all around town.
MR. LeCATES: Call volumes are definitely up.
MS. HAYTHE: So just thank you and your staff for all that you do because --
MR. LeCATES: Thank you.

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MS. HAYTHE: -- you're vital to this community.
MR. LeCATES: Thank you. I appreciate that. I appreciate the Council's support on not only this project but all the projects. You guys have certainly stepped up to the plate and helped us out on numerous occasions.
MS. MIELKE: You deserve it.
MR. LeCATES: Well, thank you. Have a good evening.
MR. STAMP: And finally, Council, I'll ask Sarah to come forward if you don't mind.
You know this Council has worked diligently over the last four years. And this year, this has been a year of completion. And you've been able to cut ribbons, break ground on a number of major projects that you all have authored, worked hard to see happen.
And I'm happy to say that we're wrapping that up with the dedication or ribbon cutting of the Public Safety Building, the Marys Court

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building that houses the Sheriff's Office and the Office of Emergency Services and a future 911 Center.

So it's exciting. We're going to have an open house on Wednesday, tomorrow, October 14th, from 4 to 6 p.m. And Sarah is going to tell you about how it's going to work.

MS. KILMON: Yes. So again, we are having an open house as well as a ribbon cutting tomorrow from four to six. And that is at 2864 Marys Court in Easton, Maryland.

You'll see it. It's a big building. And that is where our Public Safety Complex is located.

It is a big building, and we do expect a lot of people. So we have decided to do a passport challenge for tomorrow. If you show up, you'll be able to stop at nine locations around the building to learn more about what the Sheriff's Office, different divisions do, as well as the different services that

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Emergency Services offers. You'll get to speak directly with staff at each one of those stops.

There's some exciting stops, including a K9 demonstration, a touch-a-truck for the Sheriff's Office as well as Emergency Services. You'll get to learn about mobile integrative health and all the other amazing programs we have here at DES and the Sheriff's Office.

So we would love to see everyone out tomorrow. Again, it is 4 to 6 p.m. at the Marys Court building, or the Public Safety Complex. And that is located at 28640 Marys Court, Easton, Maryland.

MR. STAMP: Thank you, Sarah.

MR. STEPP: Thank you.

MR. STAMP: And Council, that completes your county manager report for this evening. As always, I thank you for your support.

MR. LESHER: Thank you, Mr. Stamp.

I'll remind the public as we approve some big-dollar items that this is just the last

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stage of those approvals, that we've been through this in the budget process. And these are all well considered well before they get to this final stage.

MR. STAMP: Thank you.

MR. LESHER: With that, we are down to the bottom of our agenda. And it is time for public comments. Is there anybody here who wishes to offer public comment this evening? Please.

MR. RIGGIN: Again, Phil Riggin, 29736 Sullivan Drive in Easton.

I'm continually impressed by, by the performance of some of the department heads here in the Talbot County government.

And I know you've made some changes recently because of retirements and people leaving for other positions. From what I've seen, I think they're being replaced by very qualified, capable people. So I don't think you should be skipping a beat in terms of the

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amount of support and advice and diligence that you have from your department heads.

I do want to say that I don't know much about financial accounting, but I do know how to count. And 22 years, 22 consecutive years of a status that's been achieved by the Finance Office here in Talbot County has to be more than significant. It has to be pretty amazing. So I, every opportunity to recognize that, I think is worth doing.

I guess that's all I have to say. Thank you very much.

MS. MIELKE: Thank you.

MR. LESHER: Anyone else for public comment?

Hearing none, we can move on to Council comment. Who would like to go first this evening?

MS. HAYTHE: Well, I think I'm going to hold mine until our next meeting.

MS. MIELKE: Me too.

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MS. HAYTHE: It's been a long night.
MR. LESHER: Nothing from either. Okay. Mr. Stepp.
MR. STEPP: Just I guess the next time before we meet next on the 27th, early voting starts in Talbot County. So I just want to remind everyone to, if they choose to do so, get on out and vote. It's at Easton Volunteer Fire Department right downtown. And begins on August 22nd (sic.) and every day until the 29th 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. So...
MS. HAYTHE: Go vote.
MR. STEPP: There we go. That's all I have.
MR. LESHER: Thank you.
I have just two quick things.
One is I want to recognize the presence of First Class Scout William Jalod here tonight from Troop 190 of Easton. It's always great to have one of the scouts with us in attendance this evening. Thank you, William. William is

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also going to be enjoying that new dehumidifier over at the skating rink. He's one of our hockey stars.
MR. STEPP: Go Hawks.
MR. LESHER: And I'll close with this note. Folks, as Mr. Stepp reminds us, it is election season. And sadly with election season seems to come vandalism and theft of political campaign signs.
There's no place for that in this community. You might think that it tears down the other side, but instead it reflects badly on your own side when you perpetrate these things.
Please don't touch campaign signs. If you get caught, you will get prosecuted. And just leave them alone. Thank you, all.
With that, the Council's next meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 27th, beginning at 5 o'clock p.m.
The Council will be convening at 2 p.m.

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for a tour of the BAAM Academic Center and then adjourning into closed session, as listed on the statement for closing that meeting.
On Tuesday, October 20th, the County Council will be meeting with representatives from the Maryland Department of Transportation for the annual consolidated transportation meeting. That meeting begins at 3 o'clock p.m. and will be held at the Wye Oak Room at the Talbot County Community Center.
Therefore, is there a motion to adjourn this meeting and reconvene as noted?
MS. HAYTHE: So moved.
MS. MIELKE: So moved. Second.
MR. LESHER: We have a motion and second. Madam Secretary, would you call the roll.
SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.
MR. LESHER: Aye.
SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.
MR. STEPP: Aye.
SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

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MS. MIELKE: Aye.
SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.
MS. HAYTHE: Aye.
MR. LESHER: Good night, all.
(Meeting concluded at: 6:33 p.m.)

STATE OF MARYLAND

I, Diane Houlihan, a Notary Public in and for the State of Maryland, County of Talbot, do hereby certify that the within named, Talbot County Council Audio, personally appeared before me at the time and place herein set according to law, was interrogated by counsel.

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

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

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 interested in the outcome of this action.

AS WITNESS my hand Notorial Seal this 19th day of October, 2026, at Easton, MD.



Diane Houlihan
Notary Public

My commission expires September 16, 2029

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