COUNTY COUNCIL OF TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

Council Meeting

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

Council Chambers, Easton, Maryland

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

Reported by
Diane Houlihan

Page 2

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. I want to welcome everybody today. This is a special legislation day.

So if we could please stand and say a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance of the Flag.

(Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.)

MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Appreciate everybody being here.

So let's start off with the agenda. It's been before us. Is there any additions, deletions, or corrections to the agenda, Council?

MS. HAYTHE: No.

MR. CALLAHAN: Hearing none, the chair moves that the agenda be accepted as unanimous consent.

Next is disbursements of September 29th are in front of us. Is there any additions,

Page 3

deletions, or corrections to that, Council? Okay. Hearing none, the chair moves that the disbursements be accepted as unanimous consent.

Okay. So the reason we're here is introduction of legislation. Madam Secretary, could you go ahead and read that into the record.

SECRETARY: A bill to amend Chapter 24, boards, committees, and commissions, of the Talbot County Code for the purpose of repealing and reenacting Article II, Board of Tourism, to establish a new Board of Economic Development and Tourism and set forth the membership, duties, and functions thereof.

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

Mr. Thomas, you want to review this?

And Stephanie, you want to come on up, too, please.

MS. MERVINE: Sure.

MR. CALLAHAN: That would be great.

Page 4

MR. THOMAS: So the purpose of the bill is to consolidate the existing Economic Development Commission and the Board of Tourism into a single board to be called, as the title states, the Board of Economic Development and Tourism.

And the bill, most bills, they take effect 60 days after passage. This one would actually take effect in March to allow, if it's passed, it would take effect on March 1st, which the Charter allows. But that would give time for the current Commission and Board to be consolidated.

MR. CALLAHAN: Right.

MR. THOMAS: And sort of work through the aspects of that process.

MR. CALLAHAN: That sounds good. That sounds great.

Stephanie, you want to speak on behalf of it.

MS. HAYTHE: Mr. President, can I just --

Page 5

MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah, please.

MS. HAYTHE: -- say why I recommended that this be introduced?

MR. CALLAHAN: I was coming to you, but go ahead.

MS. HAYTHE: Okay. And then I'll let Stephanie take over.

MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Okay.

MS. HAYTHE: So you have this before you because the Tourism Board, the department was combined in 2016. However, the boards were not combined at that time.

And so it's been ten years. We have a new director. And so that it's in line with industry standards for economic development and tourism boards per IEDC, we're asking that the boards be combined at this time but allow Stephanie to get her board in place by taking effect in March 2027.

MR. CALLAHAN: Sure.

MS. HAYTHE: So I just want to --

Page 6

MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah.
MS. HAYTHE: -- give that overview of why I asked for this to be brought before us today.
MR. CALLAHAN: No problem.
MS. HAYTHE: Okay.
MR. CALLAHAN: Sounds good.
MS. MERVINE: Thank you. Can you hear me okay?
MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah.
MS. MERVINE: Good evening, Council Members, county leadership.
Before I begin, I wanted to be very clear that I am deeply grateful for the dedication and service both boards have served, and their commitment, experience, long-standing contribution have laid the foundation for the work we are discussing tonight.
And we sincerely appreciate every member who serves and continues to serve. Their efforts have brought Talbot County to where it is today, and this proposed structure builds on

Page 7

their important work, not replacing it.
I'm also here to talk about what the forward-looking steps for our county look like. The creation of this unified board will help us modernize our approach, align with the practices as nationally-recognized standards from IEDC, which is the International Economic Development Council. We went by what their recommendations were and the industry sectors quite closely, and I believe it will strengthen our ability to compete, collaborate, and grow.
MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. That sounds great.
Any other thoughts, Council?
MR. STEPP: None here.
MR. CALLAHAN: Keasha?
MS. HAYTHE: No.
MR. CALLAHAN: So at this time, raise our hands to move forward.
Is that what we have to do?
MR. LESHER: Introduce.
MR. CALLAHAN: Introduce, yup.

Page 8

MR. LESHER: Introduced by Council.
SECRETARY: This will be known as Bill Number 1655, and the public hearing will be held on Tuesday, October 27th, at 5:30 p.m.
MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. That sounds great.
Good job, Mr. Thomas and Stephanie. Appreciate it.
MS. MERVINE: Thank you, Mr. Thomas.
MR. CALLAHAN: That's good. That's good.
I know we need to -- we've got the public comment. Stephanie, can you check and see to make sure out there that nobody's lingering out there?
MS. MERVINE: Sure.
MR. CALLAHAN: It's got a sign-in sheet out there, too, if there's anybody.
Probably not, I'm assuming.
MS. HAYTHE: Yeah. Nobody showed up today.
MR. CALLAHAN: Just about the time I say we don't have anything.

Page 9

MS. MERVINE: We don't have anyone signed up.
MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Good. All right.
And then Council comments.
MS. HAYTHE: Starting with me?
MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah, I'll start with you.
MS. HAYTHE: Happy Breast Cancer Awareness Month. So I'm wearing my pink.
MR. CALLAHAN: Wow. Okay.
MS. HAYTHE: For those that have had breast cancer. So certainly we want to celebrate those that are free from cancer, breast cancer.
And I just love, you know, helping women and doing that for this month. But not only this month, every month.
But wearing in honor of Breast Cancer Survivors Month.
MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Got you.
MS. MIELKE: Thank you for that support.
MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah. Yup.

Page 10

Good? Okay.
MR. LESHER: I have nothing.
MR. STEPP: Good here as well, Mr. President. Thank you.
MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. And like I said, like Keasha said, I live with a survivor that had it twice. So it means a lot to me, too. And thank the Lord that she's here.
And I wish all the ladies that have made it through and survived all this stuff, more power to them. And I'm proud of being a part of the whole movement of supporting that. That's for sure. So I appreciate everything that people do for breast cancer. That's for sure.
So other than that, Madam Secretary. Or Mr. Lesher, I'm sorry, yup.
MR. LESHER: Well, Council's next meeting will be on Tuesday, October 13th, beginning at 5 o'clock p.m. Council will be convening at 3:30 p.m. and then immediately adjourning into

Page 11

closed session, as listed on the statement for closing that meeting.
If there is no other business, we can -- a motion to adjourn would be in order.
MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.
MS. HAYTHE: So moved.
MS. MIELKE: So moved. Second.
MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We got a motion and second. Madam Secretary, could you call the vote.
SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.
MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.
SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.
MR. STEPP: Aye.
SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.
MR. LESHER: Aye.
SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.
MS. MIELKE: Aye.
SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.
MS. HAYTHE: Aye.
MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thank you, guys.

Page 12

Appreciate it.
(Meeting concluded at: 4:11 p.m.)

Page 13

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 6th day of October, 2026, at Easton, MD.



Diane Houlihan
Notary Public

My commission expires September 16, 2029

1
1362 13:15
13th 10:19
16 13:19
1655 8:3
1st 4:10
2
2016 5:11
2026 1:7 13:13
2027 5:19
2029 13:19
24 3:8
27th 8:4
29th 2:20
3
3:30 10:21
4
4:11 12:2
5
5 1:7 10:20
5:00 1:7
5:30 8:4
6
60 4:8
6th 13:13
a
ability 7:11
accepted 2:18 3:3
accurate 13:7
action 13:12
actually 4:8
additions 2:13 2:21
adjourn 11:4
adjourning 10:21
agenda 2:12,14 2:18
ahead 3:6 5:5
align 7:5
allegiance 2:7,9
allow 4:9 5:17
allows 4:11
amend 3:8
anybody 8:16
appeared 13:3
appreciate 2:10 6:18 8:7 10:13 12:1
approach 7:5
article 3:11
asked 6:3
asking 5:16
aspects 4:16
assisted 13:7
assuming 8:17
audio 13:3
awareness 9:7
aye 11:12,14,16 11:18,20
b
beginning 10:19
behalf 4:19
believe 7:10
bill 3:8 4:1,7 8:2
bills 4:7
board 3:11,12 4:3,4,5,12 5:10 5:18 7:4
boards 3:9 5:11 5:16,17 6:14
breast 9:7,11 9:13,17 10:14
brought 6:3,20
builds 6:21
business 11:3
c
call 11:9
callahan 1:14 2:3,10,17 3:15 3:21 4:14,17 5:1,4,8,20 6:1,4 6:6,9 7:12,15 7:17,21 8:5,9 8:15,20 9:3,6,9 9:19,21 10:5 11:5,8,11,12,21
called 4:4
cancer 9:7,11 9:12,13,17 10:14
celebrate 9:12
certainly 9:11
certify 13:3,5,8 13:10
chair 2:17 3:2
chambers 1:10
chapter 3:8
charter 4:11
check 8:11
chuck 1:14
clear 6:12
closed 11:1
closely 7:10
closing 11:2
code 3:10
collaborate 7:11
combined 5:11 5:12,17
come 3:18
coming 5:4
comment 8:11
comments 9:4
commission 4:3 4:12 13:19
commissions 3:9
commitment 6:15
committees 3:9
compete 7:11
computer 13:7
concluded 12:2

consent 2:19 3:3
consolidate 4:2
consolidated 4:13
contained 13:9
continues 6:19
contribution 6:16
convening 10:20
corrections 2:14 3:1
council 1:1,4 1:10,13 2:15 3:1 6:10 7:8,13 8:1 9:4 10:20 13:3
council's 10:18
counsel 13:4,9 13:10,11
county 1:1,1 3:10 6:11,20 7:3 13:2,3
creation 7:4
current 4:12

d

dave 1:18
day 2:5 13:13
days 4:8
dedication 6:13
deeply 6:13
deletions 2:14 3:1
department 5:10
development 3:12 4:3,5 5:15 7:8
diane 1:21 13:2 13:16
director 5:14
disbursements 2:20 3:3
discussing 6:17
doing 9:15
duties 3:14

e

easton 1:10 13:13
economic 3:12 4:2,5 5:15 7:7
effect 4:7,9,10 5:19
efforts 6:20
employee 13:11
entered 13:9
establish 3:12
evening 6:10
everybody 2:4 2:10
examination 13:5
existing 4:2
experience 6:15
expires 13:19

f

f 1:14
flag 2:8
forth 3:13
forward 7:3,18
foundation 6:16
free 9:12
front 2:21
functions 3:14
further 13:5,8 13:10

g

give 4:11 6:2
go 3:6 5:4
good 4:17 6:6 6:10 8:6,9,9 9:3 10:1,3
grateful 6:13
great 3:21 4:18 7:12 8:5
grow 7:11
guys 11:21

h

hand 13:13
hands 7:18
happy 9:7
haythe 1:16 2:16 4:21 5:2,6 5:9,21 6:2,5 7:16 8:18 9:5,7 9:10 11:6,19 11:20
hear 6:7
hearing 2:17 3:2 8:3
held 8:4
help 7:4
helping 9:14
honor 9:17
houlihan 1:21 13:2,16

i

iedc 5:16 7:7
ii 3:11
immediately 10:21
important 7:1
industry 5:15 7:9
interested 13:12
international 7:7
interrogated 13:4
introduce 7:20 7:21
introduced 5:3 8:1
introduction 3:5

j

job 8:6

k

keasha 1:16 7:15 10:6
know 8:10 9:14
known 8:2

l

l 1:17
ladies 10:9
laid 6:16
law 13:4
leadership 6:11
legislation 2:4 3:5
lesher 1:15 7:20 8:1 10:2 10:17,18 11:15 11:16
line 5:14
lingering 8:12
listed 11:1
live 10:6
long 6:15
look 7:3
looking 7:3
lord 10:8
lot 10:7
love 9:14
lynn 1:17

m

madam 3:5,15 10:16 11:9
made 10:9
make 8:12
manner 13:7
march 4:9,10 5:19
maryland 1:1 1:10 13:1,2
matter 13:7
md 13:13
means 10:7 13:7
meeting 1:4 10:18 11:2 12:2
member 6:18
members 1:13 6:11
membership 3:13
mervine 3:20 6:7,10 8:8,14 9:1
mielke 1:17 9:20 11:7,17 11:18
modernize 7:5
month 9:8,15 9:16,16,18
motion 11:4,8
move 7:18
moved 11:6,7
movement 10:12
moves 2:18 3:2

n

n 1:16
named 13:3
nationally 7:6
need 8:10
new 3:12 5:13
nobody's 8:12
notary 13:2,17
notes 13:6
notorial 13:13
number 8:3

o

o'clock 10:20
october 1:7 8:4 10:19 13:13
okay 2:3,10 3:2 3:4,15 5:6,8,8 6:5,8 7:12 8:5 9:3,9,19 10:1,5 11:5,8,21
order 11:4
outcome 13:12
overview 6:2

p

p.m. 1:7 8:4 10:20,21 12:2
part 10:11
parties 13:11 13:11
passage 4:8
passed 4:9
people 10:14
personally 13:3
pete 1:15
pink 9:8
place 5:18 13:4
please 2:6 3:19 5:1
pledge 2:7,9
power 10:11
practices 7:6
prayer 2:7,9
presence 13:9
president 4:21 10:4
printed 13:6
probably 8:17
problem 6:4
proceedings 2:1
process 4:16
proposed 6:21
proud 10:11
public 8:3,10 13:2,17
purpose 3:10 4:1

q

quite 7:10

r

raise 7:17
read 3:6
reason 3:4
recognized 7:6
recommendat... 7:9
recommended 5:2
record 3:7
recorded 13:6
reenacting 3:11
related 13:11
repealing 3:10
replacing 7:1
reported 1:20
review 3:17
right 4:14 9:3

s

seal 13:13
second 11:7,9
secretary 3:5,8 3:16 8:2 10:16 11:9,11,13,15 11:17,19
sectors 7:9
see 8:11
september 2:20 13:19
serve 6:19
served 6:14
serves 6:19
service 6:14
session 11:1
set 3:13 13:4
sheet 8:15
showed 8:18
sign 8:15
signature 13:15
signed 9:1
sincerely 6:18
single 4:4
sorry 10:17
sort 4:15
sounds 4:17,18 6:6 7:12 8:5
speak 4:19
special 2:4
stand 2:6
standards 5:15 7:6
standing 6:15
start 2:12 9:6
starting 9:5
state 13:1,2
statement 11:1
states 4:5
stenographic 13:6
stenographic... 13:6
stephanie 3:18 4:19 5:7,18 8:6 8:11
stepp 1:18 7:14 10:3 11:13,14
steps 7:3
stipulations 13:8
strengthen 7:10
structure 6:21
stuff 10:10
support 9:20
supporting 10:12
sure 3:20 5:20 8:12,14 10:13 10:15
survived 10:10
survivor 10:6
survivors 9:18

t

take 4:7,9,10 5:7
talbot 1:1 3:10 6:20 13:2,3
talk 7:2
ten 5:13
thank 3:15 6:7 8:8 9:20 10:4,8 11:21
thereof 3:14
thomas 3:17 4:1,15 8:6,8
thoughts 7:13
time 4:11 5:12 5:17 7:17 8:20 13:4
title 4:4
today 2:4 6:3 6:21 8:19
tonight 6:17
tourism 3:11 3:13 4:3,6 5:10 5:16
transcribed 13:6
transcript 2:1
transcription 13:7
true 13:7
tuesday 8:4 10:19
twice 10:7

u

unanimous 2:18 3:3
unified 7:4

v

vote 11:10

w

want 2:3 3:17 3:18 4:19 5:21 9:11
wanted 6:12

way 13:11
we've 8:10
wearing 9:8,17
welcome 2:3
went 7:8
wish 10:9
witness 13:13
women 9:14
work 4:15 6:17 7:1
wow 9:9

y

yeah 5:1 6:1,9 8:18 9:6,21
years 5:13
yup 7:21 9:21 10:17