



# TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

County Council

MINUTES

April 23, 2024

Present – President Chuck Callahan, Keasha N. Haythe, Lynn L. Mielke, Dave Stepp, County Manager Clay Stamp, and County Attorney Patrick Thomas. Vice President Pete Leshar was absent.

- I. Agenda – Mr. Callahan requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Agenda of Tuesday, April 23, 2024.
- II. Minutes – Mr. Callahan requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Minutes of Tuesday, March 26, 2024.
- III. Disbursements – Mr. Callahan requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Disbursements of Tuesday, April 23, 2024.
- IV. Certificate of Recognition to Blake Newton, Student, Easton High School for His Design of the Logo for the Talbot County Sheriff's Office/Easton Police Department's Critical Response Unit – The Clerk read a certificate of recognition into the record which spoke of Mr. Newton's dedication of time and talent to design an insignia for the joint Critical Response Unit of the Talbot County Sheriff's Office and Easton Police Department. Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved the certificate of recognition by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye  
Mr. Stepp – Aye  
Ms. Mielke – Aye  
Ms. Haythe – Aye

Sheriff Joe Gamble stated that when the Critical Response Unit was instituted approximately four years ago, several members of the Unit requested to have an insignia for their uniforms. Sheriff Gamble read a Law Enforcement Salute into the record in recognition of Mr. Newton's use of talent toward the design of the insignia. Sheriff Gamble and Alan Lowrey, Chief of Police, Town of Easton, presented the Law Enforcement Salute to Mr. Newton on behalf of their respective agencies.

- V. Proclamation – National Sexual Assault Awareness Month – April 2024 – The Clerk read a proclamation into the record in recognition of April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. The proclamation spoke of the prevalence of, and violence often associated with, sexual assault, the sometimes long-term serious physical and/or psychological health issues which can result following sexual assaults, and the need for communities to work to provide support services for victims and to prevent sexual assault. Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved the proclamation by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye  
Mr. Stepp – Aye  
Ms. Mielke – Aye  
Ms. Haythe – Aye

Susan Ahlstrom, MS, Human Trafficking Regional Navigator, For All Seasons, Inc., expressed her appreciation to the Council for recognizing April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. She stated

that For All Seasons, Inc. is the only sexual assault and rape crisis center in the Mid-Shore Region and offers a 24/7 hotline to serve individuals who are victims of sexual assault.

- VI. Update by Talbot Humane – Patty Crankshaw-Quimby, Executive Director, Talbot Humane – Ms. Crankshaw-Quimby provided statistical information on the number and types of animals taken in at Talbot Humane and the number of animals that were adopted, reunited with their owners or transferred to other rescue groups. Ms. Crankshaw-Quimby also provided statistical information on the number of animals that were spayed or neutered and microchipped, and the number of animals that were fostered. She stated that the intake of animals at the shelter increased by 18% from 2022 to 2023 and that nationally, animals are staying at shelters for longer periods of time, increasing the likelihood of disease and behavioral issues. She stated that one of the main goals of Talbot Humane is to intervene with these animals through programming prior to their entering the shelter system. Regarding the animal control function of Talbot Humane, Ms. Crankshaw-Quimby stated that officers made 380 animal control calls, 90% of which were for bite cases, stray animals and investigations of violations, and that 70% required follow-up visits. She stated that in 2023, 1,300 animals (at public and private animal shelters in Talbot County) were spayed or neutered; 2024 is the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Talbot Humane’s spay/neuter program which has resulted in a 48% reduction in intake of animals since the program began in 2004. Ms. Crankshaw-Quimby noted other services provided by Talbot Humane, including distribution of pet food and other pet supplies, and microchipping. She stated that in 2024, Talbot Humane won a competitive Maryland Department of Agriculture grant in the sum of \$56,000 to provide free spay/neuter services to qualified residents of Talbot and Dorchester counties. Ms. Crankshaw-Quimby expressed her appreciation to the many volunteers who contribute countless hours toward caring for the animals and attending community events on behalf of Talbot Humane, noting the upcoming “Strutt Your Mutt Dog Walk” at Oxford Day on Saturday, April 27, 2024, and the Frederick Running Festival on Saturday, May 5, 2024. Ms. Crankshaw-Quimby concluded her presentation by offering Council members an opportunity to tour the Talbot Humane facility. Council members expressed their appreciation to Ms. Crankshaw-Quimby for her work with the animals. Talbot Humane will continue to update the Council on a regular or as-needed basis.
- VII. Presentation by Talbot County Agricultural Community – Shannon Dill, Extension Educator – AgFS, University of Maryland Extension – Talbot County; Shawn Smith, District Manager, Talbot Soil Conservation District; John Swaine, III, Chairman, Board of Supervisors, Talbot Soil Conservation District and Vice President of Talbot County Farm Bureau; John Barga, County Executive Director, USDA Farm Service Agency – Ms. Dill stated that the mission of the University of Maryland Extension Office in Talbot County, and its partner agencies, is to support agricultural profitability and sustainability in the county by providing the community with unbiased research-based information related to agriculture by focusing on production, regulatory compliance, marketing and educational programs. Ms. Dill briefed the Council about a new workforce development internship program which is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture National Institute on Food and Agriculture (USDA NIFA) to advance agriculture-related sciences and careers in hopes that the next generation will pursue agricultural careers upon entering the workforce, thus helping to ensure the long-term viability of agriculture. Ms. Dill provided statistical information from the latest USDA Census which is completed every five years; the last USDA Census was completed in 2017. She stated that there are currently 357 farms in Talbot County, an increase of 13% since the last survey was completed; however, the size of the average farm is down, to approximately 270 acres; production expenses have increased 45% since COVID-19 and the marketing value has increased 60%, noting that Talbot County is 12<sup>th</sup> in the state with regard to the market value of products sold. Ms. Dill concluded her presentation by stating that the flowering vegetation in fields is the cover crop, tillage radish, which when plowed under in the spring, helps to break up compacted soils; and that slow-moving farm equipment is once again on

the roadways, and she urged motorists to use caution and to have patience as the equipment travels from field to field throughout the county. Mr. Smith stated that the Talbot Soil Conservation District, which recently celebrated its 66<sup>th</sup> year, provides technical assistance for conservation practices for agricultural operations, promotes educational conservation outreach, and ensures proper construction planning and delivery. He stated that each year, the Soil Conservation District holds a conservation tour; in October 2023, the 2022 Cooperator of the Year Award was presented to John Trax and Keith Shortall, whose families have farmed together for more than 60 years; they recently worked with the Soil Conservation District on a number of projects to address water quality and nutrient runoff, including completion of two grass waterways. Mr. Smith outlined other accomplishments, including the planting of over 33,000 acres of cover crops by 74 farmers, stated that the District worked with more farmers than in the previous year to install more best management practices, and reviewed approximately 160 erosion and sediment control plans in the county. Mr. Swaine stated that the Talbot County Farm Bureau, was established in 1956 to work with the Maryland Farm Bureau and the American Farm Bureau Federation to provide its members with a better understanding of agriculture. He outlined several priorities of the Talbot County Farm Bureau, including support of all day Sunday Deer Hunting on private land, an Anti-Discrimination Statement and Permanent Funding for Nutrient Management. Mr. Barga stated that the USDA Farm Service Agency provides farmers with not only a strong safety net program, but also focuses on conservation, targeting conservation farm programs and farm loan programs by working with farmers on wetland restorations, wildlife preservation and soil and water erosion control; the Agency also provides programs to assist and support farmers following natural disasters as well as direct operating loans, particularly for beginning farmers and ranchers, and minority and women farmers and ranchers. The Council members expressed their appreciation to the representatives of the agricultural community in attendance for helping to ensure that agriculture remains a vital part of the economy of Talbot County. Representatives of the agricultural community will continue to update the Council on a regular or as-needed basis.

VIII. Public Hearing:

Resolution No. 356, A RESOLUTION TO FORMALLY DECLINE TO ACCEPT THE OFFER OF DEDICATION FOR THE PAPER STREET PORTION OF CALVERT AVENUE AS SHOWN ON A SUBDIVISION PLAT ENTITLED “MAP OF ‘RIO VISTA’ DEVELOPMENT” DATED FEBRUARY 1954, RECORDED AMONG THE LAND RECORDS OF TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND AT PLAT BOOK J.T.B. 8, FOLIO 11, AND TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTION OF A QUITCLAIM DEED TO CONVEY A 4,195 SQUARE FOOT PORTION OF THE PAPER STREET ADJACENT TO 226 TYLER AVENUE, ST. MICHAELS, MARYLAND TO THE OWNERS OF SUCH PROPERTY, DR. GRAYSON R. BOWERS AND TERESA M. BOWERS, FOR NO MONETARY CONSIDERATION, was read into the record and brought forward for public hearing. Prior to the public hearing, County Attorney, Patrick Thomas, stated that the plat referenced in the title of the resolution depicts several streets and roadways in the Rio Vista development that were offered to be dedicated to public use, including several “paper streets” that were never opened by the County and one of which is a portion of Calvert Avenue which runs between Forest Avenue and Monroe Street. Mr. Thomas stated that the rear of Dr. and Mrs. Bower’s property abuts that paper street portion of Calvert Avenue which is the subject of Resolution No. 356. Members of the public were provided an opportunity to comment on the legislation. The record on Resolution No. 356 will remain open. Resolution No. 356 is eligible for vote on Tuesday, May 14, 2024.

IX. Eligible for Vote:

Bill No. 1551, Findings of Fact were brought forward for discussion along with:

Bill No. 1551, A BILL TO AWARD 8.348 ACRES OF SUPPLEMENTAL GROWTH ALLOCATION TO THE TOWN OF EASTON AND TO IMPOSE CERTAIN CONDITIONS, RESTRICTIONS, AND LIMITATIONS ON ITS USE, which was read into the record and brought forward for vote. Prior to the vote, County Attorney, Patrick Thomas, stated that before the Council can award growth allocation, it is required to make certain findings as required by the County's zoning code and State law. Mr. Thomas stated that he had prepared, and provided to Council, Findings of Fact based on the record of this case and the testimony presented at the public hearing on the legislation at the Council meeting on Tuesday, April 9, 2024. The Council approved the Findings of Fact by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye  
Mr. Stepp – Aye  
Mr. Leshner – Aye (via absentee ballot)  
Ms. Mielke – Aye  
Ms. Haythe - Aye

Bill No.1551 was then brought forward for vote. The Council approved Bill No. 1551 by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye  
Mr. Stepp – Aye  
Mr. Leshner – Aye (via absentee ballot)  
Ms. Mielke – Aye  
Ms. Haythe - Aye

Bill No.1 1551 will become effective as outlined in the legislation.

Bill No. 1552, A BILL TO AMEND CHAPTER 11 OF THE TALBOT COUNTY CODE (ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES) FOR THE PURPOSE OF GENERALLY EXEMPTING THOMPSON PARK, LOCATED IN THE TOWN OF EASTON, FROM THE 500-FOOT PUBLIC PARK SETBACK REQUIREMENT FOR NEW OFF-SALE LICENSES, was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for vote. Prior to the vote, County Attorney, Patrick Thomas, stated that the legislation was requested to be introduced by Bluepoint Hospitality Group (Easton) since under the County's current alcoholic beverages code, new off-sale license establishments must be located at least 500 feet from schools, correctional facilities, and parks, with the exception of Thompson Park in Easton, but only for Class I (Alcohol dispensary Bistros), which includes The Wardroom owned by Bluepoint Hospitality Group. Mr. Thomas stated that, if the legislation is approved, it would delete the reference to Class I (Alcohol Dispensary Bistros), thereby allowing any off-sale establishment within 500 feet of Thompson Park. The Council voted to approved Bill No. 1552 by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye  
Mr. Stepp – Aye  
Mr. Leshner – Aye (via absentee ballot)  
Ms. Mielke – Aye  
Ms. Haythe – Aye

Bill No. 1552 will become effective as provided for in the legislation.

X. Public Comments: There were no public comments.

XI. County Manager's Report:

- A. Request from Finance Office to Approve 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Budget Transfers for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 – Martha Sparks, Finance Director, stated that § 615 of the Talbot County Charter provides for transfers between agencies of the County government and within the same fund only during the last quarter of the fiscal year, upon the recommendation of the County Manager and the approval of the County Council. She stated that most of the items identified for transfer are Capital Outlay items which were requested as part of the FY25 budget but which were later determined can be purchased with funding appropriated in FY24 under the guidelines of § 615 and the Council's approval. Ms. Sparks stated that several capital outlay items previously approved by Council for purchase utilizing Contingency Funds are also included in the transfer request. Ms. Sparks then outlined the specific items requested for transfer which total \$871,572. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Budget Transfers as outlined by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye  
Mr. Stepp – Aye  
Ms. Mielke – Aye  
Ms. Haythe - Aye

- B. Bid 24-04, SHOWER STALLS AND PLUMBING FIXTURES RENOVATIONS – TALBOT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS – TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND – Prior to request for approval, Terry Kokolis, Director, Talbot County Department of Corrections, stated that his department has faced challenges finding a contractor willing to come into the facility to renovate the original 1990 plumbing but was able to do so from a list of contractors which provide services to the State prison system. Mr. Stamp then requested Council approval to award Bid No. 24-04 to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, PBI Commercial, in the sum of \$350,440.00. Mr. Stamp stated that \$330,000 is available for the project and is that Mr. Kokolis is requesting to use \$20,500 in Contingency Funds which the Finance Director has certified are available. Council discussion ensued with Mr. Kokolis. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Mr. Stepp, the Council approved the award as presented by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye  
Mr. Stepp – Aye  
Ms. Mielke – Aye  
Ms. Haythe – Aye

Mr. Stepp congratulated the Talbot County Department of Corrections for having received the Recognition of Achievement Award from the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services and read the following statement into the record:

*Talbot County Department of Corrections Director, administrative team, and staff demonstrated a commitment to the audit process through the constant and daily use of the standards for an adult detention center as an effective management tool. Commitment and dedication were evident based on this facility achieving total compliance with the standards for an adult detention center. The Talbot County*

*Department of Corrections is recommended to receive the Recognition of Achievement Award.*

- C. Bid No. 24-05, 2024 TALBOT COUNTY TRAVEL GUIDE - TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND – Requested Council approval to award Bid No. 24-05 to the sole bidder, APG Chesapeake Media; total cost of the project is \$52,451, which includes anticipated \$40,500 in advertising revenue; the remaining cost of \$11,951 will be paid by the Talbot County Department of Economic Development and Tourism; Council discussion ensued with Cassandra Vanhooser, Director, Department of Economic Development and Tourism. Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Ms. Haythe, the Council approved the award as recommended by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye  
Mr. Stepp – Aye  
Ms. Mielke – Aye  
Ms. Haythe – Aye

Ms. Haythe expressed her appreciation to Ms. Vanhooser for the many hours of hard work she puts in for the Department of Economic Development and Tourism. Council discussion then ensued with Ms. Vanhooser regarding several economic development matters, including the upcoming Business Appreciation Summit to be held on Tuesday, May 2, 2024, at 8:00 a.m. in the Gold Room of the Tidewater Inn in Easton; the speaker for the event will be the Acting Administrator for the Small Business Administration.

- D. Permitting Portal Seminar – Mr. Stamp stated that on Wednesday, April 24, 2024, at 5:00 p.m., the Talbot County Permits and Inspections Department will host a permitting portal seminar in the Wye Oak Room at the Talbot County Community Center. He stated that the seminar is an opportunity for individuals to learn more about how the portal works and to share their views with the Permitting Department as to how, in their opinion, the permitting process in general is working.
- E. Talbot Day Celebration – Mr. Stamp encouraged individuals to attend and participate in the first Talbot Day celebration which will take place on Thursday, April 25, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. at the Courthouse; nominees for Talbot Citizen of the Year will be recognized and the winner announced; the names of the Talbot Day poster contest winners will also be announced.

XII. Public Comments: No comments.

XIII. Council Comments:

Mr. Stepp - Mr. Stepp stated that he is looking forward to Talbot Day on Thursday and appreciates all the work staff that has done for the event. He stated that, in his opinion, it is going to be a wonderful day and it appears that the weather forecast will be good so the event can be held outside. Mr. Stepp concluded his comments by again expressing his appreciation to staff for their hard work on the event.

Ms. Mielke - Ms. Mielke concurred with the statements of Mr. Stamp and Mr. Stepp.

Ms. Haythe - Ms. Haythe expressed her appreciation to Mr. Stepp for bringing the Talbot Day celebration together and for the proclamation he sponsored last year to bring this year's celebration to fruition; she also expressed her appreciation to Sarah Kilmon and staff for their work to organize the Talbot Day event. She stated that, in her opinion, it's good to see the Council have fun and joke together and that she appreciates serving with each of her colleagues. She stated that she is looking forward to Talbot Day and to celebrating all the citizens. Following Mr. Callahan's comments, Ms. Haythe encouraged those who had not yet done so, to sign up for the lip sync battle fundraiser to benefit Talbot Interfaith Shelter; the event will be held on Saturday, April 27, 2024 at the Waterfowl Building; she stated that she would be a judge, and Sarah Kilmon is one of the contestants.

Mr. Callahan - Mr. Callahan expressed his appreciation to Mr. Stepp for bringing Talbot Day to the attention of the citizens of the towns and the county, and that, in his opinion, the celebration can be built upon for years to come. He stated that the ceremony, which is being modeled after the now discontinued Maryland You Are Beautiful ceremony, provides the County with an opportunity to recognize individuals who truly give of their time, talents, and energy to the citizens of Talbot County. Mr. Callahan concluded his comments by expressing his appreciation to Sarah Kilmon for all her hard work for the Talbot Day celebration.

The transcript of the April 23, 2024, County Council meeting is available for review in the Office of the Talbot County Manager during regular office hours.

Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council voted to adjourn and to reconvene on Tuesday, May 7, 2024, beginning at 1:30 p.m. and at 2:00 p.m. for a public hearing on Bill No. 1553, the FY25 proposed budget: the 2:00 p.m. public hearing will be held in the Bradley Meeting Room, after which the meeting will recess and reconvene at 7:00 p.m. in the Easton Elementary School Cafeteria for a continuation of the public hearing on the proposed FY25 budget by voting 4 - 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan - Aye  
Mr. Stepp – Aye  
Ms. Mielke – Aye  
Ms. Haythe – Aye

The meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

#### XIV. Summary of Closed Session Held on April 23, 2024:

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

Time of closed session: 4:30 p.m. to 5:55 p.m.  
Place of closed session: County Council Office  
Purpose of the closed session: To consider various matters as set forth in the statement for closing the meeting

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

Names of members voting aye: Callahan, Haythe, Leshar (via conference call), Mielke, Stepp

Members opposed: None

Abstaining: None

Absent: None

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

<b>Topic Description</b>	<b>Statutory Authority</b>	<b>Reason for Closed Session Discussion</b>	<b>Persons Present</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>
To discuss appointments to various County boards and committees	GP § 3-305(b)(1)(i)	Public discussion would discourage individuals from volunteering to serve	Chuck Callahan, Pete Leshar, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Clay Stamp, Patrick Thomas, Jessica Morris	No action
To discuss personnel matter involving Department of Parks and Recreation	GP § 3-305(b)(1)(i)	Discussion involves specific individual	Chuck Callahan, Pete Leshar, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Clay Stamp, Patrick Thomas, Jessica Morris, Donna Pardieu	No action
For update on legal matter involving State vs. Christopher Worthy	GP § 3-305(b)(7)(8)	Attorney-client privilege regarding legal advice	Chuck Callahan, Pete Leshar, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Clay Stamp, Patrick Thomas, Jessica Morris	No action
To discuss proposal for utility easement in Easton for a public purpose	GP § 3-305(b)(3)	To protect the County's bargaining position regarding the potential acquisition of real property for a public purpose	Chuck Callahan, Pete Leshar, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Clay Stamp, Patrick Thomas, Jessica Morris	Council did not approve request





**TALBOT COUNTY,  
MARYLAND  
WEEKLY CASH  
STATEMENT  
April 23, 2024**

**OPERATING FUNDS - SHORE UNITED BANK**

<b>OPERATING FUNDS AT</b>	<b>4/16/2024</b>	<b>\$17,425,772.99</b>
RETURNED CHECK(S) #610, 1838		(540.26)
Deposits		1,818,616.52
Checks		(77,750.67)
ACH Disbursements		(886,488.39)
EFT'S		(156,472.35)
Wire Transfers		(103,427.40)
Voided ACH Disbursement		64,939.48

<b>OPERATING FUNDS AT</b>	<b>4/23/2024</b>	<b><u>\$18,084,649.92</u></b>
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<b>PETTY CASH FUNDS</b>		<b>\$18,105.00</b>
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**INVESTMENT FUNDS**

	<u>Yield</u>	
Maryland Local Government Investment Pool (MLGIP)	5.36%	\$21,943,784.56
Bayvanguard Bank	4.68%	\$10,665,326.61
Shore United Money Market Account	5.33%	\$77,294,348.28

<b>INVESTMENT FUNDS TOTAL</b>		<b><u>\$109,921,564.45</u></b>
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<b><u>TOTAL ALL CASH AND INVESTMENTS</u></b>		<b><u>\$128,006,214.37</u></b>
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