



TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

County Council

MINUTES

December 9, 2025

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

- I. Agenda – The Agenda for Tuesday, December 9, 2025, was brought forward for approval. Mr. Stepp made a motion to amend the agenda to include a request by the Col. Tench Tilghman Chapter of the Maryland Sons of the American Revolution to commission, frame and install a portrait of Col. Tench Tilghman in the Talbot County Courthouse; Mr. Leshner seconded the motion, and the Council approved the Agenda, as amended, by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

- II. Minutes – Mr. Callahan requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Minutes of Tuesday, November 25, 2025.

- III. Disbursements – Mr. Callahan requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Disbursements of Tuesday, December 2, 2025, and Tuesday, December 9, 2025.

- IV. Certificate of Recognition to Cassandra Vanhooser, Maryland Tourism Person of the Year - The Clerk read a certificate of recognition into the record which spoke of Ms. Vanhooser's selection as the 2025 Maryland Tourism Person of the Year at the recent Maryland Travel and Tourism Summit. Ms. Vanhooser, who serves as the Director of the Talbot County Department of Economic Development & Tourism, was recognized for the enthusiasm and commitment she brings toward promoting Maryland as a world class tourism destination, for helping to bring greater visibility of the role of tourism as an important economic driver in Maryland, and for utilizing her many years of professional journalistic experience as a travel writer to strengthen partnerships which support small businesses, celebrate local heritage, and showcase the wonderful quality of life in Talbot County. Upon motion by Mr. Leshner, seconded by Ms. Haythe, the Council approved the certificate of recognition by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

Ms. Vanhooser expressed her appreciation to her peers and colleagues for the honor of being recognized. She also expressed her appreciation to the Council, County Manager, Clay Stamp, Assistant County Manager, Jessica Morris, and the Department of Economic Development & Tourism team for their support of the Department.

Ms. Haythe presented the Certificate of Recognition to Ms. Vanhooser. Clay Stamp, County Manager, was also in attendance.

V. Introduction of Numbered Resolutions:

A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE WATER AND SEWER PLAN TO RECLASSIFY AND REMAP CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 801 PORT STREET, EASTON, MARYLAND, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 34 AS PARCEL 215, FROM “W-2, S-2” TO “W-1, S-1” IMMEDIATE PRIORITY STATUS PURSUANT TO AN APPLICATION FILED BY THE TOWN OF EASTON was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for introduction. The resolution was introduced by Mr. Callahan, Ms. Haythe, Mr. Leshner, Ms. Mielke, and Mr. Stepp as Resolution No. 387. A public hearing was scheduled for Tuesday, January 13, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the Bradley Meeting Room, South Wing, Talbot County Courthouse, 11 North Washington Street, Easton, MD 21601.

A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE WATER AND SEWER PLAN TO RECLASSIFY AND REMAP CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 7508 COOPER POINT ROAD, BOZMAN, MARYLAND, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 31 AS PARCEL 78, FROM “UNPROGRAMMED” TO “S-1” IMMEDIATE PRIORITY STATUS PURSUANT TO AN APPLICATION FILED BY LINDA ZECHER-HIGGINS was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for introduction. Prior to introduction, Ray Clarke, County Engineer, stated that the property outlined in the resolution is between two (2) areas served by Resolution No. 250. Council discussion ensued with Mr. Clarke who stated that the zoning of the property is one (1) dwelling unit (DU) per 20 acres and is not subdividable; information from Environmental Health regarding the status of the septic system is pending. The resolution was introduced by Mr. Callahan, Ms. Haythe, Ms. Mielke, and Mr. Stepp as Resolution No. 388. A public hearing was scheduled for Tuesday, January 13, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the Bradley Meeting Room, South Wing, Talbot County Courthouse, 11 North Washington Street, Easton, MD 21601.

A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE WATER AND SEWER PLAN TO RECLASSIFY AND REMAP CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 7510 COOPER POINT ROAD, BOZMAN, MARYLAND, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 31 AS PARCEL 65, FROM “UNPROGRAMMED” TO “S-1” IMMEDIATE PRIORITY STATUS PURSUANT TO AN APPLICATION FILED BY LINDA ZECHER-HIGGINS was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for introduction. Prior to introduction, Ray Clarke, County Engineer, stated that the improved 13.4-acre property is between two (2) areas served by Resolution No. 250 sewer service area, is zoned one (1) DU per 20 acres and is not subdividable; information from Environmental Health regarding the status of the septic system is pending. The resolution was introduced by Mr. Callahan, Ms. Haythe, Ms. Mielke, and Mr. Stepp as Resolution No. 389. A public hearing was scheduled for Tuesday, January 13, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the Bradley Meeting Room, South Wing, Talbot County Courthouse, 11 North Washington Street, Easton, MD 21601.

A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE WATER AND SEWER PLAN TO RECLASSIFY AND REMAP CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 24114 MOUNT PLEASANT ROAD, ST. MICHAELS, MARYLAND, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 32 AS PARCEL 86, FROM “UNPROGRAMMED” TO “S-1” IMMEDIATE PRIORITY STATUS PURSUANT TO AN APPLICATION FILED BY KRISTINA AND DONALD KEPPLER was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for introduction. Prior to introduction, Ray Clarke, County Engineer, stated that the improved 1.25-acre property is in the WRC (Western Rural Conservation) zone and the neighboring property was brought in approximately four (4) years ago; information from Environmental Health regarding the status of the septic system is pending. The resolution was introduced by Mr. Callahan, Ms. Haythe and Mr. Stepp as Resolution No. 390. A public hearing was scheduled for Tuesday, January 13, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the Bradley Meeting Room, South Wing, Talbot County Courthouse, 11 North Washington Street, Easton, MD 21601.

A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE WATER AND SEWER PLAN TO RECLASSIFY AND REMAP CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 7440 COOPER POINT ROAD, BOZMAN, MARYLAND, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 31 AS PARCEL 326, FROM “UNPROGRAMMED” TO “S-1” IMMEDIATE PRIORITY STATUS PURSUANT TO AN APPLICATION FILED BY SHARON AND DUANE EKEDAHL was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for introduction. Prior to introduction, Ray Clarke, County Engineer, stated that the subject property is an improved 7.8-acre lot and information from Environmental Health regarding the status of the septic system is pending. The resolution was introduced by Mr. Callahan, Ms. Haythe, and Mr. Stepp as Resolution No. 391. A public hearing was scheduled for Tuesday, January 13, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the Bradley Meeting Room, South Wing, Talbot County Courthouse, 11 North Washington Street, Easton, MD 21601.

VI. County Manager’s Report:

- A. Request from County Manager – Requested Council approval to declare Tuesday, December 16, 2025, a Special Legislative Day. Upon motion by Mr. Leshner, seconded by Mr. Stepp, the Council approved the request by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

- B. Request for Letter of Support – Requested Council approval for a letter in support of a grant application to the Maryland Arts Council by the Col. Tench Tilghman Chapter of the Maryland Sons of the American Revolution; if approved, the grant funding will be used to commission, frame and install a portrait of Talbot County native, Col. Tench Tilghman, in the Talbot County Courthouse. Wesley Hagood, President, Col. Tench Tilghman Chapter of the Maryland Sons of the American Revolution, provided detailed information on the request; no County funds are required. Upon motion by Mr. Leshner, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved the request by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

- C. Request for Letter of Support – Requested Council approval for a letter in support of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum’s request to the Governor for inclusion of \$740,000 in the Governor’s FY27 Capital Budget to support the replacement of the HVAC system in one of the Museum’s exhibition buildings; no County funding is required. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Mr. Stepp, the Council approved forwarding a letter in support of the request by voting 4 – 0 – 1 as follows:

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

Mr. Leshner abstained from voting as he is employed by the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum.

- D. Bid No. 23-11, EXTENSION OF SEWER FROM THE REGION II (ST. MICHAELS) WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT, TO THE MOUNT PLEASANT AREA, UNDER BROAD CREEK, AND TO THE VILLAGES OF BOZMAN AND NEAVITT, AS OUTLINED IN RESOLUTION NO. 250 (Change Orders 1 & 2) – Requested Council approval of the County Engineer’s recommendation to award Change Orders 1 & 2 for Bid No. 23-11, Contract A, with Schummer, Inc. in the total sum of \$427,992.01; funding for the change orders will come from contingency funding for the project. Ray Clarke, County Engineer, stated that the engineering firm for the project inadvertently omitted the areas that are the subject of the change orders from the scope of the project; therefore, the contractor did not include those areas in their bid proposal. Council discussion ensued with Mr. Clarke. Upon motion by Mr. Leshner, seconded by Ms. Haythe, the Council approved the change orders by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

VII. Public Hearing:

Bill No. 1623, A BILL TO AMEND CHAPTER 11 OF THE TALBOT COUNTY CODE (ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES) FOR THE PURPOSES OF PERMITTING ON-PREMISES CONSUMPTION OF BEER, WINE, AND LIQUOR AT ALCOHOL DISPENSARY BISTROS, EXPANDING THE SEATING CAPACITY FOR ALCOHOL DISPENSARY BISTROS, EXEMPTING CLASS I LICENSES ISSUED FOR AN URBAN LOCATION FROM THE MARKET TEST SET FORTH IN § 11-8(D)(2) IF THE MUNICIPALITY IN WHICH THE URBAN LOCATION IS LOCATED DOES NOT HAVE AN EXISTING ALCOHOL DISPENSARY BISTRO HOLDING A VALID CLASS I LICENSE, AND EXEMPTING OXFORD CONSERVATION PARK FROM THE 500-FOOT DISTANCE RESTRICTION FOR NEW OFF-SALE LICENSES, was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for public hearing. Prior to the public hearing, Patrick Thomas, County Attorney, stated that the legislation was requested by attorney, Adam Lynn, on behalf of a client who is interested in opening a restaurant with a small market in Oxford. Mr. Thomas outlined the concept for the market portion of the proposed business, the Class I Alcoholic Beverages license, and stated that the proposed change to Chapter 11 (Alcoholic Beverages) of the Talbot County Code is similar to what Council previously approved for Thompson Park in Easton. Members of the public were then afforded an opportunity to comment on the legislation. Bill No. 1623 is eligible for vote on Tuesday, December 16, 2025, a Special Legislative Day.

VIII. Eligible for Vote:

Bill No. 1621, A BILL TO AMEND CHAPTER 190 (ZONING, SUBDIVISION, AND LAND DEVELOPMENT), SECTIONS 190-25.2 (TABLE OF LAND USES) AND 190-29 (COMMERCIAL USES), REGARDING FUNERAL HOMES AND CREMATORIA, was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for vote. Prior to the vote, Patrick Thomas, County

Attorney, stated that the proposed amendment was initiated on behalf of a local business; if approved, the legislation would permit funeral homes and crematoria in the AC district, subject to certain regulations, which he outlined. He stated that the legislation had been reviewed by the Planning Commission and recommended to the Council for approval. Council discussion ensued. The Council approved Bill No. 1623 by a vote of 3 – 2 as follows:

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

Bill No. 1621 will become effective as provided for in the legislation.

Bill No. 1622, A BILL TO AMEND CHAPTER 190 (ZONING, SUBDIVISION, AND LAND DEVELOPMENT) OF THE TALBOT COUNTY CODE FOR THE PURPOSES OF PROVIDING FOR CLASSES OF SHORT-TERM RENTAL LICENSES AND AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS PERTAINING TO SHORT-TERM RENTAL LICENSES, INCLUDING: 1) THE COMPOSITION AND TERM OF THE SHORT-TERM RENTAL REVIEW BOARD; 2) CONTENTS OF NEW APPLICATIONS; 3) HEARINGS, DECISIONS, AND APPEALS; 4) RENEWAL; 5) GROUNDS FOR DENIAL; AND 6) ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS, was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for vote. Prior to the vote, Mr. Leshner stated he had been one of the sponsors of the legislation, but upon reflection, realizes that Bill No. 1622 does not address the concerns of some individuals, and raises concerns of others, and in his opinion, the Council needs to take another look at the issue and was therefore withdrawing his sponsorship. Ms. Mielke, the other sponsor of the legislation, stated that from comments received, approximately twice as many citizens were in favor of the legislation. She stated that those opposing the legislation were primarily STR (Short-Term Rental) owners who are not Talbot County residents and that 75% of the Short-Term Rentals are owned by LLCs or out-of-state residents, and 22% are owned by other entities. She stated that the majority of the citizens who are in support of the legislation live in the TR (Town Residential) and TC (Town Conservation) zones which were not addressed in the legislation. She stated that, in her opinion, the Council needs to amend the legislation to include provisions for the TR and TC zones, then have the legislation reviewed by the Planning Commission. Ms. Mielke stated that there is a statewide trend to review and amend STR regulations and cited several jurisdictions which have, or plan to do so. Ms. Mielke also withdrew her sponsorship of the legislation. Patrick Thomas, County Attorney, stated that as there are now no sponsors of the legislation, it dies for lack of a sponsor; without Council action, the legislation will expire on January 1, 2026.

IX. Public Comments: Members of the public were afforded an opportunity to comment on matters of interest to them.

X. Council Comments:

Mr. Stepp - Mr. Stepp wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Mr. Leshner - Mr. Leshner reminded everyone that Hanukkah begins on Sunday and wished those who celebrate a Happy Hanukkah.

Ms. Mielke - No comments.

Ms. Haythe - No comments.

Mr. Callahan - Mr. Callahan stated that the Council will be meeting next Tuesday, December 16th to end the year.

Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Mr. Stepp, the Council voted to reconvene on Tuesday, December 16, 2025, a Special Legislative Day, at 3:30 p.m. in Open Session and immediately adjourn into Closed Session as listed on the statement for closing that meeting, then for the regularly scheduled meeting at 5:00 p.m. by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

The meeting ended at 5:54 p.m.

The transcript of the Tuesday, December 16, 2025, County Council meeting is available for review in the Office of the Talbot County Manager during regular office hours.

XI. Summary of Closed Session Held on December 9, 2025:

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

Time of closed session: 3:35 p.m. End 4:30 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, Leshner, Haythe, 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:

Topic Description	Statutory Authority	Reason for Closed Session Discussion	Persons Present	Action Taken
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 Leshner, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Clay	No action

			Stamp, Jessica Morris	
To discuss legal services contract	GP § 3-305(b)(1)(i)	Discussion involves specific individual	Chuck Callahan, Pete Leshner, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Clay Stamp, Jessica Morris	No action
To consider the acquisition of real property in the Town of Easton for a public purpose	GP § 3-305(b)(3)	To protect the County's bargaining position regarding the possible acquisition of real property for a public purpose	Chuck Callahan, Pete Leshner, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Clay Stamp, Jessica Morris, Patrick Thomas, Brian LeCates	No action



TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND
WEEKLY CASH STATEMENT
12/2/2025

OPERATING FUNDS - SHORE UNITED BANK

OPERATING FUNDS AT 11/25/2025 \$ 37,679,297.03

Total ADP Payroll PPE 11/21/2025	(825,720.49)
Total ADP Monthly Payroll PPE 11/30/2025	(18,750.49)
Returned Paymentus Payments	(4,290.96)
Airport Merchant Portal Hosting 9/2025	(11.00)
Repurposing Merchant Portal Hosting 9/2025	(15.00)
Roads Merchant Portal Hosting 9/2025	(15.00)
Bank Charges 10/2025	(8,058.55)

Deposits	1,453,158.34
Checks	(86,454.17)
ACH Disbursements	(880,234.98)
EFT's	(320,982.59)
Wire Transfers	(52,525.35)

OPERATING FUNDS AT 12/02/2025 \$ 36,935,396.79


PETTY CASH FUNDS \$ 18,105.00

INVESTMENT FUNDS

	<u>Yield</u>	
Maryland Local Government Investment Pool (MLGIP)	3.99%	\$ 23,749,836.82
Bayvanguard Bank	4.15%	\$ 11,409,550.41
Shore United Money Market Account	4.33%	\$ 63,903,075.35

INVESTMENT FUNDS TOTAL \$ 99,080,567.58

TOTAL ALL CASH AND INVESTMENTS \$ 136,015,964.37

		TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND WEEKLY CASH STATEMENT 12/9/2025	
OPERATING FUNDS - SHORE UNITED BANK			
OPERATING FUNDS AT		12/2/2025	\$ 36,935,396.79
RES235 Loan Balance Reduction			(834.00)
Deposits			18,586,116.24
Checks			(68,803.01)
ACH Disbursements			(541,618.32)
EFT's			(315,894.92)
Wire Transfers			(1,008,166.94)
OPERATING FUNDS AT		12/09/2025	\$ 53,586,195.84
PETTY CASH FUNDS			\$ 18,105.00
INVESTMENT FUNDS			
		<u>Yield</u>	
Maryland Local Government Investment Pool (MLGIP)		3.95%	\$ 23,749,836.82
Bayvanguard Bank		4.15%	\$ 11,409,550.41
Shore United Money Market Account		4.33%	\$ 63,903,075.35
INVESTMENT FUNDS TOTAL			\$ 99,080,567.58
<u>TOTAL ALL CASH AND INVESTMENTS</u>			<u>\$ 152,666,763.42</u>