



TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

County Council

MINUTES

February 10, 2026

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

- I. Agenda – The Agenda for Tuesday, February 10, 2026, was brought forward for approval. Mr. Stepp made a motion to amend the agenda to have *Item VI. Presentation of Annual Report for Talbot County* presented before *Item V. Proclamation: American Heart Month – February 2026*; the motion was seconded by Ms. Mieke. The Council approved the agenda, as amended, by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

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

- II. Minutes – Mr. Leshner requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Minutes of Tuesday, January 27, 2026.

- III. Disbursements – Mr. Leshner requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Disbursements of Tuesday, February 3, 2026, and Tuesday, February 10, 2026.

- IV. Presentation of Annual Report for Talbot County – Sarah Kilmon, Communications Manager – Ms. Kilmon briefed the Council on the 2025 Annual Report for Talbot County which provides an overview of County government operations using the five (5) pillars of Talbot County Government: Education and Recreation; Public Safety, Health, and Welfare, Infrastructure; Environmental Stewardship and Economic Stability and focusing on the themes of Progress, Partnerships and Purpose. Ms. Kilmon noted various infrastructure projects which have recently been completed or are currently in progress; public safety initiatives, and economic development efforts. She stated that infrastructure projects include the ongoing Chapel District Elementary School and the St. Michaels Library renovation and expansion projects; the completion, in 2024, of the gymnasium at the Talbot County Community Center which has allowed for an expansion of programming for the Department of Parks and Recreation and year-round use of the ice rink; Goldsborough Neck and Airport Road improvement projects; countywide broadband expansion by Easton Utilities Commission in partnership with Talbot County; and improvements at Hog Neck Golf Course. She stated that Public Safety initiatives include the construction of a North EMS Station in Cordova which will decrease the emergency response time in the northern portion of the county; an upgrade of the Computer-Aided Design (CAD) system for the County's 9-1-1 Center and completion of a new Public Safety Complex and sallyport on Marys Court in Easton; a new facility for the Talbot County Health Department which was completed in 2024 which provides much needed space for new programs and initiatives to better serve the community; the launching of the Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) program which provides individuals an opportunity to receive care in their homes

and medication management, to help reduce Emergency Room visits whenever possible; and community readiness initiatives including Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and Stop the Bleed classes. Ms. Kilmon also provided information on the update of the County's Comprehensive Plan; expansion of sewer service to environmentally fragile areas of the county; and investment in large economic engines for Talbot County, including the new Regional Medical Center and Easton Airport. She utilized charts and graphs to depict taxpayer funding invested in each sector of County government as well as grant funding received for various County projects. Individuals who wish to more proactively communicate with the County are encouraged to sign up at [Engage Talbot County](#).

- V. Proclamation: American Heart Month – February 2026 – The Clerk read a proclamation into the record which spoke of the prevalence of heart disease as the leading cause of death of Americans each year, and preventive measures which can reduce risk of the disease including, maintaining a healthy weight, eating balanced and nutritious meals, increasing physical activity, and encouraging citizens to participate in healthier lifestyle initiatives to help eradicate the deadly disease. The proclamation also spoke of sudden cardiac arrest and the partnership of the Talbot County Paramedic Foundation, the Talbot County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association, the Department of Emergency Services, and the University of Maryland Shore Regional Health to address cardiac care through public education and provision of state-of-the-art lifesaving services and devices. Upon motion by Ms. Mielke, seconded by Ms. Haythe, the Council approved the proclamation by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

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

Tina Kintop, EMS Division Chief, Talbot County Department of Emergency Services, expressed her appreciation to the Council for their support of American Heart Month and the entities which partner with the Department of Emergency Services on outreach to the public, preparedness and prevention initiatives, including placement of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in Talbot County businesses and along parks and trails, and providing CPR certification classes. She stated that the Mobile Integrated Health Program provides preventative care related to heart disease by focusing on chronic disease management, education, medication oversight and community resources to support a healthier lifestyle to help individuals stay out of the hospital. She stated that, to date, approximately 300 AEDs have been placed in public locations throughout the county, 26 of which are outdoor temperature-controlled units to ensure year-round accessibility. Director Kintop stated that the annual CPR marathon will be held on Friday, March 20, 2026, at the Talbot County Health Department, 510 Cadmus Lane in Easton and encouraged residents to participate. Information can be found at www.talbotcountymd.gov/lifesaver. Council members expressed their appreciation to Director Kintop, DES, and its partner agencies for all they do to provide a safer environment for the citizens of Talbot County.

Mr. Stepp presented the Proclamation to Director Kintop who accepted on behalf of the Department of Emergency Services and its partner organizations.

- VI. Introduction of Legislation:

A BILL TO AMEND CHAPTER 190 (ZONING, SUBDIVISION, AND LAND DEVELOPMENT) OF THE TALBOT COUNTY CODE FOR THE PURPOSES OF PROVIDING THAT CANNABIS

GROWING AND THE PROCESSING OF CANNABIS GROWN ON-SITE SHALL BE PERMITTED BY SPECIAL EXCEPTION IN THE AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION, COUNTRYSIDE PRESERVATION, AND WESTERN RURAL CONSERVATION ZONING DISTRICTS, PROVIDING THAT THE PROCESSING OF CANNABIS GROWN OFF-SITE SHALL BE PERMITTED BY SPECIAL EXCEPTION IN THE VILLAGE MIXED, GENERAL COMMERCIAL, AND LIMITED INDUSTRIAL ZONING DISTRICTS, AND PROVIDING THAT CANNABIS DISPENSARIES SHALL BE PERMITTED BY SPECIAL EXCEPTION IN THE LIMITED COMMERCIAL, GENERAL COMMERCIAL, AND LIMITED INDUSTRIAL ZONING DISTRICTS, EACH SUBJECT TO CERTAIN CONDITIONS, AND DEFINING TERMS ASSOCIATED THEREWITH was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for introduction. The legislation was introduced by Ms. Haythe, Mr. Leshner, Ms. Mielke, and Mr. Stepp as Bill No. 1624. A public hearing was scheduled for Tuesday, March 10, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the Bradley Meeting Room, South Wing, Talbot County Courthouse, 11 North Washington Street, Easton, Maryland 21601.

VII. County Manager's Report:

- A. Talbot County Senior Citizens Task Force – Requested Council approval for the appointment of Lee Newcomb to a three-year term on the Senior Citizens Task Force as a representative of the Talbot County Department of Social Services – Adult Services; said term will expire on October 14, 2028. Upon motion by Ms. Mielke, seconded by Ms. Haythe, the Council approved the appointment by voting 4 – 0 as follows

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

- B. Bid No. 26-01, SINCLAIR AVENUE WATERFRONT PARK STONE REVETMENT REPAIR – SINCLAIR AVENUE, TILGHMAN, MARYLAND 21671 – Requested Council approval of the recommendation of the Assistant Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation to award Bid No. 26-01 to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, Sweitzer Marine, LLC in the sum of \$42,300; funding for the project was included in the FY26 County Budget. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved the award by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

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

- C. BID NO. 23-03, PORTABLE SANITARY CHEMICAL TOILET SERVICE – TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND – Requested Council approval to renew the contract with Pierson's Comfort Group for the provision of portable sanitary chemical toilet service for County parks and landings for the 2026 season in a sum not to exceed \$46,147. Ms. Morris stated that there are sufficient funds in the FY26 Budget. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved extension of the contract as outlined by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

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

- D. Request from Department of Parks and Recreation – Requested Council approval of the recommendation of the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation to award the project for replacement of the coping and tile at the Bay Hundred Community Pool to the lowest responsive and responsible proposer, Coastline Pool Services, in the sum of \$79,101.00; funding for the project was included as a FY26 Capital Improvement Project (Bill No. 1607). Council discussion ensued with Emily Gilmer, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation. Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Ms. Haythe, the Council approved the award by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

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

- E. Request from Department of Parks and Recreation – Requested Council approval to procure and install replacement playground equipment at Home Run Baker Park in Trappe; the cost of the project is approximately \$280,000, 90% of which will be funded through Program Open Space (POS); and requested Council approval to utilize \$28,000 in Contingency Funds which the Finance Director certified are available, to cover the remaining 10% cost of the project in order to lock in 2025 prices. Council discussion ensued with Emily Gilmer, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation, who stated that if approved, installation of the playground is anticipated to be completed in the spring and ready use in Summer 2026. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved the requests by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

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

- F. Requests from Department of Public Works – Requested Council approval of the following items related to the Chapel Road Culvert Replacement Project:

- To award a Change Order to contractor, David A. Bramble, Inc. in the sum of \$298,240.00 for the purchase and installation of 92 (40-foot) timber pilings, rip rap, and associated survey and inspection work related to the installation of the pilings and rip rap; Council discussion ensued with Josh Elliott, Assistant County Engineer, regarding the need for the Change Order. Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Ms. Haythe, the Council approved the Change Order by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

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

- To enter into a Construction Easement Agreement By and Between John M. Higgins and Susan L. Higgins, 9541 Chapel Road, Easton, Maryland and Talbot County Maryland in the sum of \$3,600. Ms. Morris stated that the County wishes to purchase a permanent easement for the expanded footprint of the culvert. Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Ms. Haythe, the Council approved the construction easement agreement by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

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

- To enter into a Temporary Construction Easement Agreement By and Between Darcy Emory Hutchison and Samantha Jean Archer, 9678 Klondike Road, Easton, Maryland and Talbot County Maryland in the sum of \$1,000; said agreement is for a temporary easement for the Chapel Road culvert replacement project. Upon motion by Ms. Mielke, seconded by Mr. Stepp, the Council approved the temporary construction easement agreement by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

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

- To utilize budgeted contingency funding for Capital Improvement Project - Mapping and Evaluation and Rehabilitation or Replacement of County Culverts in the sum of \$170,000; Council discussion ensued with Josh Elliott, Assistant County Engineer, who stated that the request is to cover unforeseen costs which might arise on a project of this size. Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Ms. Haythe, the Council approved the request by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

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

- To close Chapel Road at Wootenau Creek from March 27, 2026, through August 11, 2026, in order to complete the culvert replacement project. Josh Elliott, Assistant County Engineer, stated that the detour will be between Gannon Road onto Matthewstown Road then back onto Black Dog Alley; travelers will also be able to use Klondike Road to Cordova Road back to Black Dog Alley. A notice of closure will be advertised in *The Star Democrat* and posted on social media. Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved the closure of Chapel Road at Wootenau Creek for the timeframe as outlined by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Leshner – Aye

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

- To apply for State Aid Funding in the sum of \$1,000,000 to assist with the cost of the Chapel Road Culvert Replacement Project. Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved the request by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

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

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

IX. Council Comments:

Ms. Haythe - Ms. Haythe reminded everyone that February is Black History Month and quoted Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., *“We must accept finite disappointment but never lose infinite hope.”*

Ms. Mielke - Ms. Mielke stated that she had attended the Talbot Agriculture and Education Center annual dinner the previous evening and, in her opinion, it was such a treat. She stated that the Center has been around for 60 years and, in her opinion, it has strengthened our rural county by providing a safe, convenient and economical gathering place for citizens of all ages and backgrounds to showcase and learn from our agricultural heritage. Ms. Mielke stated that it was rewarding to see so many young people in attendance who are involved in 4-H and, in her opinion, it was good to see that we have a continuing future that agriculture plays in our community. Ms. Mielke concluded her comments by asking that members of the community support the Agriculture and Education Center when space is needed for weddings, class reunions, and various other activities. She stated that although they receive generous contributions from the Lions Club, they also need support from the community.

Mr. Stepp - Mr. Stepp stated that he was thankful for the recent warmer weather and that it was very nice to see some snow and ice melting.

Mr. Leshner - Mr. Leshner stated that he had attended the District 37 Night in Annapolis the previous evening, which was hosted by Delegates Hutchinson, Adams, Senator Mautz, and Delegate Sheree Sample-Hughes from District 37-A. He stated that Mike Mason, the County’s lobbyist was there and that the Council meets with Mr. Mason each Thursday to discuss any proposed legislation in Annapolis which might impact county government or county economic interests. Mr. Leshner stated that as with all the Council’s public meetings, members of the public are invited to listen to the meetings which are held remotely.

Upon motion by Ms. Haythe seconded by Mr. Stepp, the Council voted to reconvene on Thursday, February 12, 2026, and Thursday, February 19, 2026, at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom with Providence Strategies for a briefing on the Maryland General Assembly legislative session - the meeting is open to the public; to reconvene on Monday, February 23, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. for a joint meeting with the Talbot County Board of Education at the Board of Education Office, 12 Magnolia Street, Easton, and to reconvene on Tuesday, February 24, 2026, at 2:30 p.m. for a work session with the Department of Economic Development and Tourism on the Draft Strategic Plan, and at 3:30 p.m. in Open Session, then adjourn into Closed Session as listed on the statement for closing that meeting, and for the regularly scheduled meeting at 5:00 p.m. by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

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

The meeting ended at 5:55 p.m.

The transcript of the Tuesday, February 10, 2026, County Council meeting is available for review in the Office of the Talbot County Manager during regular office hours.

X. Summary of Closed Session Held on February 10, 2026:

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

Time of closed session: 4:30 p.m. End 4:40 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: Leshner, Haythe, Mielke, Stepp
 Members opposed: None
 Abstaining: None
 Absent: Callahan

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	Pete Leshner, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Jessica Morris, Patrick Thomas	No action



TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND
WEEKLY CASH STATEMENT
2/3/2026

OPERATING FUNDS - SHORE UNITED BANK

OPERATING FUNDS AT	1/27/2026	\$	41,279,373.31
Total ADP Monthly Payroll PPE 1/31/2026			(17,107.49)
Returned Paymentus Payments			(445.00)
Deposits			1,191,417.21
Checks			(79,386.00)
ACH Disbursements			(697,001.25)
OPERATING FUNDS AT	2/3/2026	\$	41,676,850.78

PETTY CASH FUNDS		\$	17,855.00
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INVESTMENT FUNDS

	<u>Yield</u>		
Maryland Local Government Investment Pool (MLGIP)	3.74%	\$	23,906,340.69
Bayvanguard Bank	4.00%	\$	11,485,844.07
Shore United Money Market Account	3.64%	\$	64,312,391.04

INVESTMENT FUNDS TOTAL		\$	99,722,430.80
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<u>TOTAL ALL CASH AND INVESTMENTS</u>		\$	141,399,281.58
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**TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND
WEEKLY CASH STATEMENT
2/10/2026**

OPERATING FUNDS - SHORE UNITED BANK

OPERATING FUNDS AT **2/3/2026** **\$ 41,676,850.78**

Returned Check #1352 (394.33)
 Returned Paymentus Payments (1,328.88)
 Interest on Accounts 12/2025 220,532.34

Deposits 2,143,268.26
 Checks (112,178.93)
 ACH Disbursements (935,050.88)
 EFT's (476,305.86)
 Wire Transfers (2,763,093.31)
 Voided Checks 510.00

OPERATING FUNDS AT **2/10/2026** **\$ 39,752,809.19**

PETTY CASH FUNDS **\$ 17,855.00**

INVESTMENT FUNDS

	<u>Yield</u>	
Maryland Local Government Investment Pool (MLGIP)	3.72%	\$ 23,906,340.69
Bayvanguard Bank	4.00%	\$ 11,485,844.07
Shore United Money Market Account	3.64%	\$ 64,312,391.04

INVESTMENT FUNDS TOTAL **\$ 99,722,430.80**

TOTAL ALL CASH AND INVESTMENTS **\$ 139,475,239.99**