



TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

County Council

MINUTES

January 28, 2025

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

- I. Agenda – Mr. Callahan requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Agenda of Tuesday, January 28, 2025.
- II. Minutes – Mr. Callahan requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Minutes of Tuesday, December 10, 2024.
- III. Disbursements – Mr. Callahan requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Disbursements of Tuesday, January 21, 2025, and Tuesday, January 28, 2025.
- IV. Proclamation: National Human Trafficking Awareness Month – January 2025 - The Clerk read a proclamation into the record which spoke of the methods by which both children and adults can be coerced into human trafficking for purposes of performing commercial sex acts, labor, or other services against their will. The proclamation also spoke of the prevalence of human trafficking, the efforts to prosecute perpetrators of this heinous crime and to rescue its victims, and the efforts to increase public awareness of human trafficking, including education on how to recognize those being trafficked. Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Mr. Leshner, the Council approved the proclamation by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

Katie Theeke, M. Ed., Vice President of Marketing & Communications, For All Seasons, Inc., and Lauren Weber, MBA, ACNP, Vice President of Strategy and Development, For All Seasons, Inc., briefed the Council on the role of their organization in providing healing assistance to the victims of human trafficking. She stated that For All Seasons, Inc. is the community behavioral health and rape crisis center which offers therapy, psychiatry, victim and crisis support, education, outreach services, including a human trafficking prevention program in their seven offices throughout the Mid-Shore area. Council discussion ensued with Ms. Theeke and Ms. Weber and Council members expressed their appreciation to the representatives for the work of For All Seasons, Inc. in the Talbot County community and throughout the Mid-Shore. For All Seasons, Inc. may be contacted at www.forallseasonsinc.org or (410) 822-1018.

Mr. Leshner presented the Proclamation to Ms. Theeke and Ms. Weber who accepted on behalf of For All Seasons, Inc.

V. Introduction of Numbered Resolution:

A RESOLUTION TO FORMALLY DECLINE TO ACCEPT THE OFFER OF DEDICATION FOR THE PAPER STREET PORTION OF RUDE AVENUE AS SHOWN ON A SUBDIVISION PLAT ENTITLED “MAP SHOWING ‘HARRISONIA’ PROPERTY OF S.T. AND GEORGE J. HARRISON, TILGHMAN ISLAND, TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND” DATED NOVEMBER 1927 AND RECORDED AMONG THE LAND RECORDS OF TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND AT LIBER C.B.L. 212, FOLIO 394, AND TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTION OF A QUITCLAIM DEED TO CONVEY A 6,000 SQUARE FOOT PORTION OF SUCH PAPER STREET ADJACENT TO 5419 RUDE AVENUE, TILGHMAN, MARYLAND, BEING ALL THAT PORTION OF RUDE AVENUE BETWEEN PARCEL 1 AND PARCEL 9 OF TALBOT COUNTY TAX MAP 44, TO THE OWNERS OF SUCH PROPERTY, JORGE A. RAMIREZ AND CHRISTINA E. RILKE, FOR NO MONETARY CONSIDERATION was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for introduction. Prior to introduction, County Attorney, Patrick Thomas, stated that Mr. Ramirez and Ms. Rilke are the owners of two parcels which are bisected by a portion of Rude Avenue which was platted in 1927 and partially established, but has never been accepted by Talbot County as a public road, is not in the County Road Inventory, and the County does not maintain the road. Brendan Mullaney, attorney for Mr. Ramirez and Ms. Rilke, outlined the reasons for his clients’ request. The resolution was introduced by Mr. Callahan, Ms. Haythe, Mr. Leshner, Ms. Mielke, and Mr. Stepp as Resolution No. 369. A public hearing was scheduled for Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. in the Bradley Meeting Room, South Wing, Talbot County Courthouse, 11 North Washington Street, Easton, Maryland 21601.

VI. Introduction of Legislation:

A BILL TO AUTHORIZE TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND (THE “COUNTY”) TO BORROW NOT MORE THAN TWENTY-SIX MILLION NINE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$26,900,000) IN ORDER TO FINANCE AND REFINANCE THE ACQUISITION, RENOVATION AND/OR CONSTRUCTION OF IMPROVEMENTS TO, AND EXPANSION OF, THE CHAPEL DISTRICT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AND TO EFFECT SUCH BORROWING BY THE ISSUANCE AND SALE OF ONE OR MORE SERIES OF ITS GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS PAYABLE FROM AD VALOREM TAXES TO BE LEVIED BY THE COUNTY; EXEMPTING THE BONDS FROM THE PROVISIONS OF SECTIONS 19-205 AND 19-206 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ARTICLE OF THE ANNOTATED CODE OF MARYLAND; AUTHORIZING THE CONSOLIDATION OF SEPARATE SERIES OF BONDS INTO ONE OR MORE BONDS; AUTHORIZING THE REFUNDING OF SUCH BONDS AND RELATING GENERALLY TO THE ISSUANCE AND SALE OF SUCH BONDS FOR SUCH PURPOSES was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for introduction. Prior to introduction, Martha Sparks, Talbot County Finance Director, stated that Bill No. 1574, approved by the Council as part of FY25 Capital Enabling Legislation in July 2024, authorized the Council to borrow up to \$26,900,000 for renovation and expansion of the Chapel District Elementary School. Ms. Sparks stated that the Council, through Bill No. 1538, which was included in the FY24 Capital Enabling Legislation, authorized the expenditure of up to \$900,000 to be used for engineering, design, and architectural services related to the Chapel District Elementary School project; those funds have now been spent as part of “prepaying” for the project until bond funds are received. Council discussion ensued with Ms. Sparks who stated that the County has traditionally sought bond funding for school

construction projects. The legislation was introduced by Mr. Callahan, Ms. Haythe, Mr. Leshner, Ms. Mielke, and Mr. Stepp as Bill No. 1583. A public hearing was scheduled for Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. in the Bradley Meeting Room, South Wing, Talbot County Courthouse, 11 North Washington Street, Easton, Maryland 21601.

- VII. Update on Leeds Creek (Tunis Mills) Bridge Project – Ray Clarke, County Engineer; Mike Mertaugh, Assistant County Engineer – Mr. Clarke provided a brief history of the project to replace the Leeds Creek (Tunis Mills) Bridge. He stated that the County held a public meeting on August 7, 2024, at which time County staff and the representatives of consultant for the project, Wallace Montgomery & Associates, utilized a PowerPoint presentation to provide information and displays of the proposed new bridge and addressed questions, comments and concerns from citizens in attendance. He stated that the State of Maryland normally inspects bridges on a biennial basis (every two years); however, the Leeds Creek (Tunis Mills) Bridge is now being inspected on an annual basis as it has been deemed to be structurally deficient. Mr. Clarke stated that since the public meeting, County staff has been working with York Bridge Concepts, the company contacted by citizens in the Tunis Mills area who are interested in replacing the bridge with an all-wooden structure, including the pilings. Mr. Clarke stated that County staff met with the engineer for York Bridge Concepts to specifically discuss the pilings for the proposed new bridge. He stated that Maryland State Highway Administration regulations prohibit utilizing spliced timber piles; in addition, no federal funding would be forthcoming if timber piles were used. Mr. Clarke stated that the information had been provided to the interested residents of Tunis Mills and surrounding vicinity. The current design includes using steel pilings filled with reinforced concrete with a concrete cap as the base of the bridge, with a laminated deck and a timber wearing surface. Utilizing the current design, the new bridge is estimated to cost \$6.5M, with 80% of funding coming from federal aid. Based on confirmation with the State Highway Administration, if the design is switched to an all-timber bridge where the timber piles would need to be spliced, the project would no longer be eligible for federal funding. The County would be burdened with the full price of the project, which would be an estimated \$5.9M. Mr. Clarke then showed a short video his office had received of the timber decking of the current bridge and outlined his concerns about using the same material for the replacement bridge and his recommendations for materials for same: steel pilings, concrete caps, a laminated deck, timber wearing surface, and timber rails. He stated that the concrete could be stamped and colored to appear as if it were wood. Council discussion ensued with Mr. Clarke and Mr. Mertaugh regarding specifics of the proposed design of the new bridge. Mr. Clarke and Mr. Mertaugh then reviewed the proposed costs for the new bridge, with and without 80% federal funding. Council members expressed their appreciation to Mr. Clarke, Mr. Mertaugh, and to County staff for their work on the proposed project and for their outreach to county citizens. Upon motion by Mr. Leshner, seconded by Ms. Haythe, the Council approved moving forward with the current design and the materials as outlined by Mr. Clarke by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye

Mr. Stepp – Aye

Mr. Leshner – Aye

Ms. Mielke – Aye

Ms. Haythe - Aye

VIII. County Manager's Report:

- A. Talbot County Board of Appeals – Requested Council approval for the reappointment of Jeff Adelman, Louis Dorsey, and Keith Prettyman (alternate) to three-year terms on

the Board of Appeals; said terms will expire on February 11, 2028. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Mr. Leshner, the Council approved the reappointments by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

- B. Talbot County Emergency Services Advisory Board – Requested Council approval for the reappointment of Debbie Timms (University of Maryland Shore Regional Health); Tim Cannon (Cordova District); Steve Mrozcek (Talbot County Fire and Rescue Association); and Steve Elliott (Talbot County Sheriff’s Office) to three-year terms on the Talbot County Emergency Service Advisory Board; said terms will expire on February 1, 2028. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Mr. Stepp, the Council approved the reappointments by voting 5 – 0 as follows

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

- C. Request from Department of Public Works – Requested Council approval of the recommendation of the County Engineer to submit applications for grant and loan funding from the Maryland Water Quality Infrastructure Finance Program and USDA Rural Development. Ray Clarke outlined the projects for which the County will be seeking funding and the amount to be requested from each entity: Region V (Tilghman) - Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade, Inflow and Infiltration Reduction, Pump Station Upgrades and Maintenance Building; Region II (St. Michaels) – Upgrades to Pump Stations 1 and 2 and ENR Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrades; Region II (Unionville/Tunis Mills/Copperville) – Pump Station Upgrades and Off-Site Maintenance Building; Region II (Martingham) – Vacuum System Improvements; and Region II (Claiborne) – Sewer Extension Project. Council discussion ensued with Mr. Clarke as each of the proposed projects was brought forward. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Mr. Leshner, the Council approved submittal of the grant and loan applications as outlined by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

- D. Bid No. 24-22, TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND – SANITARY DISTRICT SEPTIC TANK EFFLUENT PUMP (STEP) SYSTEM INSTALLATION AND CONNECTION – RESOLUTION NO. 235 (Re-bid of Bid No. 23-10) – Requested

Council approval of the County Engineer’s recommendation to award Bid No. 24-22 to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, Schummer, Inc. in the sum of \$5,900,291 for contracts A through G. County Engineer, Ray Clarke, stated that three (3) bids had been received; however, two (2) of the bids were deemed non-responsive despite the efforts of County staff to assist bidders with obtaining bonding assistance. Council discussion ensued with Mr. Clarke. Upon motion by Mr. Leshner, seconded by Mr. Stepp, the Council approved the award by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

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

X. Council Comments:

Mr. Stepp - No comments.

Mr. Leshner – Mr. Leshner stated that in follow-up to complaints the County received regarding the Town of Trappe and Paris Foods, the Town, with the approval of Paris Foods, has submitted an application to amend the County Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan. He stated that the application will be considered by the County Council for introduction on Tuesday, March 11, 2025, and that Lyndsey Ryan, attorney for the Town of Trappe, is planning to attend the Tuesday, February 11th County Council meeting to address the allegations outlined in the complaints and to answer questions from the Council regarding same. Mr. Leshner reminded everyone that despite the current chaos in Washington, DC, Talbot County Government continues to deliver the services our citizens count on, including maintaining roads, answering 911 calls, and dispatching emergency services. He stated that the libraries and parks and recreation facilities are open and clean, schools and Easton Airport are open, and building permits are being issued. Mr. Leshner concluded his comments by stating that, in his opinion, the County government continues to serve the public with quiet competence, and he expressed his appreciation to County staff for making that happen.

Ms. Mielke - No comments.

Ms. Haythe – Ms. Haythe stated that Saturday, February 1st is the first day of Black History Month. She stated that the Waters Edge Museum in Oxford will be hosting a celebration from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. on February 1st which she will be attending and encouraged those who had not yet visited the Museum to do so.

Mr. Callahan - Mr. Callahan offered prayers and condolences to the Gannon family on the recent death of Glen Gannon.

Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council voted to adjourn and to reconvene on Tuesday, February 11, 2025, in Open Session at 3:30 p.m. 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 adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

The transcript of the January 28, 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 January 28, 2025:

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

Time of closed session: 4:05 p.m. to 4:55 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, Leshner, Mielke
 Members opposed: None
 Abstaining: None
 Absent: Stepp (arrived at 4:15 p.m.)

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 personnel matter involving Health Officer	GP § 3-305(b)(1)(i)	Discussion involves specific individual	Chuck Callahan, Pete Leshner, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Jessica Morris, Patrick Thomas	No action
To discuss appointments to	GP § 3-305(b)(1)(i)	Public discussion would discourage	Chuck Callahan, Pete Leshner,	No action

various County boards and committees		individuals from volunteering to serve	Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Jessica Morris, Patrick Thomas	
To discuss negotiations for proposed transfer of property in Easton for a public purpose	GP § 3-305(b)(3)	To protect the County’s bargaining position regarding the potential transfer of real property for a public purpose	Chuck Callahan, Pete Leshner, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Jessica Morris, Patrick Thomas	No action
To discuss legal matter regarding lease at Easton Airport	GP § 3-305(b)(7)	Attorney-client privilege regarding legal advice	Chuck Callahan, Pete Leshner, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Jessica Morris, Patrick Thomas, Micah Risher	Council concurred with recommendation
To consult with County Attorney to obtain legal advice regarding allegations regarding Trappe sewer connection	GP § 3-305(b)(7)	Attorney-client privilege regarding legal advice	Chuck Callahan, Pete Leshner, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Jessica Morris, Patrick Thomas	No action

**TALBOT COUNTY,
MARYLAND
WEEKLY CASH
STATEMENT
1/21/2025**



OPERATING FUNDS - SHORE UNITED BANK

OPERATING FUNDS AT

1/14/2025

\$14,685,908.39

COMMUNITY CENTER SALES & USE TAX DUE 1/20/2025		(719.63)
GOLF COURSE SALES & USE TAX DUE 1/20/2025		(577.59)
ROAD SALES & USE TAX DUE 1/20/2025		(762.69)
AIRPORT PCI COMPLIANCE FEE 11/2024		(19.96)
REPURPOSING CENTER PCI COMPLIANCE FEE 11/2024		(19.96)
ROADS PCI COMPLIANCE FEE 11/2024		(19.96)
AIRPORT PCI COMPLIANCE FEE 12/2024		(19.96)
REPURPOSING CENTER PCI COMPLIANCE FEE 12/2024		(19.96)
ROADS PCI COMPLIANCE FEE 12/2024		(19.96)
RETURNED CHECK #1085		(17,974.09)
BANK CHARGES 10/2024		(6,552.49)
BANK CHARGES 11/2024		(4,877.54)
INTEREST ON ACCOUNTS 12/2024		136,208.26
Deposits		1,099,618.44
Checks		(141,465.14)
ACH Disbursements		(2,564,933.98)
EFT's		(63,924.06)
Wire Transfers		(4,547,703.00)
OPERATING FUNDS AT	1/21/2025	<u>\$8,572,125.12</u>
PETTY CASH FUNDS		\$18,105.00
INVESTMENT FUNDS		
	<u>Yield</u>	
Maryland Local Government Investment Pool (MLGIP)	4.39%	\$22,822,330.31
Bayvanguard Bank	4.15%	\$11,029,291.18

Shore United Money Market Account	4.33%	\$81,346,945.25
INVESTMENT FUNDS TOTAL		<u>\$115,216,671.74</u>
<u>TOTAL ALL CASH AND INVESTMENTS</u>		<u>\$123,788,796.86</u>



**TALBOT COUNTY,
MARYLAND
WEEKLY CASH
STATEMENT
1/28/2025**

OPERATING FUNDS - SHORE UNITED BANK

OPERATING FUNDS AT	1/21/2025	\$8,572,125.12
TOTAL ADP PAYROLL PPE 1/17/2025		(997,381.25)
TOTAL ADP MONTHLY PAYROLL PPE 1/31/2025		(18,770.41)
FY2025 PROPERTY TAX/COUNTY OWNED PROPERTY		(10,017.16)
AIRPORT PCI COMPLIANCE FEE 10/2024		(19.95)
REPURPOSING CENTER PCI COMPLIANCE FEE 10/2024		(19.95)
ROADS PCI COMPLIANCE FEE 10/2024		(19.95)
RETURNED CHECKS #00812968767, #1284		(2,081.54)
ENTERPRISE LEASE PAYMENT 9/2024		31,018.87
Deposits		779,713.26
Checks		(462,242.71)
ACH Disbursements		(733,685.21)
Voided Checks		10,081.29

OPERATING FUNDS AT	1/21/2025	<u>\$7,168,700.41</u>
PETTY CASH FUNDS		\$18,105.00
<u>INVESTMENT FUNDS</u>		
	<u>Yield</u>	
Maryland Local Government Investment Pool (MLGIP)	4.47%	\$22,911,850.49
Bayvanguard Bank Shore United Money Market Account	4.15%	\$11,029,291.18
	4.33%	\$81,346,945.25
INVESTMENT FUNDS TOTAL		<u>\$115,306,191.92</u>
<u>TOTAL ALL CASH AND INVESTMENTS</u>		<u><u>\$122,474,892.33</u></u>