



TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

County Council

MINUTES

November 25, 2025

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

- I. Agenda – Mr. Leshner requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Agenda of Tuesday, November 25, 2025.
- II. Minutes – Mr. Leshner requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Minutes of Tuesday, October 28, 2025, and Tuesday, November 4, 2025.
- III. Disbursements – Mr. Leshner requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Disbursements of Tuesday, November 11, 2025, Tuesday, November 18, 2025, and Tuesday, November 25, 2025.
- IV. Council Commendation to Hannah Ward, Maryland 9-1-1 Board Communication Specialist of the Year – Holley Guschke, 9-1-1 Division Chief, Department of Emergency Services, read the statement submitted to the Maryland 9-1-1 Board for the nomination of Hannah Ward, who was selected by her peers, for consideration as Talbot County's Communication Specialist of the Year. The statement spoke of Ms. Ward's work ethic, her ability to handle high pressure situations with a positive attitude and calm demeanor, her tireless dedication to her job, the professionalism and compassion by which she performs her job, her willingness to assist her co-workers, and many other positive attributes. Council members expressed their congratulations to Ms. Ward. The Clerk then read a Council commendation into the record which spoke of Ms. Ward's selection as Talbot County's Maryland 9-1-1 Board Communication Specialist of the Year. Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved the commendation by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

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

Ms. Haythe presented the Council Commendation to Ms. Ward. Holley Guschke, Brian LeCates, Director, Department of Emergency Services, and County Manager, Clay Stamp were also in attendance.
- V. Proclamation: Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Month – November 2025 – The Clerk read a proclamation into the record which spoke of the increasing number of individuals and families in the Talbot County community who are experiencing homelessness, the many reasons why homelessness may occur, and the various organizations in Talbot County whose mission is to provide shelter and other supportive services to those who are experiencing homelessness and/or

food insecurity. Upon motion by Ms. Mielke, seconded by Mr. Stepp, the Council approved the proclamation by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

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

Julie Lowe, Executive Director, Talbot Interfaith Shelter, expressed the appreciation for the proclamation on behalf of Talbot Interfaith Shelter and partner organizations in the county including, the Neighborhood Service Center, St. Vincent de Paul, Mid Shore Roundtable on Homelessness at Mid Shore Behavioral Health, Talbot County Public Schools McKinney-Vento Homelessness Assistance Program and Mid Shore Council on Family Violence. Council discussion ensued with Ms. Lowe. Council members expressed their appreciation to Ms. Lowe and the other organizations for the work they do.

Mr. Stepp presented the Proclamation to Ms. Lowe who accepted on behalf of the agencies in Talbot County which provide housing and services to homeless individuals and families and to those who are experiencing food insecurity.

- VI. Proclamation: 40th Anniversary of Festival of Trees – The Clerk read a proclamation into the record in recognition of the 40th anniversary of the Festival of Trees which supports the Talbot Hospice Foundation and its mission to provide professional, team-oriented care to patients faced with a life-limiting illness in an atmosphere of comfort and dignity. The proclamation stated that since its inception 40 years ago, the Festival of Trees and its various events have raised more than \$3.7 million for the Talbot Hospice Foundation. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Mr. Stepp, the Council approved the proclamation by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

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

Leslie Ware and Midge Menzies, co-founders of the Festival of Trees, provided a brief history of the founding of the event.

Ms. Mielke presented the Proclamation to Ms. Ware, Ms. Menzies, Karla Wieland-Cherry, Dale Jafari, Brenda Forbes Butler and Alisha Saulsbury who accepted on behalf of the Festival of Trees.

- VII. Introduction of Administrative Resolution:

ADMINISTRATIVE RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE USE OF THE GENERAL FUND RESERVE IF REQUIRED FOR THE PAYMENT OF DEBT SERVICE FOR THE COUNTY'S GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS (MWIFA PROJECT) was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for introduction. Prior to introduction, Martha Sparks, Finance Director, stated that the County has been working with the Maryland Department of the Environment to secure a funding package (grants, loans, and loan forgiveness) to assist with the financing of improvements for the Talbot County Sanitary District's Region II (St. Michaels) sewer system extension project as outlined in Resolution No. 235. She stated that Bill No. 1619, approved by the Council in August 2025, and an Administrative Resolution approved by the Council on October 28, 2025, authorized the issuance of general obligation bonds for the project. MDE has

requested additional assurances through the administrative resolution now before the Council which would preapprove the use of General Fund reserve funding, if needed, to repay the debt service. She stated that the County's Reserve Policy requires that the County Manager certify the availability of use of the reserves for the debt service and Council's approval is required for use of the funding. The administrative resolution was introduced by Ms. Haythe, Mr. Leshner, Ms. Mielke, and Mr. Stepp. The Council approved the administrative resolution by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

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

VIII. County Manager's Report:

- A. Economic Development Commission – Requested Council approval for the appointment of Michael Meier, M.D., MPH to the Economic Development Commission as the representative of the Town of St. Michaels; said term will complete the unexpired term of Rob Straebel which will expire on June 30, 2026. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved the appointment by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

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

- B. Mid-Shore Behavioral Health Board of Directors – Requested Council approval for the appointment of Amie Hoffman and the reappointment of Shanez Jenkins to four-year terms on the Mid-Shore Behavioral Health Board of Directors as Talbot County representatives; said terms will expire on October 31, 2029. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved the appointment and the reappointment by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

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

- C. Planning and Zoning Commission – Requested Council approval for the reappointment of Phillip "Chip" Councill, Jr. to a five-year term on the Talbot County Planning and Zoning Commission; said term will expire on December 2, 2030. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Mr. Stepp, the Council approved the reappointment by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

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

IX. Public Hearings:

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, brought forward for public hearing, and members of the public were provided an opportunity to comment on the legislation. Written comments on Bill No. 1621 will be accepted until Noon on Friday, December 5, 2025. Bill No. 1621 is eligible for vote on Tuesday, December 9, 2025.

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 public hearing. Prior to the public hearing, County Attorney, Patrick Thomas, stated that the legislation represents the initial proposal Council had forwarded to the Planning Commission, with the exception of the following three (3) changes as recommended by the Planning Commission: the proposed increase in the minimum night stay for certain zoning districts from three (3) nights to seven (7) nights has been removed; the proposed requirement for a landline telephone has been removed; and the proposed requirement to maintain a log of rentals has been removed. Members of the public were then afforded an opportunity to comment on the legislation. Written comments on Bill No. 1622 will be accepted until Noon on Friday, December 5, 2025. Bill No. 1622 is eligible for vote on Tuesday, December 9, 2025.

X. County Manager's Report Continued:

- D. Request for Letter of Support – Requested Council approval of a request from Eastern Shore Land Conservancy for a letter in support of their application to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Grants Gateway Funding for the San Domingo Creek Park environmental enhancement project; no County funding is required. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Mr. Stepp, the Council approved the request by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

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

- E. Request from County Manager – Requested Council approval to apply for and accept grant funding from the Maryland Energy Administration Local Government Energy Modernization Program in the sum of \$1,825,101 for improvements to County facilities. If approved, the funding will benefit existing capital improvement projects at the Department of Corrections and the Courthouse. Mr. Stamp stated that the Finance Office has confirmed that the 10% required match of \$182,510.10 is available in the FY26 Budget. 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

- F. Request from Department of Parks and Recreation – Requested Council approval of the request of the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation to utilize FY26 Capital Funding to procure engineering services for replacement of the dehumidifier systems for the ice rink and curling rink at the Talbot County Community Center by piggybacking on a Wicomico County contract with Electrical Automation Services (EASI) in the sum of \$45,100. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Mr. Stepp, the Council approved the request by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

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

- G. Request from County Manager – Requested Council approval to have the County enter into a Contract for Sale and Purchase of approximately 1,333± sq. ft. of Real Property located at 9002 Goldsborough Neck Road, Easton, in the sum of \$3,306.80. Ray Clarke, County Engineer, briefed the Council on the reason for the request which relates to the Goldsborough Neck Road improvement project. Mr. Stamp stated that purchase of the property will enhance the intersection of Villa Road at Goldsborough Neck Road by allowing the County to implement visibility improvements at that intersection as quickly as possible in order that the project can be completed by the end of the year. Council discussion ensued with Mr. Clarke and Mr. Stamp. Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved the request by voting 3 – 1 as follows:

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

- H. Bid No. 25-13, REQUEST FOR FARMLAND RENTAL PROPOSALS – EASTON AIRPORT, EASTON - TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND – Micah Risher, Manager, Easton Airport, requested Council approval to award Bid No. 25-13 to the high bidder, Edward Roe, in the sum of \$8,600 per year for the next three (3) crop seasons. Upon motion by Ms. Mielke, 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

- I. County Offices Closed – Mr. Stamp stated that County offices will be closed on Thursday, November 27, 2025, for Thanksgiving Day and Friday, November 28, 2025, in recognition of American Indian Heritage Day.

XI. Public Comments: There were no public comments.

XII. Council Comments:

Ms. Haythe - Ms. Haythe wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Ms. Mielke - Ms. Mielke wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Mr. Stepp - Mr. Stepp wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Ms. Leshner - Mr. Leshner wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Mr. Stepp, the Council voted to reconvene on Tuesday, December 9, 2025, 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 4 – 0 as follows:

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

The meeting ended at 6:44 p.m.

The transcript of the Tuesday, November 25, 2025, County Council meeting is available for review in the Office of the Talbot County Manager during regular office hours.

XIII. Summary of Closed Session Held on November 25, 2025:

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


Time of closed session: 4:15 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: 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, Clay Stamp, Jessica Morris, Patrick Thomas	No action
For legal briefing on John Doe v Board of Education, Health Department and State of Maryland et al	GP § 3-305(b)(7)(8)	Attorney-client privilege regarding legal advice	Pete Leshner, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Clay Stamp, Jessica Morris, Patrick Thomas	No action
To discuss matters related to Town of Oxford's Police Department and Sheriff's Office providing coverage	GP § 3-305(b)(7)(10)	Attorney-client privilege regarding legal advice	Pete Leshner, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Clay Stamp, Jessica Morris, Patrick Thomas	No action

		TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND WEEKLY CASH STATEMENT 11/11/2025	
OPERATING FUNDS - SHORE UNITED BANK			
OPERATING FUNDS AT	11/4/2025		\$ 48,706,062.42
Returned Checks #1054, #139			(2,337.55)
Returned Paymentus Payments			(5,804.15)
FY25 Stale Dated Checks			9,514.67
Deposits			3,110,388.62
Checks			(206,768.72)
ACH Disbursements			(1,015,329.89)
OPERATING FUNDS AT	11/11/2025		\$ 50,595,725.40
PETTY CASH FUNDS			\$ 18,105.00
INVESTMENT FUNDS			
		<u>Yield</u>	
Maryland Local Government Investment Pool (MLGIP)		4.05%	\$ 23,666,968.37
Bayvanguard Bank		4.15%	\$ 11,370,181.16
Shore United Money Market Account		4.33%	\$ 63,903,075.35
INVESTMENT FUNDS TOTAL			\$ 98,958,329.88
<u>TOTAL ALL CASH AND INVESTMENTS</u>			<u>\$ 149,554,055.28</u>

		TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND WEEKLY CASH STATEMENT 11/18/2025	
OPERATING FUNDS - SHORE UNITED BANK			
OPERATING FUNDS AT		11/11/2025	\$ 50,595,725.40
Returned Paymentus Payments			(13,878.54)
Interest on Accounts 10/2025			243,877.65
Deposits			944,984.71
Checks			(93,016.54)
ACH Disbursements			(988,838.87)
EFT's			(220,522.24)
Wire Transfers			(12,111,295.04)
Voided Check			3,197.60
OPERATING FUNDS AT		11/18/2025	\$ 38,360,234.13
PETTY CASH FUNDS			\$ 18,105.00
INVESTMENT FUNDS			
		<u>Yield</u>	
Maryland Local Government Investment Pool (MLGIP)		4.02%	\$ 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>\$ 137,440,801.71</u>

		TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND WEEKLY CASH STATEMENT 11/25/2025	
OPERATING FUNDS - SHORE UNITED BANK			
OPERATING FUNDS AT		11/18/2025	\$ 38,360,234.13
Total ADP Payroll PPE 11/07/2025			(1,035,732.42)
Community Center Sales & Use Tax Due 11/20/2025			(144.20)
Golf Course Sales & Use Tax Due 11/20/2025			(2,736.37)
Roads Sales & Use Tax Due 11/20/2025			(625.12)
Returned Paymentus Payments			(6,811.08)
Returned Checks #193, #0000007097			(2,261.40)
Evolv Annual PCI Compliance Fee/Roads			(129.00)
Evolv Annual PCI Compliance Fee/Repurposing Center			(129.00)
Evolv Annual PCI Compliance Fee/Airport			(129.00)
Deposits			2,648,720.17
Checks			(173,514.62)
ACH Disbursements			(2,111,191.62)
Voided Check			3,746.56
OPERATING FUNDS AT		11/25/2025	\$ 37,679,297.03
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
<u>TOTAL ALL CASH AND INVESTMENTS</u>			\$ 136,759,864.61