



TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

County Council

MINUTES

November 26, 2024

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

- I. Agenda – The agenda of Tuesday, November 26, 2024, was brought forward for approval. Ms. Haythe made a motion to amend the agenda to remove *Request from County Manager to Utilize Contingency Funds to Reimburse the State’s Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP)* from the County Manager’s Report; Ms. Mielke 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 (via telephone)
 - Ms. Mielke – Aye
 - Ms. Haythe – Aye
- II. Minutes – Mr. Callahan requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Minutes of Tuesday, October 23, 2024, and Friday, October 25, 2024.
- III. Disbursements – Mr. Callahan requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Disbursements of Tuesday, November 19, 2024, and Tuesday, November 26, 2024.
- IV. Presentation of Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Award for FY2023 to Talbot County Finance Office – Martha Sparks, Finance Director; Kaitlin Foster-Clark, Assistant Finance Director – Ms. Sparks stated that Talbot County had again been awarded the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for its FY23 Annual Comprehensive Finance Report. She stated that although not all members of the Finance Office are involved in preparing the Report, the award reflects the excellence of the work of the entire Finance Office staff; she then introduced several staff members in attendance. The GFOA award was established in 1945 to encourage and assist state and local governments to go beyond the minimal requirements in generally accepted accounting principles in preparation of their annual comprehensive financial reports that evidence the spirit of transparency and full disclosure, and to recognize the government entities that achieve that goal. This is the 23rd consecutive year that Talbot County has received the GFOA Award for Excellence in Financial Reporting. Ms. Sparks expressed her appreciation to the Finance Office staff, and Council members commended Ms. Sparks and her staff for their work on a daily basis and for having received the award.
- V. Presentation by Veteran & Military Support Alliance (VAMSA) – Eric Johnson, Executive Director, VAMSA; Lei Ellingson, Deputy Director, VAMSA; Bruce Bereano, Office of Bruce Bereano, Annapolis, Maryland – Mr. Bereano stated that the purpose of VAMSA is to support and assist veterans, active military personnel, and their families on the Eastern Shore with challenges they may face. Ms. Ellingson stated that her background is in mental health, caregiving and special education. Mr. Johnson briefed the Council on his background, including being a veteran himself,

and explained why suicide prevention and the veteran and military communities are so important to him. He provided statistical information on the number of veterans in Talbot County (8.46 %), approximately 2,559 individuals, and when utilizing a 2.5 multiplier for their families, approximately 6,400 individuals, making one-fifth of Talbot County's population, part of a veteran family. He stated that although the total number of veterans in the United States is declining, the number of veterans receiving a total or permanent disability rating is skyrocketing and the Veterans Administration (VA) is struggling to meet the demand for service even though most veterans do not receive medical and behavioral healthcare through the VA. Mr. Johnson then outlined the formation of VAMSA, beginning in January 2022 when several veterans organizations in Queen Anne's County and Commissioner Jim Moran, a Marine Corps veteran, conducted a needs survey and it was determined that a resource center for veterans and their families was needed; in September 2022, VAMSA became a component of Mid-Shore Community Foundation, utilizing their nonprofit status while the organization worked to obtain its own nonprofit status which it obtained in August 2023. He stated that VAMSA provides mental and behavioral health programs for veterans struggling with PTSD, provides suicide prevention programs, referrals, peer support, claims assistance, resources for legal, financial and adaptive housing matters, and addiction counseling resources. VAMSA is located in Stevensville, Maryland and is available for both in-person or virtual assistance at 844-MIL-VETS (844-645-8387) or www.vamsa.us. Mr. Johnson, Ms. Ellingston and Mr. Bereano concluded their presentation by requesting Council consideration to provide financial support to the VAMSA organization.

- VI. Presentation of Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) Program Recertification Report – Elisa Deflaux, Planner II, Talbot County Department of Planning & Zoning – Ms. Deflaux requested Council's approval to forward a request to the State of Maryland for recertification of Talbot County's MALPF program as is required every five (5) years. By providing the State with more detailed information regarding the utilization of MALPF funding and the status of land preservation in Talbot County, the County is permitted to retain an additional portion of the Transfer Taxes collected on the sale of property in Talbot County for the purpose of land preservation; the Recertification Report was reviewed by the Maryland Department of Planning and unanimously approved by the Talbot County Planning Commission. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved the Recertification Report as presented by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

- VII. Discussion of 2024 Report of the Review – Ray Clarke, County Engineer – Mr. Clarke outlined next steps for the *Draft 2024 Report of the Review*, a copy of which had been provided to Council for their review and comment. He stated that next steps include, upon Council's approval, posting the document on the website to provide an opportunity for review by members of the public and placing copies of the Report in the Talbot County Free Library; setting up an email address to which any comments can be sent; and forwarding the document to the Maryland Department of the Environment, Talbot County Planning Commission, and the Talbot County Public Works Advisory Board for their review. Mr. Clarke stated that the focus of the *2024 Report of the Review* is to update the maps identified in the 2002 Report of the Review to include those parcels whose status has since been amended and have been incorporated into the County's Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan so that all the water and sewer service areas are shown in the document. Council

discussion ensued with Mr. Clarke. At Council's request, staff will again review the document while awaiting Council comments.

VIII. Election of Council Officers – Mr. Callahan was elected president of the Council for 2024-2025; Mr. Leshner was elected vice president for 2024-2025.

IX. County Manager's Report:

A. Request from County Manager – Requested Council approval to have the County enter into a Contract for Sale and Purchase of 16.6 ± Acres of Property on Goldsborough Neck Road adjacent to Easton Airport on Goldsborough Neck Road in the sum of \$250,000; the property appraised at \$585,000. Micah Risher, Manager, Easton Airport, stated that purchase of the property would provide the Airport an opportunity to possibly locate non-aeronautical businesses on the property which is also adjacent to the Mistletoe Hall Business Park. Mr. Stamp stated that purchase of the property will be made utilizing Easton Airport enterprise funds; no County funds are required. Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Ms. Haythe, the Council approved entering into the Contract by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

B. Request for Letter of Support from Eastern Shore Land Conservancy – Requested Council approval to forward a letter in support of Eastern Shore Land Conservancy's FY26 Rural Legacy applications prioritized as follows: Eastern Shore Heartland Rural Legacy Area and the Tuckahoe Rural Legacy Area; no County funds are required. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved the letter of support by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

C. Bid No. 24-11, TALBOT COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM STRATEGIC PLAN – Requested Council approval of the recommendation of the Economic Development Commission Steering Committee to award Bid No. 24-11 to Camoin Associates, Inc. in the sum of \$104,712; five bids were received. Ryan Snow, consultant to the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, outlined the process by which the recommendation was derived by the Steering Committee and Interview Committee as to which company would provide the best strategic plan for the Talbot County Department of Economic Development and Tourism. He stated that grant funding received from the Governor's Rural Economic Development Fund will cover the cost of the strategic plan. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Mr. Stepp, the Council approved the award by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

- D. Bid No. 22-11, REGION II (ST. MICHAELS) SEWER SYSTEM EXTENSION – (RESOLUTION NO. 235) – PHASE 1 – REPLACEMENT OF ROYAL OAK PUMP STATION NO. 1 – Change Order No. 4 – Requested Council approval of the County Engineer’s recommendation to award Change Order No. 4 for Bid No. 22-11 to contractor, Retallack & Sons, Inc., in the sum of \$217,643.42. County Engineer, Ray Clarke, stated that the Change Order is for additional work required to replace and upgrade 10 existing air relief valves, vault piping and associated mechanical parts on the force main from Unionville to the Royal Oak pump station and the force main from the Royal Oak pump station to St. Michaels in order to help prevent future sewer overflows; cost of the improvements will be paid for by the users. Council discussion ensued with Mr. Clarke. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved the Change Order No. 4 as presented by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

- E. Request for Letter of Support from Martingham Property Owners Association – Requested Council approval for a letter in support of an application by the Martingham Property Owners Association for grant funding from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. If approved, the funding would be utilized by the Property Owners Association for a flood mitigation and stormwater management planning project; no County funds are required. Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Ms. Haythe, the Council approved the letter of support by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

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

XI. Council Comments:

Mr. Stepp - Mr. Stepp stated that he wished everyone a happy and safe Thanksgiving and, as stated in today’s prayer, safe travels and he hopes everyone enjoys their time with family and friends. Following Ms. Haythe’s comments, Mr. Stepp congratulated Mr. Callahan and Mr. Leshner on being re-elected as president and vice president, respectively, of the Council.

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

Ms. Haythe - Ms. Haythe wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and stated that she hopes staff has some much-needed time off with their family and enjoys “turkey day”.

Mr. Leshner – Mr. Leshner reminded everyone that the Thanksgiving holiday is a holiday that is about something – a moment for gratitude, and, in his opinion, we all have reason for gratitude and that we should take a moment to express gratitude to whomever and whatever we find ourselves in fortunate circumstances about.

Mr. Callahan - Mr. Callahan stated that he hopes everyone has a great Thanksgiving. He expressed his appreciation to the voters of Talbot County for approving Question A on the November ballot which gives the County Council the authority to increase revenues above the revenue cap by one cent (1¢) per \$100 of assessed value, if needed, for an additional seven (7) fiscal years from July 1, 2026, through June 30 2033, in order to help fund public safety (fire departments, Sheriff’s Office, Emergency Medical Services). He stated that the passage of Question A is, in his opinion, very important to the community and has allowed the County to build the new EMS North Station on Cordova Road, among other initiatives.

Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council voted to adjourn and to reconvene on Tuesday, December 3, 2024 at 3:30 p.m. in the Bradley Meeting Room for a work session to discuss a proposal for an oyster nutrient trade credit pilot program, following which the Council will convene in Closed Session; and to reconvene on Tuesday, December 10, 2024, at 2:30 p.m. for a work session on Cannabis Community Reinvestment and Repair Funds (CRRF), then adjourn into Closed Session as listed on the statement for closing that meeting, then for the regularly scheduled meeting at 5:00 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 6:11 p.m.

The transcript of the November 26, 2024, County Council meeting is available for review in the Office of the Talbot County Manager during regular office hours.

XII. Summary of Closed Session Held on November 26, 2024:

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

Time of closed session: 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 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, 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 Stamp, Jessica Morris, Patrick Thomas	No action
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, Clay Stamp, Jessica Morris, Patrick Thomas	No action
To discuss proposed acquisition of property in Cordova 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 Leshner, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Clay Stamp, Jessica Morris, Patrick Thomas	No action
To discuss proposed acquisition of property 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 Leshner, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Clay Stamp, Jessica Morris, Patrick Thomas	No action



**TALBOT COUNTY,
MARYLAND
WEEKLY CASH
STATEMENT
11/19/2024**

OPERATING FUNDS - SHORE UNITED BANK

OPERATING FUNDS AT	11/12/2024	\$18,733,237.83
Total ADP Payroll PPE 11/8/2024		(954,382.22)
Returned Paymentus Payments		(3,641.12)
Community Center Chargebacks		(180.00)
Interest on Accounts 10/2024		154,219.87
Deposits		775,712.43
Checks		(144,971.81)
ACH Disbursements		(2,629,343.36)
EFT's		(270,450.76)
Wire Transfers		(5,392,419.97)
 OPERATING FUNDS AT	 11/19/2024	 <u>\$10,267,780.89</u>

PETTY CASH FUNDS \$18,105.00

INVESTMENT FUNDS

	<u>Yield</u>	
Maryland Local Government Investment Pool (MLGIP)	4.81%	\$22,733,359.10
Bayvanguard Bank Shore United Money	4.32%	\$10,954,529.57
Market Account	4.83%	\$80,725,055.02

**INVESTMENT FUNDS
TOTAL****\$114,431,048.69****TOTAL ALL CASH AND INVESTMENTS****\$124,698,829.58**

**TALBOT COUNTY,
MARYLAND
WEEKLY CASH
STATEMENT
11/26/2024**

OPERATING FUNDS - SHORE UNITED BANK

OPERATING FUNDS AT	11/19/2024	\$10,267,780.89
Total ADP Monthly Payroll PPE 11/15/2024		(111,699.58)
Total ADP Payroll PPE 11/14/2024 (Holiday Bonus)		(91,498.99)
Total ADP Payroll PPE 11/08/2024 (Supplemental Run)		(126.56)
Returned Paymentus Payment		(8,925.10)
Deposits		2,758,882.69
Checks		(106,293.89)
ACH Disbursements		(1,124,593.83)
EFT's		(221,359.88)
Wire Transfers		
OPERATING FUNDS AT	11/26/2024	<u>\$11,362,165.75</u>
PETTY CASH FUNDS		\$18,105.00

INVESTMENT FUNDS

	<u>Yield</u>	
Maryland Local Government Investment Pool (MLGIP)	4.72%	\$22,733,359.10
Bayvanguard Bank Shore United Money	4.32%	\$10,954,529.57
Market Account	4.83%	\$80,725,055.02
INVESTMENT FUNDS		
TOTAL		<u>\$114,431,048.69</u>
<u>TOTAL ALL CASH AND INVESTMENTS</u>		<u>\$125,793,214.44</u>