



# TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

County Council

## MINUTES *SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE DAY*

November 4, 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 – Mr. Callahan requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Agenda of Tuesday, November 4, 2025.
- II. Minutes – Mr. Callahan requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Minutes of Tuesday, October 14, 2025.
- III. Disbursements – Mr. Callahan requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Disbursements of Tuesday, November 4, 2025.
- IV. Proclamation: Operation Green Light for Veterans – The Clerk read a proclamation into the record which encourages businesses and residents to display a green light at their home or business from November 4, 2025, through November 11, 2025, as a way to recognize, honor, and bring visibility to the service and immeasurable sacrifices of veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces. The proclamation spoke of the various local, State, and national organizations which assist and support veterans as they return to civilian life, a high percentage of whom are at risk for developing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and some of whom may be at risk for suicide. Organizations, including the Cambridge VA Outpatient Clinic, Health Care for Homeless Veterans, Maryland's Commitment to Veterans, Perry Point VA Medical Center, Support Services for Veteran Families and the Veteran and Military Support Alliance (VAMSA), provide resources related to healthcare, housing assistance, crisis intervention, peer support, substance use services and mental health support for veterans. The proclamation also spoke of the role of veterans in various organizations in their communities throughout the nation which help fellow veterans receive access to over \$52 billion in federal health, disability, and compensation benefits each year. Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Ms. Mielke, 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

Rachel Stoyanov, HUB Liaison, Mid-Shore Behavioral Health, read the following statement into the record:

*The Mid-Shore region is home to a strong and diverse veteran community. Approximately 6.8 percent of Maryland's adult civilian population are veterans, many of whom reside in Rural areas like the Mid-Shore, where access to healthcare, mental health support,*

*employment, and social support can be very limited. About 25 percent of Maryland veterans live with a disability, compared to just 13.2 percent of non-veterans, which further underscores the importance of community awareness and your local support. Operation Green Light for Veterans is an important initiative that encourages residents, businesses, and public buildings to display green lights as a visible show of appreciation and solidarity. Beyond honoring their service, this helps raise awareness of the challenges veterans face and connects them to vital local resources, ensuring that they feel recognized and supported across all ages and stages of their lives. The Mid Shore Behavioral Health database is regularly updated and a good place to find resources for veterans in this community. Please reach out to Mid Shore Behavioral Health with any additional questions or if we can provide any further support to your veteran.*

Council members expressed their appreciation for the sacrifices of all veterans, and their families. Ms. Mielke presented the Proclamation to Ms. Stoyanov and the veterans in attendance.

- V. Update by Maryland Environment Service (MES) – Tim Ford, Managing Director, Environmental Operations, Maryland Environmental Service; Gary Lasako, P.G., Senior Project Manager, Maryland Environmental Service – Mr. Ford and Mr. Lasako utilized a PowerPoint presentation to brief the Council on matters related to the Mid-Shore I Transfer Station in Easton and the Mid-Shore II Landfill in Ridgely, Caroline County. Mr. Ford stated that tipping fees for FY26 at Mid-shore II are \$71.50/ton for trash and includes a recycling surcharge of \$5.00/ton; the fees is \$46.50/ton for brush and includes a recycling surcharge of \$2.50/ton; and a surcharge of \$5.00/ton for sewage sludge beginning January 1, 2026. He stated that the Exposed Geomembrane Cap (EGC) for Mid-Shore I remains in good condition; it was installed in 2016 and is now 10 years into its 20-year warranty; MES has begun reserving funding for its future replacement. Mr. Ford stated that the collection of methane (landfill gas) is no longer voluntary but is required; therefore, carbon credits are no longer available. He stated that leachate, which is monitored quarterly, is managed by MES at both Mid-Shore I and Mid-Shore II. Mr. Lasako provided statistical information on tonnages of trash, brush and scale house transactions at Mid-Shore I for the last 12 months, stating that the tonnage of trash received to date is slightly above the projected amount for the year. He also provided statistical information on the number of visits to the HODO (Homeowner Drop-off) over the past 12 months (approximately 24,000) and the number of punch cards sold. Mr. Ford stated that the 128-foot lift for Cell No. 3 at Mid-Shore II began in September and construction has begun on a new cell (Cell No. 5 at Mid-Shore II), one of two remaining cells at Mid-Shore II which will take the landfill through 2042 as approved in 2024 under agreements between the participating counties and Caroline County, the host of Mid-Shore II. Mr. Ford outlined costs included in the extension of the life of Mid-Shore II financed through 2025 Revenue Bonds, the debt service for same, and stated that construction began on Cell No. 5 and the leachate tank in August 2025; the estimated completion date of Cell No. 5 is February 2026, with the anticipated completion date of the leachate tank in June 2026. Mr. Lasako provided an update on the Mid-Shore Regional Recycling Program, stating that, at the County's request following concerns by residents, the recycling bins located at Perry Cabin Park in St. Michaels were removed in July 2025 and have been redistributed to various locations throughout the county which were closer to Easton, including Auto Zone and the Amish Market. Mr. Lasako stated that MES also worked with the owners of St. Michaels Market (formerly Graul's) for the placement of additional bins at that location to help accommodate the items for recycling which had previously been placed at the Perry Cabin Park location. He stated that MES is working with County Engineer, Ray Clarke, and the owners of St. Michaels Market on a plan for the relocation of the recycling area at St. Michaels Market to another location on the site in order to accommodate additional bins. Mr. Lasako stated that the Mid-Shore Recycling Program generated a net income

of \$208,505 in FY25, producing a net operating gain for Talbot County of \$48,224, which, along with the County's existing balance of \$26,053, can be utilized by the County for its recycling projects. Mr. Lasako concluded his presentation by stating that MES will be providing recycling services for the 2025 Waterfowl Festival. Council discussion ensued with Mr. Ford and Mr. Lasako as various items were brought forward. Maryland Environmental Service will continue to update the Council on a regular or as-needed basis.

- VI. Presentation of FY26 Senior Care Plan – Carrie Ottey, RN,BSN, Community Health Nurse Program Supervisor – Senior Services/AERS, Talbot County Health Department; Dr. Fahmi Fahmi, Talbot County Health Officer – Ms. Ottey utilized a PowerPoint presentation to provide an overview of the Senior Care Program, a statewide grant program funded through the Maryland Department of Aging which provides services for individuals aged 65 and over throughout the state who are at risk of placement in a nursing home in order to assist them with remaining in their homes for as long as possible. The Senior Care Program provides four (4) core services including: screening of eligibility for services; comprehensive assessment of individual needs through a visit to the individual's home; engagement of a case manager to facilitate and coordinate the services needed; and utilization of the pool of gap-filling funds for the purchase of items and services needed for those individuals who meet the Senior Care Program's eligibility requirements. Ms. Ottey stated that the Senior Care Program, which began as a pilot program in 1982 and administered by the State, is a partnership between the Health Department, Upper Shore Aging, Social Services and Talbot County Government; Talbot County is one of only two counties in Maryland that administers the Senior Care Program at their respective health departments through the Adult Evaluation and Review Services (AERS) Program, whereby after assessment, a customized plan is developed to address each client's particular needs following input from the client and his or her family members. Ms. Ottey outlined income eligibility guidelines for participation in the program and stated that in FY25, 223 unduplicated clients received services, the highest number in recent years, with an average spending of \$1,000 per client; she also provided various demographic information for the clients served. Ms. Ottey also outlined challenges facing the Senior Care Program, including the growth of the county's senior population and their growing preference for aging at home which strains limited resources including housing, transportation, and workers to provide in-home care. She stated that November is National Family Caregivers Month and that family caregivers provide invaluable, unpaid care for their loved ones while juggling work, children and their own healthcare needs. Ms. Ottey concluded her presentation by stating that in FY27, the Maryland Department of Aging will be changing the name of the Senior Care Program to Supporting Older Adults with Resources, or SOAR, expressed her appreciation to the Council for their continued support of the Senior Care Program, and read testimonials from several clients into the record as to what the Program means to them. Council members expressed their appreciation to Ms. Ottey and the team of the Senior Care Program for the work they do on behalf of the vulnerable Talbot County senior citizens they serve. Upon motion by Mr. Leshner, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved the FY26 Senior Care Plan as presented by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

- VII. Presentation of Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Award for FY2024 to Talbot County Finance Office – Martha Sparks, Finance Director; Kaitlin Foster-Clark, Assistant Finance

Director – Ms. Sparks stated that the Governors Finance Officers Association (GFOA) had awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to Talbot County for its FY24 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report which demonstrated a constructive spirit of full disclosure to clearly communicate its financial story and to motivate potential users and user groups to read the Report. She stated that the Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition for governmental accounts and financial reporting and represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management. She stated that this is the 25<sup>th</sup> consecutive year Talbot County has won the award. Ms. Sparks stated that although she, Assistant Finance Director, Kaitlin Foster-Clark and the team of the Finance Office received individual awards, the award would not have been possible without the dedication to excellence that the entire staff of the Finance Office provides to county residents, businesses, the County Council, the County Manager, and County departments and that she is proud to work with each one. Ms. Sparks introduced members of the Finance Office team in attendance and Council members expressed their appreciation for their continued hard work throughout the year.

VIII. Introduction of Legislation:

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 introduced by Mr. Callahan, Ms. Haythe, Mr. Leshner, Ms. Mielke, and Mr. Stepp as Bill No. 1623. A public hearing was scheduled for Tuesday, December 9, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. in the Bradley Meeting Room, South Wing, Talbot County Courthouse, 11 North Washington Street, Easton, Maryland 21601. Patrick Thomas, County Attorney stated that the proposed zoning text amendment had been requested by Attorney, Adam Lynn, on behalf of his client. Mr. Lynn stated that it is his understanding that the Class I license is relatively new in Talbot County and in the past, has been tailored to specific requests. He stated that his request for a text amendment is meant to be somewhat broader in scope but specific enough to achieve its goals without creating any issues for the community. Council discussion ensued with Mr. Lynn and his client.

IX. Discussion and Referral of Proposed Cannabis Zoning Text Amendment to Planning Commission

– Prior to Council discussion, Patrick Thomas, County Attorney, stated that the proposed cannabis regulations were requested by Ms. Haythe for referral to the Planning Commission and are similar to previous regulations considered by the Council, with some changes. Mr. Thomas stated that the proposed changes include: (1) increasing the minimum setbacks from 500 feet, which could be reduced in the prior legislation to 200 feet with consent of the neighboring property owners, to 1,000 feet from any property containing preexisting residential or institutional use; (2) increases the minimum lot size from 20 acres in the prior legislation to 75 acres for growing of cannabis; and (3) separates cannabis processing for cannabis grown on site and cannabis grown off site. He stated that cannabis processing for cannabis grown on site would be an agricultural use; cannabis processing for cannabis grown off site would be an industrial use, making cannabis grown and processed on site would be a Special Exception use rather than a permitted use, as in the prior legislation; off-site processing would be a Special Exception use in the VM (Village Mixed) and GC (General Commercial) Districts and permitted in the LI (Limited Industrial) zoning districts.

Upon motion by Ms. Mielke, seconded by Mr. Leshner, the Council approved forwarding the proposed text amendment to the Planning Commission for review and recommendation by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye

Mr. Stepp – Aye

Mr. Leshner – Aye

Ms. Mielke – Aye

Ms. Haythe – Aye

- X. Council Election of Officers: Mr. Callahan was elected president of the County Council for 2025-2026; Mr. Leshner was elected vice president for 2025-2026.

- XI. County Manager's Report:

- A. Bid No. 24-05, 2024 TALBOT COUNTY TRAVEL GUIDE – TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND – Cassandra Vanhooser, Director, Department of Economic Development and Tourism requested Council approval to award an amendment to the 2024 agreement with APG Chesapeake which provided for a contract extension upon agreement by both parties. Ms. Vanhooser stated that the County's cost for the new 2026 Travel Guide is approximately \$11,951. Upon motion by Mr. Leshner, seconded by Ms. Haythe, the Council approved the amendment to Bid No. 24-05 by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye

Mr. Stepp – Aye

Mr. Leshner – Aye

Ms. Mielke – Aye

Ms. Haythe - Aye

- B. Request from Easton Airport – Requested Council approval of a sole source procurement from East Coast Aviation for the furnishing and installation of new fuel pump metering systems for both jet fuel and Avgas in a sum not to exceed \$65,000. Council discussion ensued with Micah Risher, Manager, Easton Airport, who outlined the reasons for the request. Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved the request as outlined by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye

Mr. Stepp – Aye

Mr. Leshner – Aye

Ms. Mielke – Aye

Ms. Haythe - Aye

- C. Requests from Easton Airport – Micah Risher, Manager, Easton Airport, requested Council approval to have Easton Airport enter into a Deed of Easement for Stormwater Management between Talbot County and the Town of Easton for parcels located at 28712 Glebe Road and 29137 Newnam Road in Easton. He stated that the Deed of Easement relates to stormwater management features being installed as part of the Easton Airport modernization project; once installed, the infrastructure is under the inspecting authority of the Town of Easton;

and

- D. Requested Council approval to have Easton Airport enter into a Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions for Stormwater Improvements Agreement between the Town of Easton and Talbot County for the new stormwater easements and covenants which the Airport already has in place with the Town. Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved the requests as outlined by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

- E. County Offices Closed – Mr. Stamp stated that County offices will be closed on Tuesday, November 11, 2025, in recognition of Veterans Day.

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

- XIII. Council Comments:

Mr. Stepp - Mr. Stepp expressed his appreciation to all veterans for their service, and especially the Marines, including his father and father-in-law. He stated that the U.S. Marine Corps just celebrated its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Mr. Stepp concluded his comments by stating that he hopes everyone has a safe, enjoyable time at the Waterfowl Festival.

Mr. Leshner - Mr. Leshner stated that Talbot County Public Schools had received a bomb threat earlier in the week which led to evacuation of the school. He stated that not only was the bomb threat enormously disruptive for the students' education, but he was also impacted, not only as a member of the community and a member of the Council, but as a parent of an Easton High School student who was impacted. Mr. Leshner expressed his appreciation for the response to the threat, stating that, in his opinion, the staff of Talbot County Public Schools coordinates well with the Sheriff's Office, the Easton Police Department and Talbot County Emergency Services. He stated that everyone is safe and the school has been cleared, thanked everyone for their professionalism to ensure the safety of students and staff and stated that, in his opinion, it is clear that there are very detailed processes in place, and leadership to ensure the processes are followed.

Ms. Mielke - Ms. Mielke followed up on Mr. Stepp's comments noting that the U.S. Marine Corps just celebrated its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary, stating that the U.S. Navy also recently celebrated its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary. She stated that as a Navy "brat" her father served in the Navy in World War II and Korea and that she would not only like to recognize that, but to recognize all veterans. She stated that on Tuesday, November 11<sup>th</sup> there will be a Veterans Day ceremony at VFW Post 5118 on Glebe Road where Sheriff's Deputy John

Coleman will be the guest soloist and Paul Callahan of Trappe will be the guest speaker.

Ms. Haythe - No comments.

Mr. Callahan – Mr. Callahan expressed his condolences to the family of David McQuay of Tilghman who recently passed away. He stated that, in his opinion, Mr. McQuay was a pillar of the Tilghman community and was instrumental in doing things for the county.

Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council voted to reconvene on Tuesday, November 25, 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 5 – 0 as follows:

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

The meeting ended at 6:12 p.m.

The transcript of the Tuesday, November 4, 2025, County Council meeting is available for review in the Office of the Talbot County Manager during regular office hours.

XIV. Summary of Closed Session Held on November 4, 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: 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
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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
For legal briefing on Dobson v Talbot County, Maryland	GP § 3-305(b)(7)(8)	Attorney-client privilege regarding legal advice	Chuck Callahan, Pete Leshner, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Clay Stamp, Jessica Morris, Patrick Thomas	No action
For legal briefing on Adam Kelley v UMMS et al	GP § 3-305(b)(7)(8)	Attorney-client privilege regarding legal advice	Chuck Callahan, Pete Leshner, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Clay Stamp, Jessica Morris, Patrick Thomas	No action



		<b>TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND</b> <b>WEEKLY CASH STATEMENT</b> <b>11/4/2025</b>	
<b>OPERATING FUNDS - SHORE UNITED BANK</b>			
<b>OPERATING FUNDS AT</b>		<b>10/28/2025</b>	<b>\$ 49,923,787.66</b>
Total ADP Payroll PPE 10/24/2025			(1,037,079.31)
Total ADP Monthly Payroll PPE 10/31/2025			(19,611.66)
Returned Value Payment			(258.75)
Returned Paymentus Payments			(5,939.43)
Resoluton 235 Loan Balance Reductions			(1,812.00)
Deposits			2,876,839.64
Checks			(117,389.75)
ACH Disbursements			(1,266,163.68)
EFT's			(470,730.81)
Wire Transfers			(1,175,579.49)
<b>OPERATING FUNDS AT</b>		<b>11/04/2025</b>	<b>\$ 48,706,062.42</b>
<b>PETTY CASH FUNDS</b>			<b>\$ 18,105.00</b>
<b>INVESTMENT FUNDS</b>			
		<u>Yield</u>	
Maryland Local Government Investment Pool (MLGIP)		4.12%	\$ 23,666,968.37
Bayvanguard Bank		4.15%	\$ 11,370,181.16
Shore United Money Market Account		4.33%	\$ 63,680,849.86
<b>INVESTMENT FUNDS TOTAL</b>			<b>\$ 98,736,104.39</b>
<b><u>TOTAL ALL CASH AND INVESTMENTS</u></b>			<b><u>\$ 147,442,166.81</u></b>