

Talbot County Manager's Office

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: 7/28/2021

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Talbot County Council Meeting Highlights, July 27, 2021

The Talbot County Council held their regularly scheduled meeting on July 27 with all Council members present with the exception of Council member Divilio. During the meeting Council recognized the bravery and heroism of Robert Bridge and Derek Hoffman, both employees of Barkers Landing Excavation, who aided a downed pilot from the Naval Academy's Powered Flight Program after it crashed into a field north of the Easton Airport on June 24.

The two young men shared their harrowing story with Council members. The young pilot who sustained serious injury, managed to get himself out of the plane, but Bridge and Hoffman were able to move him away from the wreckage moments before it burst into flames.

Both men received praise and thanks from Council members for their actions. "It was a privilege to have these two gentlemen here tonight who saved a life," said Council President Chuck Callahan. "Instantly, they responded to a plane crash and made a real difference in another family's life. That's what we're all here for, and I want this to be a lesson for all of us. Get involved and help people. Make a difference in someone's life."

In other business:

- The County Council voted 4-0 to approve a request from the Talbot County Department of Emergency Services to award a contract for \$669,166.25 to AT&T to provide Next Generation 9-1-1 services to Talbot County.

The planned system upgrade is part of a national initiative supported by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) that will allow Talbot County to replace legacy telephone networks and transition to an internet-based platform. This new technology to enable emergency personnel to better respond to calls for help.

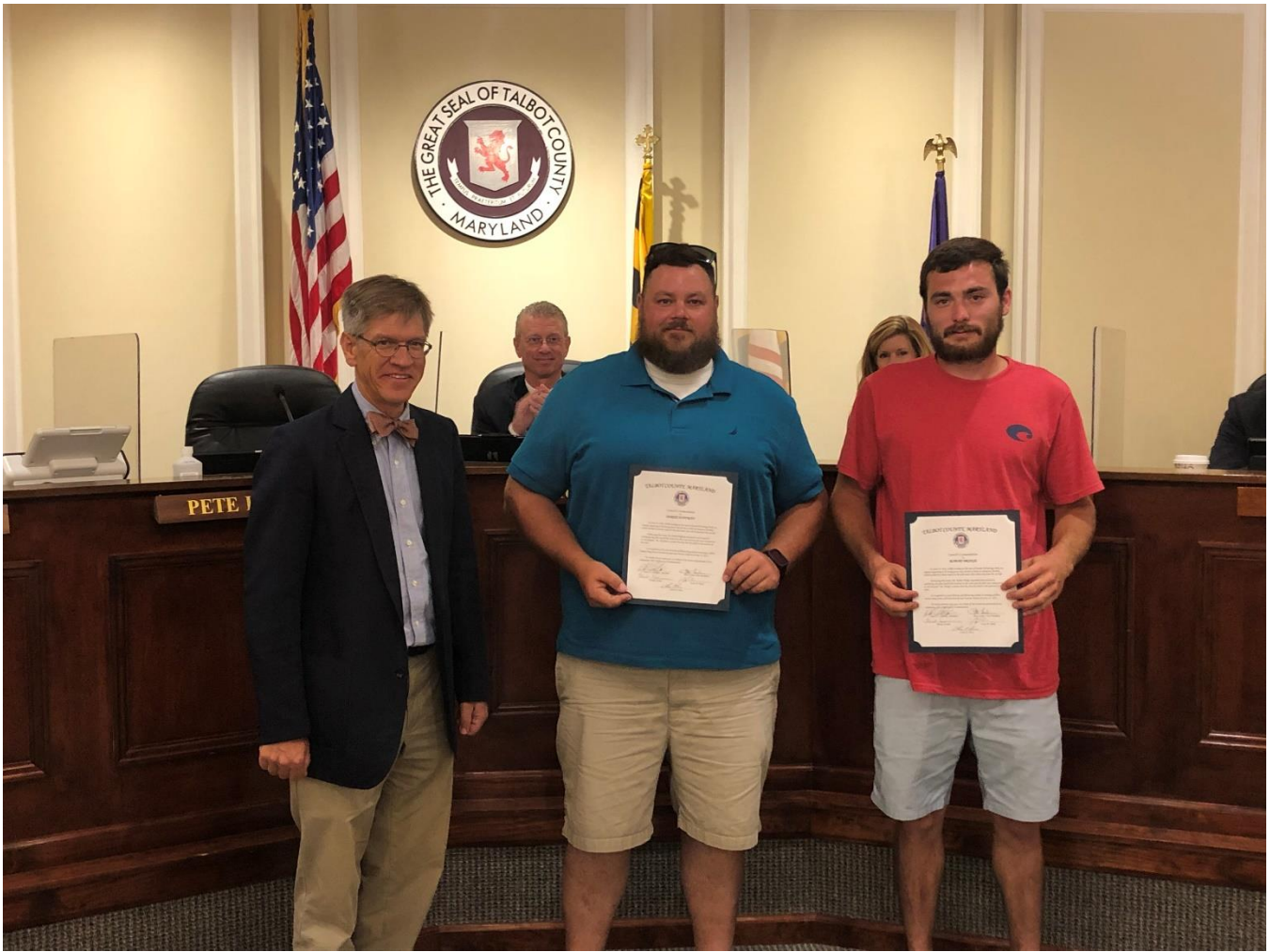
This initiative was part of a regional effort that began in 2019. Talbot County joined other Eastern Shore counties to hire a consultant who developed a request for proposals (RFP) for the group. The group ultimately chose AT&T to provide the service after all of the bids were evaluated and scored. The project will be funded by a grant from the State of Maryland 9-1-1 Board; no County funds are required.

“We will be able to better serve the community when they call for help by integrating with this new communication technology,” said Brian LeCates, acting director of Talbot County Department of Emergency Services. Clay Stamp, County Manager, recognized and thanked Tommy Haddaway, Communication Technologist with Department of Emergency Services for his efforts preparing and reviewing the RFP.

- Council also voted 4-0 to approve the extension of a cybersecurity service contract for the Department of Emergency Services that is funded by the State of Maryland 9-1-1 Board in the amount of \$327,000. “All you have to do is open the newspaper or turn on the television to see how important this is to Talbot County,” LeCates noted. “In these days when cyberattacks are seen daily, this is critically important to our keeping 9-1-1 technology as safe as possible. We are grateful to the State for their partnership.” Again no County funds are required.
- Tim Ford, Acting Managing Director of Environmental Operations for Maryland Environmental Service (MES), provided an update on services provided to Talbot County over the past year, as well as sharing future goals for the Tri-County Solid Waste Landfills and Recycling Services.
- Chesapeake College President Cliff Coppersmith asked Council to approve a revised budget that allows the college to use its fund balance for operations. The additional money will be used to provide salary increases, to replace an aging website, to initiate a rebranding initiative, to provide maintenance upgrades to the learning resource center and to digitize student records. Council voted 4-0 to approve the budget. No additional County funds are required.
- Council members Callahan, Leshner and Price introduced legislation to raise the salary for the Talbot County Sheriff after the 2022 election to make it more competitive with other senior law enforcement professionals. A public hearing on Bill No. 1492 was scheduled for Tuesday, August 24 at 6:30 p.m.
- Economic Development and Tourism Director Cassandra Vanhooser provided a regularly scheduled update on economic activity to the County Council. She reported that Talbot County has distributed 112 new grants using \$545,351 in state funding to small businesses that have been impacted by the pandemic. She also introduced her staff, including Krista Boothby, economic development and tourism manager, who joined the department in May.

The next legislative meeting of the County Council will be held on Tuesday, August 10 at 6 p.m. On Tuesday, August 3 at 4 p.m. the Talbot County Council will be meeting with Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) President Wilbur Levensgood and MACo Executive Director Michael Sanderson to discuss the upcoming state legislative session. The meeting is open to the public and will be held in the Bradley Meeting Room, South Wing, Talbot County Courthouse, 11 North Washington Street, Easton.

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Pictured left to right
Front row: Talbot County Council Vice President Pete Leshner, Derek Hoffman, Robert Bridge
Back row: Talbot County Council President Chuck Callahan, Council Member Laura Price, Council Member Corey Pack