



TALBOT COUNTY PROPERTY TAX REFERENDUM COMMITTEE

215 Bay St. Easton, MD 21601 **MINUTES**

December 11, 2019

Present – Bill Boos, Earl Chance, Pamela Clay, Susan Delean-Botkin, Ron Engle, Joe Gamble, Kelly Griffith, Ronald Johnson, Henry Leonard, Brad Miller, Corey Pack, Clay Stamp, Angela Lane, Alex Glessner and Anthony Kupersmith

- I. Welcome and Introductions – Committee members introduced themselves.
- II. Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by Susan Delean-Botkin and seconded by Pamela Clay to approve the minutes of November 11, 2019. All committee members voted to approve the minutes; there were no objections or abstentions.
- III. Snow Policy- There was a brief discussion concerning future meetings in the event of winter weather events. If Talbot County Offices are closed, the Committee will not meet. If there is an evening winter weather event, Angela Lane will email committee members if the meeting is cancelled.
- IV. Mr. Boos provided the Committee with the response to the listening session he held in St Michaels on November 23, 2019. Most people understand that the County has unmet needs; and they are willing to pay additional taxes – but the reason for and the structure of any increases must be specific. In addition, there is concern of the impact that the required funding for the Public Schools (due the implementation of the recommendations of the Kirwan Commission) will have on property taxes.
- V. Committee Comments/Brainstorming – The discussion concerning issues with the tax cap and any modification continued.

The discussion included:

- CPI-U as a percentage increase qualifier is confusing – should the ballot question just increase the amount the property tax revenues can increase to 2.5% or 3% per year. It was noted that the Taxpayers Association had opposed any increase more than 2.5% during the last election.
- Any increases in revenues need to be tied to specific needs. What does the Sheriff's Office need to be competitive, what does Emergency Medical Services need to reduce response times in area of the County.
- Once we have specific costs for these services we can determine the amount of an increase needed in property taxes.
- Some needs/services may have to be phased in over time.
- Focus on Emergency Services and develop a list of needs with costs to “fill” those needs. Include the Roads Department as an Emergency Service department.
- Articulate needs clearly and identify gaps in services.

The Committee requested that staff prepare two approaches/options for Committee members to use when discussing a modification of the tax cap with citizens. The two options should include capital needs and the cost for services for multiple years.

VI. Public Comments

Susie Hayward from Mid Shore Board of Realtors noted that these are the same items that were discussed during the last election. The Committee then discussed having a provision that would allow the County to set a property tax rate that generates more than a 2.5 % increase tax revenues for a few years and then have the allowed amount of additional property tax revenues decrease to a lower percentage.

Next Steps:

Upon motion by Clay Stamp, seconded by Ron Engle, the Committee voted to end the meeting at 5:10 p.m.