

COUNTY COUNCIL OF TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

Council Meeting

December 10, 2024; 5:00 p.m.

Council Chambers, Easton, Maryland

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Chuck F. Callahan

Pete Leshner

Keasha N. Haythe

Lynn L. Mielke

Dave Stepp

Reported by

Diane Houlihan

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We'll go ahead and get started here. Okay. I want to welcome everybody. We're going to get started here with the agenda.

If you don't mind standing, we'll go ahead and say the prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance of the Flag.

(Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.)

MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Stepp. Appreciate it. Okay.

Start off with the agenda. The Council has had a chance to take a look at the agenda. Is there any additions, deletions, or corrections to the agenda? Okay. Hearing none, the agenda is accepted as unanimous consent. Okay.

Next on the agenda is the minutes. We've had a chance to take a look at the minutes of October 29th. Is there any additions,

1 deletions, or corrections to the minutes?

2 MS. MIELKE: No.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: So the chair moves that the
4 minutes be accepted as unanimous consent.

5 Okay.

6 Next is disbursements of December 3rd and
7 December 10th. We've had a chance to take a
8 look at those. Is there any additions,
9 deletions, or corrections to the disbursements?
10 Okay. You good?

11 MR. LESHER: Yeah.

12 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. The chair moves that
13 the disbursements be accepted as unanimous
14 consent. Okay.

15 First on the agenda is a presentation of
16 the Talbot County Tourism Board. If you guys
17 want to come on up. Welcome.

18 MS. VANHOOSER: Thank you so much.

19 Is Martha coming?

20 MS. MORRIS: Yes, she is. Yes.

21 MS. VANHOOSER: So I don't think Martha is

1 with us yet.

2 MR. STAMP: There she is.

3 MS. VANHOOSER: Oh, there she is. All
4 right.

5 Good evening, Council. Thank you for
6 having us this evening. Cassandra Vanhooser,
7 Talbot County Economic Development and Tourism.

8 My chairman, Judy Bixler of the Tourism
9 Board. We have a number of members of the
10 Tourism Board here tonight. Also, a number of
11 interested members who are tourism partners who
12 are also here this evening.

13 And.

14 MS. SPARKS: Martha Sparks, finance
15 director for Talbot County.

16 MS. VANHOOSER: All right. So you have in
17 your packet an updated PowerPoint presentation
18 that outlines the proposal from the Tourism
19 Board. And it details the, both the amount of
20 revenue that this proposal would generate and
21 the uses of the tax revenue. So I won't review

1 that information unless you need me to do so.
2 But I will give you an overview of the steps
3 that we've taken to get to here tonight.

4 The Tourism Board first presented their
5 proposal at a public work session with the
6 Talbot County Council on August 27th. At that
7 meeting, you asked us to present the
8 information to the towns and seek their
9 support.

10 The Town of Easton voted five to zero to
11 support the proposal on September 3rd. The
12 Town of Oxford voted three to zero to support
13 the proposal on September 24th. Town of
14 St. Michaels voted four to one to support the
15 proposal on September 25th.

16 In your annual meeting with the two State
17 legislators, the delegates and the State
18 senator, Johnny Mautz, we laid out the proposal
19 again. And at that meeting, you requested a
20 public meeting and a presentation to the Town
21 of Trappe.

1 So I presented to the Town of Trappe on
2 December 4th. And they voted four to one to
3 support, with one person abstaining.

4 Now, I did not present to the Town of
5 Queen Anne. However, they considered the
6 request I submitted in writing. And they also
7 voted three to zero to support the request.

8 The Tourism Board also held a public
9 meeting on December 3rd specifically for
10 accommodations collectors. And a number showed
11 up to express their concerns. Among the
12 concerns is that we are in a price sensitive
13 market and that they believe this will drive
14 business to other jurisdictions.

15 Also, the overwhelming request was to know
16 what the money will be used for. Though many
17 didn't understand that the towns control much
18 of the revenue of what is collected. And
19 that's within one mile of their borders.

20 So we also distributed a survey to all the
21 accommodations tax collectors that we have

1 email addresses for. And you have these
2 results, along with a survey that was created
3 by a private citizen who owns a short-term
4 rental.

5 So you are the final approval needed for
6 the proposed accommodations tax increase to
7 move forward. So here we are with our deadline
8 for submitting to the State delegation looming,
9 asking you to support the proposal from the
10 Talbot County Tourism Board.

11 Now, I'm going to toss it to Martha to
12 sort of lay out what her proposal is, which
13 would be separate from the rate increase. And
14 then Captain Judy can make some comments, and
15 then I'll bring us home.

16 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

17 MS. SPARKS: So my request is currently in
18 Talbot County's public accommodations tax code,
19 when there's a failure to comply with payment
20 of the accommodations tax for a period of 120
21 days from the date it's due, the county can

1 impose a ten percent penalty. We are allowed
2 to do that or we're required to grant that
3 120-day grace period. That's part of Maryland
4 law.

5 Talbot County and Wicomico County are the
6 only ones that provide that extended grace
7 period.

8 And my request is that Council would
9 approve a request to the legislature to reduce
10 that to being paid, that where they must be
11 paid one month after they're due before that
12 ten percent penalty becomes effective.

13 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

14 MS. VANHOOSER: Captain Judy.

15 MS. BIXLER: I just want to let you know
16 that the Tourism Board is representative of
17 every one of our entities in the tourism
18 business. And we have voted unanimously after
19 many, many months and years of study of this
20 accommodations tax. And we feel that it is
21 really imperative in order for us to be able to

1 continue to market our area and to have the
2 communities be able to afford to take up the
3 expenses of having tourism here, for you to
4 please approve this.

5 We are the lowest rate in the entire
6 State.

7 The other thing that is important is that
8 we have to go through the steps. You're a step
9 in the middle of this process. We then have to
10 go to the State and get them to get the
11 approval.

12 And if we can get the State approval, you
13 still have the ability to decide how and when
14 that tax would be increased if they approve it.

15 And so we really feel that it's important
16 that we get to the next step. This is the
17 first time in a long time that we've had every
18 single community voting unanimously.

19 Over the years -- we have not had an
20 increase since I think 2004. So that's 20
21 years that we have not changed the amount of

1 the accommodations tax.

2 So I really wanted to impress upon you
3 that this is an important aspect. We love our
4 communities, and we feel that we can best
5 market our communities and bring people here
6 and then let the towns and communities pay for
7 the services that they're using.

8 It's not a tax on individual county
9 residents. This is a tax on those that visit
10 us.

11 The other reason that we feel it's very
12 important is tourism is a really important
13 factor here in our county. It's a clean
14 industry. It brings us all together. We, as
15 Talbot County, are an icon of many of the
16 tourism entities in our State. And we'd like
17 to be able to continue to provide that. Thank
18 you.

19 MS. VANHOOSER: So I will summarize for
20 you in this way.

21 You're really being called on to balance

1 the effects on tourism businesses with the
2 benefits to the towns and the county.

3 The Tourism Board has weighed the
4 evidence, and they, and yes, we, believe that
5 the benefits outweigh the disadvantages.

6 Now, there are people who would disagree
7 with that. And I respect their opinion. But
8 we believe the following: Nobody likes to pay
9 taxes and nobody likes to collect taxes. But
10 somebody has to pay for the services that
11 visitors use.

12 All five of our towns have voted publicly
13 to support this request. The Tourism Board has
14 voted publicly multiple times to support this
15 request.

16 Some of our largest tax collectors, I
17 reached out to them, and they have stated they
18 either support the proposal or that they simply
19 will not oppose it. Although, there are
20 others, as I have acknowledged, who do not
21 support it in any way and feel that we already

1 have as escalator for collecting the tax and
2 that it will hurt their business.

3 But I will say the Tourism Board would not
4 recommend something that they believed was
5 harmful to the hospitality and tourism
6 industry. And it's just that simple.

7 Research shows that accommodations tax
8 rates do not overly influence a visitor's
9 choice of destinations. It does influence
10 groups more than transients, but it is not the
11 deciding factor in most travel decisions.

12 Other jurisdictions in the State of
13 Maryland have increased their accommodations
14 tax rates. And many others have much higher
15 rates than ours. And it has not resulted in
16 fewer bookings.

17 Howard County, seven percent. Montgomery
18 County, seven percent. Anne Arundel just
19 raised theirs to eight percent. Garrett County
20 is at eight percent. Baltimore City and
21 County, both at 9.5 percent. And Baltimore

1 City has a two percent tourism improvement
2 district that they also impose.

3 So some jurisdictions around the world
4 have imposed taxes as a punitive measure to try
5 and curb over-tourism. That is not the case
6 here. The simple need for additional revenue
7 to offset the cost of tourism to local
8 jurisdictions is the genesis of this proposal.

9 So I think you really have two decisions
10 here to make. One, do you support a
11 two percent tax rate increase. And then the
12 other is do you support Martha's proposal for
13 the change in the collection time frame.

14 So the ball is now in your court and you
15 have a decision to make.

16 MR. CALLAHAN: We sure do.

17 Discussion.

18 MS. HAYTHE: Cassandra, thank you all for
19 your presentation here this evening. We
20 recognize that the tourism industry is a very
21 distinct part of Talbot County.

1 Do you have the economic impact of the
2 tourism industry in Talbot County?

3 MS. VANHOOSER: Yes. It is 203 million.
4 And I'm quoting from memory here, but I can get
5 you those exact numbers.

6 Here is I think the real impact, is it
7 employs almost 2,000 people directly and
8 indirectly in our county.

9 And we pay for a study in partnership with
10 the State of Maryland and other counties to get
11 these numbers.

12 MS. HAYTHE: Thank you. So 203 million
13 and 2,000 jobs?

14 MS. VANHOOSER: Yes. And that's revenue.
15 Yes.

16 MS. HAYTHE: Thank you.

17 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah.

18 MS. MIELKE: Is the accommodations tax
19 based on the amount that the lodging source
20 charges for the lodging?

21 MS. VANHOOSER: Yes. It includes --

1 1 MS. MIELKE: So if it's gone up in 20
2 2 years, then the amount that is received under
3 3 the four percent has also gone up without
4 4 increasing the four percent, correct?

5 5 MS. VANHOOSER: That would be correct.

6 6 MS. MIELKE: Thank you.

7 7 MR. CALLAHAN: Mr. Leshner.

8 8 MR. LESHER: I want to thank the Tourism
11 11 hearing
9 9 Board members for all the work that you've been
10 10 doing on this, the due diligence, the public
11 11 that you heard, the feedback that
12 12 you've received back and also your professional
13 13 consideration from all the sectors that you
14 14 represent on the board. And I appreciate your
15 15 unanimous recommendation on this.

16 16 Thank you for all the due diligence that
17 17 you've put into taking this process this far.

18 18 MR. CALLAHAN: You're good? So do we want
19 19 to vote on these two questions separately?

20 20 Do we need a motion?

21 21 MR. LESHER: I'll start with a motion --

1 so this is a motion to authorize a letter to
2 our State delegation to request the
3 legislation.

4 And I'll start with a motion to request
5 legislation to reduce the grace period for
6 payment of the accommodations tax to one month.

7 MS. SPARKS: Correct.

8 MS. HAYTHE: I second that motion.

9 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We got a motion and
10 second. Madam Secretary, could you call the
11 vote.

12 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

13 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

14 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

15 MR. STEPP: Aye.

16 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

17 MR. LESHNER: Aye.

18 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

19 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

20 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

21 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

1 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Second?

2 MR. LESHER: And I'll move that we
3 authorize a letter to the State delegation,
4 again, to request an increase in the Talbot
5 County accommodations tax from four percent to
6 six percent, as recommended by the Tourism
7 Board.

8 MS. HAYTHE: (Inaudible.)

9 MR. CALLAHAN: (Inaudible.)

10 MR. LESHER: We can put the motion on
11 the -- I can hold the motion if you want to
12 collect public comment first.

13 MR. CALLAHAN: We can do that. You mean
14 until the very end?

15 MR. STEPP: I think we should.

16 MS. HAYTHE: Yeah, I think we should.

17 MR. LESHER: Okay. So you're not going to
18 do public comment at this juncture?

19 MR. CALLAHAN: I can.

20 MR. LESHER: Okay.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: So I'll go ahead and start

1 with public comment.

2 MS. HAYTHE: Okay. On this particular
3 item?

4 MR. CALLAHAN: On this particular item,
5 yes.

6 MR. WAGNER: Good evening, everyone. I
7 have a handout for you. There's one for each
8 commissioner.

9 MS. HAYTHE: Remind them of the time and
10 did they sign up outside.

11 MS. MIELKE: (Inaudible.)

12 MS. HAYTHE: (Inaudible.)

13 MR. CALLAHAN: (Inaudible.)

14 MR. STAMP: The small one and a big one.

15 MR. WAGNER: Yeah, exactly.

16 MR. CALLAHAN: Good evening.

17 MR. WAGNER: Good evening, everyone. How
18 are you this evening?

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. So let me make sure
20 I tell you the rules.

21 So for an individual, it's three minutes.

1 For a business, it's five.

2 MR. LESHER: For an organization
3 representing multiple ones so that multiple
4 ones don't have to speak.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup.

6 MR. WAGNER: I'll make it the three.

7 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

8 MR. WAGNER: I've given you a sheet that
9 I -- that Cassandra sent me some information
10 last week, and I've tweaked this spreadsheet.

11 MR. CALLAHAN: I'm sorry. Would you mind
12 identifying who you are?

13 MR. WAGNER: My name is Scott Wagner. I
14 am the managing partner for 25876, which is a
15 partnership that owns The Oaks Waterfront Inn
16 in Royal Oak.

17 We attended the presentation last week.

18 And actually, this issue came up in
19 Pennsylvania. So I'm very familiar with it.

20 But I've done a spreadsheet. And it shows
21 you, the one with the most amount of numbers,

1 it starts in 2009 and goes down to 2024.

2 And numbers I don't think people are
3 really aware of and I think they're good to
4 point out. Over the last 16 years, 21.5
5 million has been collected in taxes. And if
6 you go across, Easton received 6.4, Oxford,
7 St. Michaels, Talbot County.

8 I broke out the STRs, the short-term
9 rentals, away from the B&Bs so you can see that
10 short-term revenue is growing.

11 Talbot County receives a five percent fee.
12 So over the last 16 years, they've received
13 almost 1.1 million in collections fees.

14 The Tourism Bureau has received 4.8.

15 So I've given you -- one of the arguments
16 I heard and it's -- I struggle with this. But
17 I've heard that the tax hasn't gone up in 20
18 years. Well, I've given you the small sheet.
19 And I took a \$100 room rate in 2009, and I did
20 a five percent escalator for the last 16 years.
21 So all that, in 2009, that tax was \$4. Today,

1 it is \$8.32. And under the new scenario, it
2 would go to 13.10.

3 MR. LESHER: Could you explain the
4 escalator? Because on average you've raised
5 your room rates by five percent every year?

6 MR. WAGNER: Well, in our situation --

7 MR. LESHER: Is that what --

8 MR. WAGNER: Well.

9 MR. LESHER: -- room rate?

10 MR. WAGNER: Our room rates have gone up
11 more than that some, but in this range.

12 But today, we're faced with we're all
13 paying housekeepers a lot more money, in some
14 situations double what were paid several years
15 ago. And our taxes have gone up.

16 And at The Oaks, our cost per room is up
17 about between 50 and \$100 a night. Has to do
18 with the taxes, our housekeeping, wage
19 increases, everything involved in operating our
20 business.

21 So the argument that room rates, while the

1 fee hasn't gone up, it essentially has ridden
2 the wave of inflation, so to speak.

3 But I think that we understand what the
4 Tourism Bureau is trying to accomplish. But I
5 think we all need to understand the numbers.

6 And so specifically I would ask, like in
7 St. Michael's, what is the actual net? Because
8 you would have to take 28 percent off of their,
9 off the top that they collected this year.

10 What are they left over with? What are they
11 doing with the money? Is it going to police
12 protection? Is anything going to tourism?

13 What I'm being told is in the Town of
14 St. Michaels they have an allocation. They
15 cut the tourism budget back dramatically.

16 So I think we all want to know where the
17 money is going, but this goes into a deeper
18 principle. This is feeding the monster. And
19 the monster is asking for a million dollars
20 more next year. And the monster is going to
21 get fatter.

1 I've never seen a tax that -- I've never
2 seen a tax go down, quite frankly.

3 So I just think it's -- what I wanted to
4 present tonight, and I appreciate all the work
5 that's gone into this. And we do consider
6 ourselves partners with this county.

7 We are also spending individually a lot of
8 money on marketing ourselves. I'll tell you
9 The Inn at Perry Cabin, Blue Point, which
10 doesn't have rooms, The Tidewater, and The
11 Oaks, we are collectively easily spending in
12 excess of a million dollars a year just in
13 marketing efforts. And it might be closer to
14 2 million if you factor in what Blue Point is
15 doing.

16 But I just think it's important that
17 everybody understand the numbers. And these
18 are -- this is a breathtaking increase. This
19 is a 50 percent increase.

20 And I guess we just want to know where the
21 money is going. There has to be

1 accountability. Because, again, the monster
2 just gets bigger and bigger. And we just need
3 to understand.

4 So I thank you for your time.

5 And also, I do want to point out this is
6 not us versus them. We want to be win-win. We
7 want our properties to prosper. But there's a
8 lot, there's a lot to this, to the pie here.

9 So I appreciate your listening to me and
10 the opportunity to present. Thank you.

11 MR. CALLAHAN: Absolutely. We appreciate
12 it. Thank you.

13 MR. STAMP: You have eight other folks
14 that have signed up.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

16 MR. STAMP: You want me to go down the
17 list?

18 MR. CALLAHAN: Yes, sir.

19 MR. STAMP: Mr. George Wilson.

20 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup.

21 MR. WILSON: Good evening. I don't really

1 need the microphone. But my name is George
2 Wilson. I am one of the owners of the Old
3 Brick Inn in St. Michaels, which has been
4 operating in the same location since 1996. So
5 for 28 years.

6 I can be redundant with Scott, but the
7 bottom line is this. When we ask where is the
8 money going and St. Michaels gives us an
9 answer, out of their million dollars in the
10 last three years, they allocated \$45,000. Not
11 per year. \$45,000.

12 So when we're told that we need the money
13 for infrastructure, I use the logic of so the
14 tourists are why we need more police? I don't
15 find the tourists in St. Michaels to be
16 threats to the police.

17 So my suggestion is that maybe there is
18 cause for this. Maybe a reallocation is in
19 order. And I would suggest that you consider
20 tabling this event.

21 And by the way, in case you don't know it,

1 this is the fourth attempt by the Tourism Board
2 to raise the accommodations tax in the last ten
3 years.

4 So and I can also tell you from personal
5 experience that when St. Michaels approved
6 this proposal, it had not been put out for
7 public comment to the lodging operators in
8 St. Michaels. Myself and one other gentleman
9 were the only two people as lodging operators
10 who were at that meeting. And we found out
11 about it, if you will, through the wire.

12 So I would consider tabling this until
13 more work can be done.

14 Not the same work. Explain to us as the
15 taxpayers where was this money spent and why is
16 it an accommodation tax?

17 Where I live, we don't have large, other
18 than here, we don't have large tourism
19 business. So when work needs to be done on
20 infrastructure, it typically goes into other
21 forms of tax.

1 So I want to thank you for your
2 consideration on that and say that I hope we
3 can reach a common ground here where everybody
4 is pulling together. Thank you very much.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Thank you, sir. Okay.

6 MR. STAMP: I think --

7 MR. CALLAHAN: Hold tight now. We got a
8 list here.

9 MR. WORKMAN: Oh, we have a list?

10 MR. CALLAHAN: Yes, sir.

11 MR. WORKMAN: Can I add my name?

12 MR. STAMP: Mr. Travis Johnson.

13 MR. CALLAHAN: Yes. Clay, can you get his
14 name, please?

15 MS. MORRIS: His name is Will Workman.

16 MR. STAMP: Will Workman.

17 MR. JOHNSON: Hello. My name is Travis
18 Johnson. I am both a resident of St. Michaels
19 and Talbot County and I also run The Old Brick
20 Inn.

21 I just have a quick comment that based on

1 this survey, 73 percent of those asked believe
2 increasing the accommodations tax will
3 negatively affect their business. That is a
4 very important number. 73.3 percent of those
5 surveyed believe that this will negatively
6 affect their business.

7 I believe this needs to be tabled until
8 more information is available, until the
9 financials are clear and transport of where the
10 money is going.

11 I work day to day with guests that come.
12 Guests already complain about rates. And do
13 you know where we -- they always say what can
14 you do for me. We're discounting our profit
15 because we can't discount taxes.

16 To touch on both what George and Scott
17 said, it is an escalator, you know. We're
18 trying to -- my costs have gone up, both labor,
19 materials, everything. But I can't raise my
20 rates too high because guests are already
21 complaining.

1 I don't want to see St. Michaels be the
2 next Ocean City where it's too expensive to go
3 there. And that's what's happening. That's
4 what I'm afraid.

5 I ask Talbot County Council to please make
6 an informed decision and table this until you
7 have all the information from both sides.
8 Don't make a rash decision that will affect my
9 future as the next residents here in Talbot
10 County. Thank you.

11 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thank you.

12 MR. STAMP: Mr. Kevin Mills, Bozman.

13 MR. MILLS: Yeah. Not about this issue.
14 This is about the sewer plant.

15 MR. STAMP: Okay. I'm sorry. Thank you.
16 We'll jump down to Michelle Hoyle.

17 MS. HOYLE: Hello. Thank you, guys, for
18 having us tonight.

19 My name is Michelle Hoyle. I am the
20 business owner of Tidewater Vacations.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: Ma'am, could you sit down

1 in the chair and talk into the mike? I'd
2 appreciate it.

3 MS. HOYLE: Sure. I'd like to stress that
4 this will impose very hardships on my company
5 as well as the other business owners.

6 Two percent may not seem like a lot in the
7 grand scheme of things. However, when we are
8 in such a market, a competitive market when it
9 comes to rentals, when it comes to hospitality,
10 this is hugely impactful.

11 Talbot County has always been big about
12 keep our short-term rentals away from the
13 Airbnb market or the VRBO market. And we are
14 literally giving them this on a silver platter.

15 Big corporations like that are able to
16 just absorb these funds. The two percent may
17 not seem like -- that will put me under.

18 Cost of, like the others have said, the
19 cost of housekeeping, the cost to provide an
20 excellent service, as well as the screening to
21 make sure that these visitors that are coming

1 are of the caliber that we want to come and
2 stay with us. That is important to our
3 company, to my company specifically.

4 And VRBOs, Airbnbs will not guarantee you
5 that. We will. However, we're going to be put
6 under because of this. They can afford to
7 absorb it. I cannot. Okay.

8 MR. CALLAHAN: Thank you.

9 MR. STAMP: Mr. Tad duPont.

10 MR. duPONT: Like the others, thank you.
11 Thank you for having us tonight.

12 I'd like to speak first on the ordinance
13 you already passed. I congratulate you for
14 doing that. I thought it was wrong for years
15 that the Council didn't collect the money
16 monthly. I paid monthly since 1986.

17 Now, I'll tell you a story that backs up
18 part of what happened.

19 I was the treasurer of St. Michaels for
20 the two years of COVID. Yes, we cut the
21 tourism budget, and we cut it pretty hard

1 because we didn't know what we were facing. We
2 didn't know what kind of people were coming, if
3 they were coming, and we didn't know where our
4 money was to be able to handle it.

5 So now that you all have passed this, we
6 would expect, I would expect as a treasurer of
7 St. Michaels, although I'm not that anymore,
8 to get a monthly check from the county for the
9 taxes that were collected the month before.

10 What does that do? That gives the towns,
11 and it would give you all, a much better read
12 on your budget process and a much better way to
13 handle it.

14 So I may be responsible for part of that,
15 but that was only because we were trying to be
16 proactive during the COVID period.

17 Now, discussion at hand. I have been
18 against this raise for a long time. Cassandra
19 knows that. We agree on a lot, but we don't
20 agree on this.

21 Talbot County should use the fact that we

1 have the lowest tax rates in the State as an
2 advertising tool.

3 Where we go wrong in Talbot County and
4 where we go wrong I think in all the little
5 towns is we have a real dead period on Tuesday,
6 Wednesday, and Thursday. That's where we all
7 could make it a lot better if we had an
8 opportunity to increase the occupancy rates
9 during that period.

10 It would seem to me that instead of
11 looking at raising the tax so that we are equal
12 with everybody else, which is really not a
13 really good way to do it, that possibly we
14 should consider lowering it back to
15 three percent.

16 Now, you can find those numbers because
17 just take the proposal and divide it by two.
18 And go on a countywide promotion where we are
19 promoting room rents, room occupancies on the
20 Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday corridor and make
21 it significant. Have everybody work at it

1 where you can advertise state round that maybe
2 rooms are 45 percent off and you couple it with
3 some activity and change up how we're doing
4 this because we're doing the same thing. And
5 every time we do the same thing, nothing
6 happens, it's not different.

7 So what I'm saying is think about
8 something different. Think about an
9 alternative. Think about what would happen if
10 you lowered it a penny instead of raising it
11 two and how you could promote being the lowest
12 taxed lodging industry in the State.

13 Thank you.

14 MR. CALLAHAN: Thank you.

15 MR. STAMP: Mr. Kevin Hartmann and
16 Angeline Hartmann.

17 MR. HARTMANN: Hello, guys. Kevin and
18 Angeline Hartmann, Ferry Bridge House in
19 Easton, unincorporated Talbot County. Thank
20 you for hearing everybody today.

21 I think our main concern is this. We were

1 part of the process of the independent survey.
2 I hope you guys got a copy of it. If you
3 haven't, I'd like to introduce it for the
4 record.

5 A couple of points on the survey. Our
6 survey and the survey that Ms. Vanhooser
7 conducted through the Talbot County Tourism
8 Department were completely in line. But the
9 number one question was is this going to impact
10 your business negatively. And all those
11 responded, the majority, ours was 82 percent
12 and I think the county's survey was a little
13 less, but in the 70 percentile range. So they
14 all feel like it's going to impact their
15 business.

16 That is kind of what we wanted to make
17 sure, is that the lodging partners all had a
18 voice in this process. So thank you for
19 delaying your vote until you could hear from
20 everyone. That's really our main concern.

21 We just got our short-term rental license

1 a year ago. So we're new to this. What we
2 would ask is that listen to all the experience
3 in this room. This is the face of tourism in
4 Talbot County, the lodging providers. These
5 are the ones that, and the 2,000 jobs that are
6 generated, they're the ones that create the
7 jobs. They're the small business owners.
8 They're the drivers of Talbot County.

9 So our concern is to listen to what
10 they're saying and take that into
11 consideration, what they're saying.

12 I know there's some people to speak after
13 us.

14 Final point is this. You have in your
15 package letters from the five I believe towns
16 in the county. Each one of those voted for the
17 increase. But the significant difference is
18 this. None of those towns heard what you're
19 hearing tonight. None of those towns have the
20 results of this survey at the time of their
21 vote. None of those towns held a public

1 hearing on the matter.

2 There was no input asked for from any of
3 the lodging providers at the time of their
4 vote. So while I respect these votes, I think
5 they were significantly undereducated as to the
6 ramifications of what this raise would do.

7 And I'll defer to my hostess here.

8 MS. HARTMANN: I think he has basically
9 said it all.

10 We just want to make sure that everybody
11 makes an informed decision when they make their
12 decision. Because we all are here to work
13 together and do the best for Talbot County. We
14 all want the same thing I think. And that's
15 why we just want to make sure that everybody
16 understands and gets all the perspectives.

17 So we appreciate your time. Thank you.

18 MR. HARTMANN: Thank you.

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Appreciate you guys. Thank
20 you.

21 MR. STAMP: And finally, Mr. Will Workman.

1 That will complete those that signed up.

2 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thank you.

3 MR. STAMP: For this subject.

4 MR. CALLAHAN: Yes.

5 MR. WORKMAN: Will Workman, St. Michaels.

6 We have owned the Parsonage Inn since
7 1985. And we developed the George Brooks House
8 as one of the native historic properties here
9 in this county.

10 I've been involved with collecting taxes
11 since the late 1980s, room taxes as well as, of
12 course, the sales tax.

13 My biggest concern is that there's no
14 floor or requirement of what should be set
15 aside for directly promoting tourism.

16 The Town of St. Michaels was free to
17 drive it to almost to zero.

18 When this legislation was initially
19 passed, I think it was '86 or '87, we were told
20 the majority of the funds would go to directly
21 promoting tourism.

1 As what stands now, they're free to use
2 the funds as part of general revenue. There's
3 no floor. There's no requirement that
4 20 percent, 30 percent, 40 percent be used to
5 directly promote tourism.

6 In the last few years, my business has
7 gone down about ten percent, 12 percent this
8 year, about ten percent last. So we're in a
9 downward trend competing in this tourism
10 market.

11 And what I don't see is where
12 St. Michaels or this county is spending that
13 much money.

14 We're pulling in \$2 million of
15 accommodations tax. What was the total spent
16 directly promoting tourism?

17 So I would recommend you set a floor or
18 ceiling, not a ceiling, a floor that at least
19 20 to 30 percent or 40 percent or even 50
20 percent, the majority is spent on directly
21 tourism.

1 As it stands, the jurisdictions can drive
2 it to zero. They can just use it for general
3 revenue, and I think that is wrong.

4 Thank you for your consideration.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Thank you. Appreciate it.
6 Okay. Come on up.

7 MS. BELLIS: Ladies first. I like it.

8 Hi, friends. My name is Jessica Bellis.
9 I sit on the Talbot County Tourism Board. I'm
10 also the chief operating finance officer for
11 the Avalon Foundation in Easton, Maryland.

12 There's just a few points that I'd like to
13 just remind everybody about, respectfully.

14 I hear the stress and the pain of a lot of
15 our accommodations partners about this tax. I
16 just want to remind everybody that it's not
17 them that's paying the tax. It is the people
18 who come and stay in those accommodations.

19 And so as someone who does love to travel,
20 perhaps they're at a competitive advantage
21 being here in Talbot County. But mostly,

1 putting us in better line with the rest of the
2 State just gives you and the towns more access
3 to the funds that you need, both to be able to
4 promote tourism and offset all of the costs
5 associated there.

6 So this is a tax that is on people who
7 come here to help offset the expenses that they
8 create. It's an expense that helps us to
9 promote the town and the county.

10 I will say that the Avalon Foundation is a
11 beneficiary of some of those funds through the
12 Town of Easton. And we hold a lot of events
13 that have a huge tourism impact and brings
14 accommodations, heads and beds if you will, to
15 a lot of our partner businesses.

16 But also, you know, Cassandra's office is
17 a promotional partner for us, too. So the
18 dollars that we spend with Cassandra are
19 matched by dollars that are created by the
20 accommodations tax.

21 We can use words like the monster that

1 you're feeding, but the monster is making sure
2 that we do have the roads and the
3 infrastructure and the police department and
4 the marketing to be able to promote and sustain
5 tourism, which is a major industry here in
6 Talbot County.

7 You have the support of your towns. You
8 have the support of the Tourism Board that you
9 have, and we've been appointed to help to
10 advise you.

11 A lot of work has gone into this, and this
12 is a funding source that both the county and
13 the towns can use to offset those costs.

14 So thank you for your time.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Thank you. Appreciate it.

16 Yes, sir. Come on up.

17 MR. SCHNEIDER: Good evening. Thank you.
18 I'm Jeff Schneider. I'm the general manager
19 for the Hampton Inn Hotel here in Easton. And
20 I'm also on the Tourism Board.

21 Just want to make a point that, again, as

1 has been said before, it is the traveling
2 guests that come into the county that are
3 paying this. So it's not a burden on our
4 citizens.

5 Having run the hotel for 12 years and been
6 active in Talbot County tourism for 12 years, I
7 think I've got a good perspective on it. I've
8 also been in the tourism industry over 25 years
9 in other areas.

10 We're the lowest in Talbot County or in
11 Maryland. We're also the lowest in the vast
12 majority of the Mid Atlantic region. So people
13 are not choosing to stay here or somewhere else
14 because of the fact that we are two percent
15 lower in tax.

16 As a hotelier for years, and also we're an
17 affiliate with Hilton Hotels, no one asks what
18 is the tax. They ask what is the total and is
19 it in their budget to stay at my hotel or a
20 competing hotel or a bed and breakfast. So the
21 two percent addition is not going to drive

1 people to us or away from us.

2 From a competitive standpoint, you know,
3 I'm a friendly competitor with all of our
4 partners in Talbot County as well as the
5 Eastern Shore.

6 When somebody comes to us and says, for
7 instance, that maybe I'm not in their budget,
8 I'll ask them who might be in their budget.
9 Because if they're not going to stay with me, I
10 want them to stay somewhere else in Talbot
11 County.

12 The former GM for the Inn at Perry Cabin
13 was for this. The former owner of Tidewater
14 Vacation Rentals was for this as well.

15 So I think it's -- I think just puts it --
16 I think my perspective for years I've been
17 saying we're just leaving good money on the
18 table. Guests are willing to pay it.

19 The other part of this is is it's not just
20 the tourism side. For instance, my hotel is
21 basically a corporate hotel. So you have the

1 corporations who are housing people in Talbot
2 County when they come to the Eastern Shore to
3 do business that are also paying this tax.

4 So a large percentage of that is going to
5 be companies who have people traveling that are
6 going to be paying the tax, not just the
7 individual tourism guests.

8 Thank you for your time.

9 MR. CALLAHAN: Thank you. Appreciate it.
10 Okay. Anybody else like to come up? Yes, sir.
11 Come on up.

12 MR. GUNSALLUS: Good evening. My name is
13 Frank Gunsallus. I'm Town Council president
14 for Easton.

15 I'm here not in my official capacity. I
16 guess sort of. But our vote already occurred.

17 But after hearing all the testimonies
18 tonight, and especially Mr. Hartmann's in
19 regards to the fact that perhaps we could have
20 been better educated before we voted, I believe
21 that people reserve the right to change their

1 mind. And I know our votes were cast, but I am
2 on your record withdrawing my support for this
3 accommodations tax.

4 Thank you.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Anybody else like to
6 come up? Anybody else? Okay.

7 MR. LESHER: I have a follow-up question
8 for Ms. Vanhooser, if she could return.

9 I pulled up your presentation from August
10 or September when you showed us the figures
11 about what, among other things, what we've
12 collected in accommodations tax. And you
13 sorted out what is passed along to Easton, to
14 Oxford, to St. Michaels, and what is collected
15 in the unincorporated portions of the county
16 that is retained.

17 And it looks like the county is
18 collecting, that it's not turning over to the
19 municipalities, in the neighborhood of a
20 quarter million, 250,000 a year.

21 MS. VANHOOSER: It's more like 450.

1 MR. LESHER: Oh, it's 450?

2 MS. VANHOOSER: Uh-huh.

3 MR. LESHER: Okay. I recall that the
4 State mandates that the county allocate its
5 collections to tourism and economic
6 development.

7 MS. VANHOOSER: That's right.

8 MR. LESHER: Can you tell us what it is
9 that the county, just remind me, our budget
10 figures for what we spend on tourism?

11 MS. VANHOOSER: Sure.

12 MR. LESHER: Promotion.

13 MS. VANHOOSER: I should have brought that
14 with me, and I apologize.

15 So my total budget. So our -- the
16 legislation, Chapter 172, Article two, was I
17 suppose developed by us many years ago. And it
18 dictates that the towns may use the money to
19 offset the cost of tourism-related activities.
20 They can use their money however they choose.

21 The county must use their money for

1 tourism and economic development activities.

2 So you fund my entire department, and my
3 budget is in the \$800,000 range. So you're
4 spending what you collect plus that amount.

5 Now, I would have to get you the exact
6 numbers to be able to have a thorough
7 conversation.

8 But you know, it's not true that we're not
9 mandated, that there is no floor. There is a
10 floor, and it's Talbot County's floor. It's
11 not the town's floor.

12 MR. LESHAR: Right.

13 MS. VANHOOSER: So and just to answer
14 Mr. Gunsallus, Easton Economic Development, who
15 I believe has funded through their
16 accommodations tax, did reach out to the
17 tourism partners in the town before their vote.
18 So you know, I believe that they were informed
19 that this vote was coming up and did not show
20 up to the meetings.

21 MR. LESHAR: Okay. Thank you very much.

1 I appreciate the follow-up information.

2 So in sum, without looking at precise
3 numbers, we're spending on the order nearly
4 twice.

5 MS. VANHOOSER: Yes.

6 MR. LESHER: Investing nearly twice in
7 tourism promotion.

8 MS. VANHOOSER: And economic development.

9 MR. LESHER: And economic development, as
10 we are collecting in accommodations tax
11 currently?

12 MS. VANHOOSER: Yes. And that includes
13 staff. That includes --

14 MR. LESHER: Understood.

15 MS. VANHOOSER: -- all of the things we
16 do.

17 MR. LESHER: But we know all that you do
18 and how much you do, too.

19 MS. VANHOOSER: So at our public meeting,
20 I handed out a comprehensive list of all the
21 things we do on the tourism side. Did not

1 include the economic development side.

2 But our meetings are open to the public,
3 and we welcome anyone who would like to come.

4 MR. LESHER: Thank you.

5 So the towns have more wiggle room, if you
6 will, fewer restrictions on how to allocate
7 this.

8 That can be a conversation that can take
9 place with each of the municipalities as they
10 go through their budget process.

11 MS. VANHOOSER: Exactly. They determine
12 how they spend their money. But by law,
13 they're able to spend it to offset the cost of
14 tourism.

15 MR. LESHER: Understood. Thank you very
16 much.

17 MS. HAYTHE: So one more question.

18 MR. CALLAHAN: Sure.

19 MS. HAYTHE: So if the county in the State
20 law has to directly allocate the money to
21 tourism, how do we make sure that that law

1 applies to the towns? Because what we heard
2 tonight was that those in the municipalities do
3 not feel that the money is being allocated to
4 tourism, hence promoting The Old Brick Inn for
5 their getaway, which the State of Maryland will
6 partner with us to do so.

7 So if the municipalities are not doing
8 this to help support the businesses, how can
9 the county ensure that the law states that it
10 has to be specifically for tourism, like we
11 have to adhere to?

12 MS. VANHOOSER: So you would have to
13 change the law at the State legislature level.
14 You would make that request to Johnny, Chris,
15 and Tom.

16 But I would say that, you know, you should
17 ask the towns as well because I think that they
18 believe they are supporting businesses and
19 supporting tourism.

20 Now, I know there has been a shift in
21 St. Michaels in how they spend their money.

1 And I am not speaking for them, but I know that
2 the Oxford Business Association gets money from
3 Oxford's collection and I know that the Town of
4 Easton, because I spoke to the mayor about it
5 yesterday, feels that they re-invest in the
6 business community.

7 So Trappe is not currently. They have new
8 regulations, but they're not currently
9 collecting any tax. And the Town of Queen Anne
10 is not. But they both have the ability to do
11 so under our current law.

12 So back to your original question, you
13 would need to change the law.

14 MS. HAYTHE: Okay. So maybe we need a
15 work session with the municipality, as
16 Mr. Leshner said, to discuss as well.

17 MR. LESHNER: Yeah. I think that can be
18 addressed as a separate issue. I don't think
19 that that needs to hold up this process.

20 MS. MIELKE: Yes, it does. I think it
21 does, Mr. Leshner. You can't vote on something

1 and say oh, well, we'll adjust it later.

2 MR. LESHER: Well, so we've already split
3 this into two issues. One is how long the
4 grace period is for collections. The second
5 issue is, which we'll address in a second,
6 second letter if we authorize it, is the rate
7 of collection.

8 And we could address, again, separately,
9 but probably with further input from the
10 municipalities, whether a floor, as has been
11 suggested, might be put on what the
12 municipalities might allocate of their share of
13 this accommodations tax toward tourism
14 promotion.

15 MS. MIELKE: With all due respect,
16 Mr. Leshner, you can't say okay, well, we'll
17 vote for the increase and then we'll deal with
18 how it's going to be allocated in the future.
19 I mean you can't do that.

20 MR. LESHER: Well, we know how the
21 county's portion is going to be allocated.

1 That's already set in law.

2 MS. HAYTHE: It is, yeah. Agreed.

3 MS. MIELKE: Huh?

4 MS. HAYTHE: I said agreed.

5 MS. MIELKE: You agree with him?

6 MS. HAYTHE: Yeah.

7 MR. LESHER: Given that the State is on a
8 set timetable, and if we don't get this, these
9 letters in to our delegation before the start
10 of term, I think the chance rapidly declines
11 that any action takes place in legislative
12 session in the State this year.

13 We're aware of this. That's why we've put
14 it off until this time to be able to collect
15 the feedback that we've collected.

16 MS. MIELKE: What is the deadline?

17 MR. LESHER: Well, session starts in
18 January.

19 MS. MIELKE: Yeah. But that's not the
20 deadline.

21 MR. LESHER: This is the last -- well, it

1 is not the deadline. But you know very well
2 that the later a bill is introduced in session,
3 the less its chance of getting a hearing.

4 MS. MIELKE: I don't know that.

5 MS. VANHOOSER: So I believe that Delegate
6 Adams requested that we have a request in to
7 them no later than January 15th. And that was
8 at our session with them on October 1st.

9 MS. HAYTHE: And with the request, the
10 State would still have to approve?

11 MS. VANHOOSER: Certainly. It has a long
12 way to go. It has to be passed by both the
13 House and the Senate.

14 MR. CALLAHAN: Exactly.

15 MR. LESHER: This is simply a request for
16 legislative action.

17 MS. VANHOOSER: It's enabling legislation
18 to enable you to raise your accommodations tax
19 rate. But it does have those specifics
20 included in it.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

1 MR. LESHER: So I'll put my motion back on
2 the table to issue the letter to our State
3 delegation requesting legislation for, enabling
4 legislation for an accommodations tax increase
5 from four to six percent for Talbot County.

6 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Is there a second?

7 MS. HAYTHE: Second.

8 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Madam Secretary, we
9 got a motion and second to send a letter. Call
10 the vote, please.

11 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

12 MR. CALLAHAN: No.

13 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

14 MR. STEPP: No.

15 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

16 MR. LESHER: Aye.

17 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

18 MS. MIELKE: No.

19 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

20 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

1 MS. VANHOOSER: Thank you.

2 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup. Thank you.

3 Yes, sir.

4 MR. LESHER: Is this in order now?

5 MR. WAGNER: One last thing. I have one
6 technical question.

7 We all collect the sales tax. Part of the
8 discussion with the delegation is what happens
9 to the sales tax that we collect and what
10 percentage comes back to this county and in
11 what form. That's another discussion that has
12 to be had.

13 And I think it has to simultaneously
14 because nobody won tonight. And we're going to
15 be back. We're going to figure this out
16 because we love this county. And I'm invested
17 very heavily.

18 But these are the kind of questions -- the
19 amount of sales tax is beyond breathtaking.
20 And I think that's where there has to be a
21 bigger conversation. We send it across, but we

1 get nothing in return.

2 MR. CALLAHAN: We'll have a conversation.

3 MR. WAGNER: Thank you very much.

4 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

5 MS. HAYTHE: Let's go. At the end.

6 MR. CALLAHAN: Next on the --

7 MS. MIELKE: They can stay.

8 MR. CALLAHAN: Huh?

9 MS. MIELKE: Anybody who wants to comment
10 can wait until the end.

11 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah. I know it. Okay.

12 Next on the agenda is the introduction of
13 a numbered resolution. Madam Secretary, could
14 you go ahead and read that.

15 SECRETARY: A resolution to amend the
16 Talbot County comprehensive water and sewer
17 plan to reclassify and remap certain real
18 properties located at 9802 Ocean Gateway and
19 9818 Ocean Gateway, Easton, Maryland. Shown on
20 tax map 25 as parcels five and six from
21 unprogrammed to W-1/S-1, immediate priority

1 status, pursuant to an application filed by the
2 McNeal Family Trust.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. You want to come on
4 up, Mr. Clarke?

5 MR. CLARKE: Ray Clarke, county engineer.
6 Council, we did receive the application
7 from the property owner seeking an amendment to
8 the comp water and sewer plan.

9 We then worked with the Office of Law to
10 prepare the resolution for your all's review
11 and introduction tonight.

12 At this point, if the Council chooses to
13 introduce this, we would be presenting this to
14 the Public Works Advisory Board at their
15 December 19th meeting for a recommendation to
16 the County Council. And then also at the
17 Planning Commission meeting on January 8th.

18 And that would be for the remaining
19 resolutions as well.

20 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. All right. Any
21 questions from Council? Okay.

1 Raise our hands to --

2 MR. LESHER: I believe -- it's not
3 completely clear to me from this, but this
4 parcel has been annexed into Easton.

5 Is this a recent annexation?

6 MR. CLARKE: I believe, yes. It's my
7 understanding that ultimately this parcel we're
8 talking about, we did receive an application as
9 well as a letter from the towns in support of
10 amending the comp water and sewer plan for this
11 parcel.

12 MR. LESHER: And is there a development
13 proposal for this property contingent on this?

14 MR. CLARKE: I'm not aware of that part.
15 No, I'm not aware.

16 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Show of hands to
17 introduce. My good hand.

18 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Callahan and
19 Stepp.

20 SECRETARY: The public hearing will be on
21 Tuesday, January 14th, at 5:30 p.m.

1 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Next one, Madam
2 Secretary.

3 SECRETARY: Oh, it will be Resolution 365.

4 MR. CALLAHAN: Yes.

5 SECRETARY: A resolution to amend the
6 Talbot County comprehensive water and sewer
7 plan to reclassify and remap certain real
8 properties located on the east side of US Route
9 50 south of Dutchmans Lane, Easton, Maryland.
10 Shown on tax map 34 as parcels 128 and 175.
11 From W-3/S-3 and unprogrammed, respectively, to
12 W-1/S-1, immediate priority status, pursuant to
13 an application filed by Corrigan & Trippe
14 Ventures, LLC.

15 MR. CLARKE: And again, we received the
16 application on this. This is actually a
17 development project for residential properties
18 in this area. So that we did receive that
19 request as well as a letter from the Town of
20 Easton supporting this.

21 MR. LESHER: And Mr. Clarke, I believe

1 this is the property that we recently, we
2 recently had the zoning waiver.

3 MR. CLARKE: Correct.

4 MR. LESHER: Because of the recent
5 annexation of this property.

6 MR. CLARKE: Yes.

7 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Council, show of
8 hands for introduction.

9 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Stepp, Leshner,
10 and Callahan.

11 SECRETARY: This will be known as
12 Resolution 366, and the public hearing will be
13 held on Tuesday, January 14th, at 5:30 p.m.

14 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Great. Next, Madam
15 Secretary.

16 SECRETARY: A resolution to amend the
17 Talbot County comprehensive water and sewer
18 plan to reclassify and remap certain real
19 property located at 7510 Quaker Neck Road,
20 Bozman, Maryland. Shown on tax map 39 as
21 parcel 79 from unprogrammed to S-1, immediate

1 priority status, pursuant to an application
2 filed by Kevin Mills.

3 MR. CLARKE: Again, so we did receive the
4 application from the property owner. And this
5 is, again, seeking to amend the comp water and
6 sewer plan for the Bozman area to go to S-1
7 sewer service.

8 This parcel consists of about four acres.
9 It is an improved lot. Sewer will be extended
10 to the area and it would be feasible to connect
11 to this property.

12 MR. LESHER: I'm sorry. You said about
13 four acres?

14 MR. CLARKE: It is, currently it is 4.1
15 acres or four acres, plus or minus.

16 MR. LESHER: So it's got one dwelling --

17 MR. CLARKE: Correct.

18 MR. LESHER: And it's not subdividable?

19 MR. CLARKE: Right. To my knowledge, it
20 is not subdividable.

21 MR. LESHER: Mr. Clarke, from the math on

1 this, this looks like this goes a little bit
2 beyond the area that is currently in the
3 comprehensive water and sewer plan for sewer
4 connection.

5 Is there a reason why in -- this would
6 have been resolution two...

7 MR. CLARKE: This is 250, Resolution 250.

8 MR. LESHER: And why -- because I remember
9 there was a lot of care to the criteria for
10 Resolution 250 and what was in and what was
11 out.

12 What was the rationale then and how has
13 the circumstances changed?

14 MR. CLARKE: This, in this situation, I
15 think Resolution 250, we tried to create break
16 points and utilizing the tier maps.

17 The one thing I would say that in the
18 review of the tier maps and in discussions with
19 Environmental Health let's say ten years ago,
20 in our discussions with Environmental Health,
21 when you typically have a parcel on the water

1 that's let's say three acres or less, it
2 becomes very difficult to find enough suitable
3 land area for a replacement drain field.

4 So again, this is on the water. It's
5 about four acres.

6 But you do run into issues with other
7 environmental things on the property that can
8 reduce your land area. So this is a potential
9 scenario where we look at we're on the water,
10 we currently have high ground water with poor
11 draining soils.

12 And so with these property owners, if
13 they're ground coupled, their septic system is
14 ground coupled and if ground water is rising on
15 them, they don't have a whole lot of treatment
16 zone. They penetrate that. And ultimately, it
17 does create problems for all the houses in
18 these areas.

19 But one of the things I think we'll do is
20 we'll seek Environmental Health's
21 recommendation on this resolution as well.

1 MR. LESHER: Thank you.

2 MR. CALLAHAN: So want to raise our hands.

3 MR. LESHER: For sponsorship.

4 Introduced by Callahan and Stepp.

5 SECRETARY: This will be known as
6 Resolution 367, and the public hearing will be
7 on Tuesday, January 14th, at 5:30.

8 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

9 MR. CLARKE: And again, Council, we
10 received the application for this parcel.
11 Again, this is I guess some industrial or
12 general commercial, if not industrial parcels.
13 It's in the Town of Trappe. And ultimately, it
14 consist of 37.86 acres in the Town of Trappe.

15 At this point in time, they're seeking I
16 guess to amend the comp water and sewer plan to
17 provide sewer to that parcel.

18 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

19 SECRETARY: This is --

20 MR. CALLAHAN: Next. I'm sorry.

21 SECRETARY: A resolution to amend the

1 Talbot County comprehensive water and sewer
2 plan to reclassify and remap certain real
3 property located at 4502 Old Trappe Road,
4 Trappe, Maryland. Shown on tax map 54 as
5 parcel 302. From unprogrammed to W-1/S-1,
6 immediate priority status, pursuant to an
7 application filed by Brian Hause.

8 MS. HAYTHE: This is already annexed in
9 the town?

10 MR. CLARKE: Yes, it is. To my knowledge,
11 it is annexed into the town.

12 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah.

13 MR. CLARKE: And we did receive a letter
14 from the town supporting the application.

15 MR. LESHER: If I recall correctly, this
16 was also subject to a recent annexation and a
17 zoning waiver.

18 MR. CLARKE: Correct.

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Any questions with
20 Ray?

21 Show of hands.

1 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Callahan and
2 Stepp.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

4 SECRETARY: And this will be known as
5 Resolution Number 368, and the public hearing
6 will be held on Tuesday, January 14th, at 5:30
7 p.m.

8 MR. CALLAHAN: That's great.

9 MR. CLARKE: Thank you.

10 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Next up is county
11 manager. Clay.

12 MR. STAMP: Good evening, Council. Thank
13 you. Under county manager report, I have
14 several things for you.

15 The first are your board and committee
16 appointments.

17 I'm asking Council's approval for a new
18 addition to or a replacement addition on the
19 Police Accountability Board. That would be for
20 Mr. Brian Naranjo.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

1 MS. HAYTHE: Motion to approve the --

2 MR. LESHER: Second.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We got a motion and
4 second. Madam Secretary, could you call the
5 vote.

6 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

7 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

8 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

9 MR. STEPP: No.

10 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

11 MR. LESHER: Aye.

12 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

13 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

14 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

15 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

16 MR. STAMP: Thank you, Council. That's
17 all from the board and committee appointments
18 this evening.

19 The first item of business I have is a
20 request from the Department of Parks and
21 Recreation. They are requesting Council

1 approval to renew the pool management contract
2 with Coastline Pools for the operation and
3 management of the George Murphy and the Bay
4 Hundred community pools for the 2025 season in
5 a total sum of \$290,811.

6 The contract will be broken out into two
7 fiscal years, FY25 and 26.

8 And with all contracts, it's been
9 thoroughly reviewed and vetted prior to the
10 recommendation.

11 And our experience with this company has
12 been positive with the management of our pools.

13 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Council.

14 MR. STEPP: I'll second the comments about
15 the successful relationship, and I'll make a
16 motion to approve.

17 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

18 MR. LESHER: I'll second.

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We got a motion and
20 second. Madam Secretary, could you call the
21 vote.

1 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

2 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

3 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

4 MR. STEPP: Aye.

5 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

6 MR. LESHNER: Aye.

7 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

8 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

9 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

10 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

11 MR. STAMP: Thank you, Council.

12 The next item I have is a request from the
13 Department of Facilities Maintenance. They're
14 requesting Council approval to award the
15 installation of the courthouse chiller and
16 cooling tower to Electric Automation Services,
17 Incorporated, EASI, in the amount of
18 \$283,767.50.

19 This would be procured by piggybacking on
20 a contract with Wicomico County.

21 There are sufficient funds in this

1 approved capital budget.

2 This is the final portion of the
3 replacement of the chiller in the courthouse.
4 There's also included a new electrical
5 distribution system.

6 It's a CIP project that we're looking
7 forward to getting done.

8 MS. HAYTHE: Motion to approve the
9 request.

10 MS. MIELKE: Second.

11 MR. STEPP: Second.

12 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We got a motion and
13 second. Madam Secretary, could you call the
14 vote.

15 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

16 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

17 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

18 MR. STEPP: Aye.

19 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

20 MR. LESHNER: Aye.

21 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

1 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

2 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

3 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

4 MR. STAMP: Thank you, Council.

5 At this point, I'll call up your favorite
6 airport manager, Mr. Micah Risher.

7 Of course, we only have one airport.

8 MR. LESHER: I'm glad he's not our second
9 or third favorite.

10 MR. RISHER: Thank you, Clay.

11 Council, good evening. Micah Risher, the
12 airport manager.

13 Exciting time to be in front of you. This
14 is part of our airfield modernization program,
15 as you know, is marching right along.

16 This request, it's time for us to press
17 the go button with our partners at FAA to
18 procure the equipment and plan the construction
19 and inspection of our new ILS system out there.

20 So the ILS system is FAA-owned equipment
21 and it's FAA-maintained equipment. We have a

1 no-cost lease for the space. Very good deal.

2 It's been installed since the year 2020.
3 Our equipment, it's time for an upgrade. So
4 with our airfield modernization, we'll be
5 getting new equipment, some refurbished
6 equipment. And it will all be relocated so
7 that we can open the new runway in 2026.

8 So tonight's ask is, for one, I'll start
9 by saying the funds that we're asking to use
10 will be coming out of the airport's cash
11 balance, which we have 2. -- 2,750,000,
12 approximately, in our cash reserves. So that
13 would be coming out of the airport fund.

14 And what we need to do is forward fund
15 this. The cost will be \$602,000. It's noted
16 there in your handout.

17 And the way this works is we need to fund
18 the FAA national airspace system planning group
19 to start procuring this equipment and to get
20 involved with us in the construction process
21 now. That way we can have the equipment

1 ordered and installed, inspected, and ready to
2 go when we open the new runway in 2026.

3 So the way this works is we forward fund
4 it. We give them the, pay them the \$602,000.
5 We literally are going to turn right around in
6 2025 calendar year and request reimbursement
7 through our ADO for 95 percent of that.

8 So the actual cost to Easton Airport is
9 going to be \$15,067.65. And we'll turn this
10 money around within 12 months.

11 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Do I have a motion?

12 MS. MIELKE: I so move.

13 MS. HAYTHE: Second.

14 MR. CALLAHAN: We got a motion and second.
15 Madam Secretary, could you call the vote.

16 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

17 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

18 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

19 MR. STEPP: Aye.

20 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

21 MR. LESHNER: Aye.

1 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

2 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

3 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

4 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

6 MR. RISHER: Thank you, Council.

7 MR. CALLAHAN: Good job, Micah.

8 MR. RISHER: I appreciate it.

9 MR. STAMP: And Council, I will call
10 Brennan Tarleton up, your planning officer.

11 And he has a request of you this evening.

12 I'll just let you run with that, if you
13 don't mind. And I'll fill in the blanks
14 wherever you need me.

15 MR. TARLETON: Absolutely.

16 Good evening, Council. Brennan Tarleton,
17 planning director for Talbot County.

18 Here this evening requesting your approval
19 of the acceptance of the grant funding from the
20 National Fish and Wildlife Services in the
21 amount of \$979,267.44 for implementing the

1 green infrastructure plan for Tilghman on the
2 Chesapeake community.

3 Earlier in this past year, you actually
4 signed the contract with the partnership and
5 the matching funds associated with this very
6 same project. That was offered by DNR in the
7 amount of 433,363 for the implementation of
8 this project.

9 Back in 2021, staff partnered and worked
10 with the Tilghman on the Chesapeake Community
11 Foundation to obtain a grant from DNR for a
12 resilient coastline project for this specific
13 site.

14 Obviously, understanding that this is a
15 community-owned parcel, the county did this in
16 partnership with them, understanding that the
17 money, the State funding and the federal
18 funding, has to go through a local government
19 entity and not through a private organization.
20 So we partnered with Tilghman on the Chesapeake
21 Community Foundation to help them come up with

1 the design of this project with help from DNR
2 and the completion of the project from Baylands
3 Consulting.

4 Now moving forward, they've sought after
5 and obtained the funding for the actual project
6 cost, which is a total of about \$1.4 million.
7 The funds between DNR and National Fish and
8 Wildlife Services covers the full amount of
9 this project as it's to be implemented.

10 So we're here tonight asking for your
11 acceptance of the second portion of the funding
12 that would be associated with the
13 implementation of the project itself.

14 It's no cost. There's no matching on the
15 county's part. We're simply working to manage
16 the funds associated with the project and to
17 assist with the construction management as
18 well.

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Any questions,
20 Council?

21 MS. HAYTHE: I think Pete has comments.

1 No.

2 MR. LESHAR: This is green infrastructure.
3 This is what would be called commonly a living
4 shoreline along this.

5 MR. TARLETON: That's correct. So it's an
6 adaptive approach to a living shoreline
7 scenario by which you implement different types
8 of structures.

9 In the project's description that I
10 provided in my memo, it talks about the
11 implementation of 665 feet of linear living
12 shoreline with vetted marsh sills, concrete
13 oyster breaks, as well as some marsh mitigation
14 and some sand dunes. That will help as sea
15 level rise and storm severity increases over
16 time to regenerate that marsh that currently
17 exists there and allow it to continue to exist
18 in that location and not creep landward.

19 So it's not the same as like a bulkhead
20 that ultimately would prevent the shoreline
21 from eroding any further. It's an adaptive

1 approach to allow that shoreline to continue to
2 be sustained over time.

3 MR. LESHER: Thank you. I recall ten,
4 between ten and 15 years ago, Chesapeake Bay
5 Maritime Museum received a grant. It must have
6 been through local government, through the same
7 NFWF source.

8 And we did it in three phases to convert
9 what had been bulkheaded shoreline into living
10 shoreline.

11 And when the second phase was completed
12 but the third phase was still in bulkhead,
13 interns from the Chesapeake Bay Trust came down
14 and did sampling along this shoreline. And in
15 the portion that had been planted for just one
16 year, they found an abundance of species along
17 that. It truly attracts -- I mean animal
18 species, not just the plants that were put in
19 there. And only yards away in front of the
20 bulkhead, we had virtually a sterile bay
21 bottom.

1 It is amazing how effective these are in
2 doing exactly what they're designed to do, both
3 protecting the land, but also protecting the
4 health of the waters that are in front of them.

5 So I'll move to accept the grant funding.

6 MS. HAYTHE: Second.

7 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We got a motion and
8 second. Madam Secretary, could you call the
9 vote.

10 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

11 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

12 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

13 MR. STEPP: Aye.

14 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

15 MR. LESHNER: Aye.

16 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

17 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

18 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

19 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

20 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

21 MR. TARLETON: Thank you.

1 MR. STAMP: Thank you, Brennan.

2 Thank you, Council.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup.

4 MR. STAMP: I have one item left. I'm
5 requesting Council approval to enter into a
6 Memorandum of Understanding with the Easton
7 Utilities Commission for the placement of a
8 fiberoptic cable in the Broad Creek bore sleeve
9 as a part of the county's extension of the
10 sewer to the Villages of Bozman and Neavitt.

11 And that line, the MOU with Easton
12 Utilities, will pay the county \$113,000 to
13 defray the county's expense associated with
14 permitting and staff time, as well as a portion
15 of the county's costs associated with the
16 project.

17 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

18 MR. LESHER: So I had the opportunity,
19 with the Public Works Advisory Board, to visit
20 the Bozman side of this property where we could
21 see the conduit coming up from the Mount

1 Pleasant Circle side. It's a good size. I
2 don't remember exactly how large it is, but
3 it's pretty sizeable.

4 That was already in place at that time.
5 And they were starting to feed or to put
6 together the sections of sewer main that goes
7 inside that conduit. And I can tell you that
8 there's plenty of room for this.

9 And as we know, Easton Utilities will help
10 with the cost of that conduit by sharing that
11 space with their infrastructure.

12 So this is a really great opportunity for
13 the county, and I'm thrilled that Easton
14 Utilities is partnering with us.

15 I will move approval of the Memorandum of
16 Understanding.

17 MS. HAYTHE: I have a question.

18 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah.

19 MS. HAYTHE: Clay, is this providing any
20 type of redundancy or is this --

21 MR. STAMP: Yes, it actually is. That's a

1 good question. Thank you very much.

2 Especially for those that have critical
3 infrastructure. It's going to allow Easton
4 Utilities and the broadband project to be able
5 to have a loop.

6 MS. HAYTHE: Okay.

7 MR. STAMP: So it will be able to back
8 feed the area.

9 For example, we have a public safety tower
10 down there. It will give us redundancy for
11 operation of that tower. Thank you.

12 MS. HAYTHE: That's the only question I
13 had. Just wanted to make sure that there was
14 redundancy there.

15 MR. STEPP: From a financial standpoint, I
16 mean we had to spend the additional what,
17 180,000, for the hard bottom and the drilling
18 and everything.

19 So this helps recoup a very large chunk of
20 that.

21 MS. HAYTHE: Absolutely.

1 MR. STEPP: With that said, I'll second
2 Mr. Leshher's motion.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We got a motion and
4 second. Madam Secretary, could you call the
5 vote.

6 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

7 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

8 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

9 MR. STEPP: Aye.

10 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshher.

11 MR. LESHER: Aye.

12 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

13 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

14 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

15 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

16 MR. STAMP: Council, that completes your
17 county manager report for this week. Thank
18 you.

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Sounds good. Good job.
20 Okay.

21 Next on the agenda is public comment. Do

1 we have a list?

2 MR. STAMP: Yes. I have Mr. Riggin is
3 here, Mr. Phil Riggin. Nonprofit activities.

4 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup. Come on up, sir.

5 MR. RIGGIN: Again, my name is Phil
6 Riggin. I'm a resident of Easton Club East
7 here in Easton, and my address is 29736
8 Sullivan Drive.

9 I've attended a number of your meetings in
10 your recent months as a new resident here in
11 Easton.

12 Although you didn't do it tonight because
13 your agenda dictated other things to do, some
14 of which were very weighty, you have made a
15 habit of congratulating people who are engaged
16 in community service and bringing them in here
17 to express your gratitude, to bring them in
18 here to accept proclamations that you've
19 prepared to recognize their work. And it's --
20 that's heartening, very heartening.

21 But I don't know that how often you folks

1 receive gratitude and appreciation for the
2 sorts of things that you do and having -- I
3 know the public, elected public officials
4 frequently don't get thanked for what they do.
5 But I want to just say one thing about that,
6 one primary thing.

7 I've done a little bit of research, and
8 it's not scientific research, but research
9 nonetheless, that you folks, the five of you as
10 a group, have volunteered or do volunteer now
11 on behalf of more than 40 organizations here in
12 the area.

13 I want to say that again. You either have
14 volunteered or do still volunteer on behalf of
15 more than 40 nonprofit or associated
16 organizations here in this county. That's an
17 amazing record.

18 I think actually that your record in that
19 regard surpasses your colleagues in virtually
20 any other county council or county commission
21 entity here on the Eastern Shore. And I'd be

1 willing to venture a guess even in the State of
2 Maryland.

3 I mean you epitomize I think the old adage
4 if you want to get something done, go find a
5 busy person. And that frequently is the case.

6 All of this, of course, is in addition to
7 your time that you spend behind the scenes, at
8 these meetings, and what you do in your current
9 job as County Council members.

10 Finally, I want to say that I think that
11 your record of commitment to community service
12 should be publicized and that the public should
13 be aware of it. Now, I'm not going to offer
14 any suggestions on how that should happen, but
15 it seems to me that people in this county
16 should know when they've elected the five of
17 you, that they elected obviously qualified
18 people, talented people, but truly, truly good
19 people. And I do think that that is something
20 that the public needs to hear.

21 Now, you can argue with my math about the

1 numbers of organization that you folks have
2 supported over the years. I do know it ranges
3 from mentoring youth to dealing with
4 homelessness. That's a pretty wide variety of
5 activity.

6 So I do know, and -- I'm sorry. I
7 shouldn't have said I do know. I guess, I
8 would guess that what you've done has directly
9 affected the lives of not just hundreds but
10 thousands of people in this community, in this
11 area, this county.

12 When you consider youth programs, I mean
13 affecting 15 or 20 kids or whatever it may be
14 just like bam, just like that. And I suspect
15 that what you've done has probably affected at
16 least two generations of people here in this
17 county and perhaps even more.

18 So I think all of you should get a raise.

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. So I want to comment
20 on one thing.

21 MR. RIGGIN: Yes.

1 MR. CALLAHAN: You can have as much time
2 as you want.

3 MR. RIGGIN: Yeah. I know. You all have
4 a lot of time at your disposal.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: I really appreciate the
6 great comments. And you know, we appreciate
7 it. We've noticed you've been here the last
8 couple of months or three months or whatever.

9 MR. RIGGIN: It's been something I've been
10 thinking about doing for several weeks now.

11 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thanks a lot.

12 MR. RIGGIN: It should be publicized.

13 MR. CALLAHAN: Thank you. Appreciate it.
14 Okay.

15 Anybody else on the list?

16 MR. STAMP: There was one more, and I
17 don't believe he's here. Kevin. Yeah, he
18 left.

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Good. Okay.
20 With that.

21 MR. STEPP: I'd like to wish everyone a

1 Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Travel
2 safe if you're traveling, enjoy time with
3 family and friends, and looking forward to
4 2025.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup.

6 MR. STEPP: Thank you, all.

7 MR. CALLAHAN: Mr. Leshner.

8 MR. LESHNER: I'll add my best wishes for
9 Christmas, Hanukkah, New Year's, any of the
10 holidays that you may celebrate. That they be
11 safe and happy for you and your family.

12 I will say that to keep us occupied,
13 several members of Council will be heading off
14 to the Maryland Association of Counties, or
15 MACo, conference.

16 I look forward in particular to sessions
17 on Maryland's future power needs and power
18 distribution, on housing, and on cannabis,
19 about which we had a workshop earlier just this
20 afternoon. We have more to learn. We have
21 more to bring back from what we see in best

1 practices in other jurisdictions. Not only
2 across the State, but in some cases with these
3 speakers from well beyond the State's borders.

4 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thank you.

5 Lynn.

6 MS. MIELKE: Well, I'd just like to quote
7 Irving Berlin about this holiday season and may
8 you have a very merry and bright holiday
9 season.

10 MR. CALLAHAN: Sounds great. Sounds
11 great.

12 MS. HAYTHE: And I'll just echo what my
13 colleagues said. You know, Merry Christmas to
14 everyone and Happy Hanukkah.

15 But also, it was really nice what you
16 said. We very seldom get to hear that sitting
17 up here.

18 Lynn asked today. We were just talking
19 about that because I spent most of my day
20 making signed auction baskets today before
21 coming here.

1 So yes. We all contribute widely to our
2 community. And I believe I can speak for all
3 of us and say we truly enjoy transforming the
4 lives of not only the youth in our community
5 but also the adults that we support, too,
6 through the homeless shelters and the senior
7 citizens that Lynn support as well.

8 But thank you. You are a breath of fresh
9 air to come to us. Because sitting up here,
10 I'm up here like I'm tired, I'm tired. But I
11 still got work to do when I get home. So thank
12 you.

13 And again, Merry Christmas to all and
14 Happy Hanukkah.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: That's great. And like my
16 colleagues said, Merry Christmas.

17 And that was a breath of fresh air.
18 That's for sure. We welcome you anytime. Now
19 that you're up here, don't come down here.
20 Don't come on down now. You're good.

21 But I want to thank Council, too. We've

1 had a great year. We've done some really great
2 work.

3 And on that comment, I want to thank
4 staff. You guys have worked hard this year for
5 us, made us look really good, and we can't
6 thank you enough. Your whole team, and that's
7 with all our employees. We have close to 400?

8 MR. STAMP: Yeah.

9 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah, close to 400
10 employees, full and part, part time. So I want
11 to thank them. They've done a great job for us
12 this year. They've done a great job for the
13 county. Worked hard for us.

14 And so I want to do a hand out to Greg, my
15 security over here. So he does a great job,
16 and we really appreciate you week in, week out
17 helping us out. And all the police force does
18 and the deputies, and we can't thank you enough
19 for protecting us. Okay. Thank you. Yeah.

20 MR. STAMP: I can't -- I have to say that
21 on behalf of those 400 employees, who are

1 incredibly dedicated.

2 MR. CALLAHAN: Yes.

3 MR. STAMP: We thank you. You help us
4 make our job easy because you rise to the
5 occasion and you support us. And we take our
6 lead from you.

7 You set the policy. And then we work
8 really hard to try to carry it out. But we're
9 very happy and proud to work with a Council
10 like you.

11 So I'll just jump on Mr. Riggin's praise
12 for you. You don't get the credit you deserve.
13 You're five people that raised your hand and
14 said I'll do it. And you all see life through
15 different lenses on different subjects, but you
16 agree -- you disagree, but you don't do it --
17 you keep that civil discord properly. You keep
18 the bar high. And we appreciate that.

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup. Thank you. That's
20 great.

21 So Mr. Leshner.

1 MR. LESHER: The County Council's next
2 meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 14,
3 2025, beginning at 5 o'clock p.m. The Council
4 will be convening in open session at 3:30 p.m.
5 and then adjourning into closed session, as
6 listed on the statement for closing that
7 meeting.

8 On Tuesday, January 7th, the Talbot County
9 Council will be meeting with the Board of
10 Education at 5 o'clock at the Easton High
11 School culinary arts program. The meeting is
12 open to the public.

13 Therefore, is there a motion to adjourn
14 this meeting and reconvene as noted?

15 MS. HAYTHE: So moved.

16 MR. STEPP: And a second.

17 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We got a motion and
18 second. Madam Secretary, could you call the
19 vote.

20 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

1 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

2 MR. STEPP: Aye.

3 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

4 MR. LESHER: Aye.

5 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

6 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

7 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

8 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

9 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thanks a lot.

10 Appreciate it.

11 Have a good night, good Christmas, good
12 holiday.

13 (Meeting concluded at: 6:27 p.m.)

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STATE OF MARYLAND

I, Diane Houlihan, a Notary Public in and for the State of Maryland, County of Baltimore City, do hereby certify that the within named, Talbot County Council Audio, personally appeared before me at the time and place herein set according to law, was interrogated by counsel.

I further certify that the examination was recorded stenographically by me and then transcribed from my stenographic notes to the within printed matter by means of computer-assisted transcription in a true and accurate manner.

I further certify that the stipulations contained herein were entered into by counsel in my presence.

I further certify that I am not of counsel to any of the parties, not an employee of counsel, nor related to any of the parties, nor in any way interested in the outcome of this action.

AS WITNESS my hand Notarial Seal this 16th day of December, 2024, at Easton, MD.



Diane Houlihan
Notary Public

My commission expires September 16, 2025

[& - 73]

Page 1

&	17 15:17	2026 74:7 75:2	4
& 61:13	172 47:16	203 14:3,12	4 15:4 20:21
1	175 61:10	21 15:21	4.1 63:14
1 15:1 58:21,21 61:12,12 62:21 63:6 67:5,5	18 15:18	21.5 20:4	4.8. 20:14
1.1 20:13	180,000 84:17	24th 5:13	40 39:4,19 87:11,15
1.4 78:6	19 15:19	25 43:8 58:20	400 94:7,9,21
10 1:7 15:10	1980s 38:11	250 64:7,7,10 64:15	433,363 77:7
100 20:19	1985 38:7	250,000 46:20	45 34:2
21:17	1986 31:16	25876 19:14	45,000 25:10 25:11
10th 3:7	1996 25:4	25th 5:15	450 46:21 47:1
11 15:11	19th 59:15	26 70:7	4502 67:3
113,000 82:12	1st 55:8	27th 5:6	4th 6:2
12 15:12 39:7 43:5,6 75:10	2	28 22:8 25:5	5
120 7:20 8:3	2 15:2 23:14 39:14 74:11	283,767.50. 71:18	5 15:5 96:3,10
128 61:10	2,000 14:7,13 36:5	290,811 70:5	50 21:17 23:19 39:19 61:9
13 15:13	2,750,000 74:11	29736 86:7	54 67:4
13.10. 21:2	20 9:20 15:1,20 20:17 39:4,19 89:13	29th 2:21	5:00 1:7
1362 98:15	2004 9:20	3	6
14 15:14 96:2	2009 20:1,19 20:21	3 15:3 61:11,11	6 15:6
14th 60:21 62:13 66:7 68:6	2020 74:2	30 39:4,19	6.4 20:6
15 15:15 80:4 89:13	2021 77:9	302 67:5	602,000 74:15 75:4
15,067.65. 75:9	2024 1:7 20:1 98:13	34 61:10	665 79:11
15th 55:7	2025 70:4 75:6 91:4 96:3 98:19	365 61:3	6:27 97:13
16 15:16 20:4 20:12,20 98:19		366 62:12	7
16th 98:13		367 66:6	7 15:7
		368 68:5	70 35:13
		37.86 66:14	73 28:1
		39 62:20	
		3:30 96:4	
		3rd 3:6 5:11 6:9	

[73.3 - ahead]

Page 2

73.3 28:4	absorb 30:16	65:5 66:14	adjust 53:1
7510 62:19	31:7	action 54:11	ado 75:7
79 62:21	abstaining 6:3	55:16 98:12	adults 93:5
7th 96:8	abundance	active 43:6	advantage
8	80:16	activities 47:19	40:20
8 15:8	accept 81:5	48:1 86:3	advertise 34:1
8.32. 21:1	86:18	activity 34:3	advertising
800,000 48:3	acceptance	89:5	33:2
82 35:11	76:19 78:11	actual 22:7	advise 42:10
86 38:19	accepted 2:17	75:8 78:5	advisory 59:14
87 38:19	3:4,13	actually 19:18	82:19
8th 59:17	access 41:2	61:16 77:3	affect 28:3,6
9	accommodati...	83:21 87:18	29:8
9 15:9	26:16	adage 88:3	affected 89:9
9.5 12:21	accommodati...	adams 55:6	89:15
95 75:7	6:10,21 7:6,18	adaptive 79:6	affecting 89:13
979,267.44	7:20 8:20 10:1	79:21	affiliate 43:17
76:21	12:7,13 14:18	add 27:11 91:8	afford 9:2 31:6
9802 58:18	16:6 17:5 26:2	addition 43:21	afraid 29:4
9818 58:19	28:2 39:15	68:18,18 88:6	afternoon
a	40:15,18 41:14	additional 13:6	91:20
ability 9:13	41:20 46:3,12	84:16	agenda 2:6,13
52:10	48:16 49:10	additions 2:15	2:14,16,17,19
able 8:21 9:2	53:13 55:18	2:21 3:8	3:15 58:12
10:17 30:15	56:4	address 53:5,8	85:21 86:13
32:4 41:3 42:4	accomplish	86:7	ago 21:15 36:1
48:6 50:13	22:4	addressed	47:17 64:19
54:14 84:4,7	accountability	52:18	80:4
absolutely	24:1 68:19	addresses 7:1	agree 32:19,20
24:11 76:15	accurate 98:7	adhere 51:11	54:5 95:16
84:21	acknowledged	adjourn 96:13	agreed 54:2,4
	11:20	adjourning	ahead 2:3,7
	acres 63:8,13	96:5	17:21 58:14
	63:15,15 65:1		

[air - august]

Page 3

air 93:9,17	amount 4:19	appointed 42:9	areas 43:9
airbnb 30:13	9:21 14:19	appointments	65:18
airbnbs 31:4	15:2 19:21	68:16 69:17	argue 88:21
airfield 73:14	48:4 57:19	appreciate	argument
74:4	71:17 76:21	2:12 15:14	21:21
airport 73:6,7	77:7 78:8	23:4 24:9,11	arguments
73:12 74:13	angeline 34:16	30:2 37:17,19	20:15
75:8	34:18	40:5 42:15	article 47:16
airport's 74:10	animal 80:17	45:9 49:1 76:8	arts 96:11
airspace 74:18	anne 6:5 12:18	90:5,6,13	arundel 12:18
all's 59:10	52:9	94:16 95:18	aside 38:15
allegiance 2:8	annexation	97:10	asked 5:7 28:1
2:10	60:5 62:5	appreciation	37:2 92:18
allocate 47:4	67:16	87:1	asking 7:9
50:6,20 53:12	annexed 60:4	approach 79:6	22:19 68:17
allocated 25:10	67:8,11	80:1	74:9 78:10
51:3 53:18,21	annual 5:16	approval 7:5	asks 43:17
allocation	answer 25:9	9:11,12 68:17	aspect 10:3
22:14	48:13	70:1 71:14	assist 78:17
allow 79:17	anybody 45:10	76:18 82:5	assisted 98:7
80:1 84:3	46:5,6 58:9	83:15	associated 41:5
allowed 8:1	90:15	approve 8:9	77:5 78:12,16
alternative	anymore 32:7	9:4,14 55:10	82:13,15 87:15
34:9	anytime 93:18	69:1 70:16	association
amazing 81:1	apologize	72:8	52:2 91:14
87:17	47:14	approved 26:5	atlantic 43:12
amend 58:15	appeared 98:3	72:1	attempt 26:1
61:5 62:16	application	approximately	attended 19:17
63:5 66:16,21	59:1,6 60:8	74:12	86:9
amending	61:13,16 63:1	area 9:1 61:18	attracts 80:17
60:10	63:4 66:10	63:6,10 64:2	auction 92:20
amendment	67:7,14	65:3,8 84:8	audio 98:3
59:7	applies 51:1	87:12 89:11	august 5:6 46:9

[authorize - budget]

Page 4

authorize 16:1 17:3 53:6 automation 71:16 available 28:8 avalon 40:11 41:10 average 21:4 award 71:14 aware 20:3 54:13 60:14,15 88:13 aye 16:13,15,17 16:19,21 56:16 56:20 69:7,11 69:13,15 71:2 71:4,6,8,10 72:16,18,20 73:1,3 75:17 75:19,21 76:2 76:4 81:11,13 81:15,17,19 85:7,9,11,13 85:15 96:21 97:2,4,6,8	backs 31:17 balance 10:21 74:11 ball 13:14 baltimore 12:20,21 98:2 bam 89:14 bar 95:18 based 14:19 27:21 basically 37:8 44:21 baskets 92:20 bay 70:3 80:4 80:13,20 baylands 78:2 bed 43:20 beds 41:14 beginning 96:3 behalf 87:11,14 94:21 believe 6:13 11:4,8 28:1,5,7 36:15 45:20 48:15,18 51:18 55:5 60:2,6 61:21 90:17 93:2 believed 12:4 bellis 40:7,8 beneficiary 41:11 benefits 11:2,5	berlin 92:7 best 10:4 37:13 91:8,21 better 32:11,12 33:7 41:1 45:20 beyond 57:19 64:2 92:3 big 18:14 30:11 30:15 bigger 24:2,2 57:21 biggest 38:13 bill 55:2 bit 64:1 87:7 bixler 4:8 8:15 blanks 76:13 blue 23:9,14 board 3:16 4:9 4:10,19 5:4 6:8 7:10 8:16 11:3 11:13 12:3 15:9,14 17:7 26:1 40:9 42:8 42:20 59:14 68:15,19 69:17 82:19 96:9 bookings 12:16 borders 6:19 92:3 bore 82:8 bottom 25:7 80:21 84:17	bozman 29:12 62:20 63:6 82:10,20 break 64:15 breakfast 43:20 breaks 79:13 breath 93:8,17 breathtaking 23:18 57:19 brennan 76:10 76:16 82:1 brian 67:7 68:20 brick 25:3 27:19 51:4 bridge 34:18 bright 92:8 bring 7:15 10:5 86:17 91:21 bringing 86:16 brings 10:14 41:13 broad 82:8 broadband 84:4 broke 20:8 broken 70:6 brooks 38:7 brought 47:13 budget 22:15 31:21 32:12 43:19 44:7,8 47:9,15 48:3
b			
b&bs 20:9 back 15:12 22:15 33:14 52:12 56:1 57:10,15 77:9 84:7 91:21			

[budget - cip]

Page 5

50:10 72:1 bulkhead 79:19 80:12,20 bulkheaded 80:9 burden 43:3 bureau 20:14 22:4 business 6:14 8:18 12:2 19:1 21:20 26:19 28:3,6 29:20 30:5 35:10,15 36:7 39:6 45:3 52:2,6 69:19 businesses 11:1 41:15 51:8,18 busy 88:5 button 73:17	7:16 8:13 13:16 14:17 15:7,18 16:9 16:12,13 17:1 17:9,13,19,21 18:4,13,16,19 19:5,7,11 24:11,15,18,20 27:5,7,10,13 29:11,21 31:8 34:14 37:19 38:2,4 40:5 42:15 45:9 46:5 50:18 55:14,21 56:6 56:8,11,12,21 57:2 58:2,4,6,8 58:11 59:3,20 60:16,18 61:1 61:4 62:7,10 62:14 66:2,4,8 66:18,20 67:12 67:19 68:1,3,8 68:10,21 69:3 69:6,7 70:13 70:17,19 71:1 71:2 72:12,15 72:16 75:11,14 75:16,17 76:5 76:7 78:19 81:7,10,11,20 82:3,17 83:18 85:3,6,7,19 86:4 89:19	90:1,5,11,13 90:19 91:5,7 92:4,10 93:15 94:9 95:2,19 96:17,20,21 97:9 called 10:21 79:3 cannabis 91:18 capacity 45:15 capital 72:1 captain 7:14 8:14 care 64:9 carry 95:8 case 13:5 25:21 88:5 cases 92:2 cash 74:10,12 cassandra 4:6 13:18 19:9 32:18 41:18 cassandra's 41:16 cast 46:1 cause 25:18 ceiling 39:18 39:18 celebrate 91:10 certain 58:17 61:7 62:18 67:2 certainly 55:11	certify 98:3,5,8 98:10 chair 3:3,12 30:1 chairman 4:8 chambers 1:10 chance 2:14,20 3:7 54:10 55:3 change 13:13 34:3 45:21 51:13 52:13 changed 9:21 64:13 chapter 47:16 charges 14:20 check 32:8 chesapeake 77:2,10,20 80:4,13 chief 40:10 chiller 71:15 72:3 choice 12:9 choose 47:20 chooses 59:12 choosing 43:13 chris 51:14 christmas 91:1 91:9 92:13 93:13,16 97:11 chuck 1:14 chunk 84:19 cip 72:6
c			
cabin 23:9 44:12 cable 82:8 calendar 75:6 caliber 31:1 call 16:10 56:9 69:4 70:20 72:13 73:5 75:15 76:9 81:8 85:4 96:18 callahan 1:14 2:3,11 3:3,12			

[circle - conducted]

Page 6

circle 83:1	48:4 54:14	26:7 27:21	competing 39:9
circumstances 64:13	57:7,9	58:9 85:21	43:20
citizen 7:3	collected 6:18	89:19 94:3	competitive
citizens 43:4	20:5 22:9 32:9	comments 7:14	30:8 40:20
93:7	46:12,14 54:15	70:14 78:21	44:2
city 12:20 13:1	collecting 12:1	90:6	competitor
29:2 98:2	38:10 46:18	commercial	44:3
civil 95:17	49:10 52:9	66:12	complain 28:12
clarke 59:4,5,5	collection	commission	complaining
60:6,14 61:15	13:13 52:3	59:17 82:7	28:21
61:21 62:3,6	53:7	87:20 98:19	complete 38:1
63:3,14,17,19	collections	commissioner	completed
63:21 64:7,14	20:13 47:5	18:8	80:11
66:9 67:10,13	53:4	commitment	completely
67:18 68:9	collectively	88:11	35:8 60:3
clay 27:13	23:11	committee	completes
68:11 73:10	collectors 6:10	68:15 69:17	85:16
83:19	6:21 11:16	common 27:3	completion
clean 10:13	come 3:17	commonly 79:3	78:2
clear 28:9 60:3	28:11 31:1	communities	comply 7:19
close 94:7,9	40:6,18 41:7	9:2 10:4,5,6	comprehensive
closed 96:5	42:16 43:2	community	49:20 58:16
closer 23:13	45:2,10,11	9:18 52:6 70:4	61:6 62:17
closing 96:6	46:6 50:3 59:3	77:2,10,15,21	64:3 67:1
club 86:6	77:21 86:4	86:16 88:11	computer 98:7
coastline 70:2	93:9,19,20	89:10 93:2,4	concern 34:21
77:12	comes 30:9,9	comp 59:8	35:20 36:9
code 7:18	44:6 57:10	60:10 63:5	38:13
colleagues	coming 3:19	66:16	concerns 6:12
87:19 92:13	30:21 32:2,3	companies	concluded
93:16	48:19 74:10,13	45:5	97:13
collect 11:9	82:21 92:21	company 30:4	concrete 79:12
17:12 31:15	comment 17:12	31:3,3 70:11	conducted 35:7
	17:18 18:1		

[conduit - covid]

Page 7

conduit 82:21 83:7,10 conference 91:15 congratulate 31:13 congratulating 86:15 connect 63:10 connection 64:4 consent 2:18 3:4,14 consider 23:5 25:19 26:12 33:14 89:12 consideration 15:13 27:2 36:11 40:4 considered 6:5 consist 66:14 consists 63:8 construction 73:18 74:20 78:17 consulting 78:3 contained 98:9 contingent 60:13 continue 9:1 10:17 79:17 80:1 contract 70:1,6 71:20 77:4	contracts 70:8 contribute 93:1 control 6:17 convening 96:4 conversation 48:7 50:8 57:21 58:2 convert 80:8 cooling 71:16 copy 35:2 corners 6:11 corporate 44:21 corporations 30:15 45:1 correct 15:4,5 16:7 62:3 63:17 67:18 79:5 corrections 2:16 3:1,9 correctly 67:15 corridor 33:20 corrigan 61:13 cost 13:7 21:16 30:18,19,19 47:19 50:13 74:1,15 75:8 78:6,14 83:10 costs 28:18 41:4 42:13 82:15 council 1:1,4 1:10,13 2:13	4:5 5:6 8:8 29:5 31:15 45:13 59:6,12 59:16,21 62:7 66:9 68:12 69:16,21 70:13 71:11,14 73:4 73:11 76:6,9 76:16 78:20 82:2,5 85:16 87:20 88:9 91:13 93:21 95:9 96:3,9 98:3 council's 68:17 96:1 counsel 98:4,9 98:10,11 counties 14:10 91:14 county 1:1,1 3:16 4:7,15 5:6 7:10,21 8:5,5 10:8,13,15 11:2 12:17,18 12:19,21 13:21 14:2,8 17:5 20:7,11 23:6 27:19 29:5,10 30:11 32:8,21 33:3 34:19 35:7 36:4,8,16 37:13 38:9 39:12 40:9,21	41:9 42:6,12 43:2,6,10 44:4 44:11 45:2 46:15,17 47:4 47:9,21 50:19 51:9 56:5 57:10,16 58:16 59:5,16 61:6 62:17 67:1 68:10,13 71:20 76:17 77:15 82:12 83:13 85:17 87:16,20 87:20 88:9,15 89:11,17 94:13 96:1,8 98:2,3 county's 7:18 35:12 48:10 53:21 78:15 82:9,13,15 countywide 33:18 couple 34:2 35:5 90:8 coupled 65:13 65:14 course 38:12 73:7 88:6 court 13:14 courthouse 71:15 72:3 covers 78:8 covid 31:20 32:16
--	--	--	---

[create - draining]

Page 8

create 36:6 41:8 64:15 65:17 created 7:2 41:19 credit 95:12 creek 82:8 creep 79:18 criteria 64:9 critical 84:2 culinary 96:11 curb 13:5 current 52:11 88:8 currently 7:17 49:11 52:7,8 63:14 64:2 65:10 79:16 cut 22:15 31:20 31:21	december 1:7 3:6,7 6:2,9 59:15 98:13 decide 9:13 deciding 12:11 decision 13:15 29:6,8 37:11 37:12 decisions 12:11 13:9 declines 54:10 dedicated 95:1 deeper 22:17 defer 37:7 defray 82:13 delaying 35:19 delegate 55:5 delegates 5:17 delegation 7:8 16:2 17:3 54:9 56:3 57:8 deletions 2:15 3:1,9 department 35:8 42:3 48:2 69:20 71:13 deputies 94:18 description 79:9 deserve 95:12 design 78:1 designed 81:2 destinations 12:9	details 4:19 determine 50:11 developed 38:7 47:17 development 4:7 47:6 48:1 48:14 49:8,9 50:1 60:12 61:17 diane 1:21 98:2 98:16 dictated 86:13 dictates 47:18 difference 36:17 different 34:6,8 79:7 95:15,15 difficult 65:2 diligence 15:10 15:16 directly 14:7 38:15,20 39:5 39:16,20 50:20 89:8 director 4:15 76:17 disadvantages 11:5 disagree 11:6 95:16 disbursements 3:6,9,13	discord 95:17 discount 28:15 discounting 28:14 discuss 52:16 discussion 13:17 32:17 57:8,11 discussions 64:18,20 disposal 90:4 distinct 13:21 distributed 6:20 distribution 72:5 91:18 district 13:2 divide 33:17 dnr 77:6,11 78:1,7 doing 15:10 22:11 23:15 31:14 34:3,4 51:7 81:2 90:10 dollars 22:19 23:12 25:9 41:18,19 double 21:14 downward 39:9 drain 65:3 draining 65:11
d			
date 7:21 dave 1:18 day 8:3 28:11 28:11 92:19 98:13 days 7:21 dead 33:5 deadline 7:7 54:16,20 55:1 deal 53:17 74:1 dealing 89:3			

[dramatically - extended]

Page 9

dramatically 22:15 drilling 84:17 drive 6:13 38:17 40:1 43:21 86:8 drivers 36:8 due 7:21 8:11 15:10,16 53:15 dunes 79:14 dupont 31:9,10 dutchmans 61:9 dwelling 63:16	96:10 98:13 easy 95:4 echo 92:12 economic 4:7 14:1 47:5 48:1 48:14 49:8,9 50:1 educated 45:20 education 96:10 effective 8:12 81:1 effects 11:1 efforts 23:13 eight 12:19,20 24:13 either 11:18 87:13 elected 87:3 88:16,17 electric 71:16 electrical 72:4 email 7:1 employee 98:11 employees 94:7 94:10,21 employs 14:7 enable 55:18 enabling 55:17 56:3 engaged 86:15 engineer 59:5	enjoy 91:2 93:3 ensure 51:9 enter 82:5 entered 98:9 entire 9:5 48:2 entities 8:17 10:16 entity 77:19 87:21 environmental 64:19,20 65:7 65:20 epitomize 88:3 equal 33:11 equipment 73:18,20,21 74:3,5,6,19,21 eroding 79:21 escalator 12:1 20:20 21:4 28:17 especially 45:18 84:2 essentially 22:1 evening 4:5,6 4:12 13:19 18:6,16,17,18 24:21 42:17 45:12 68:12 69:18 73:11 76:11,16,18 event 25:20 events 41:12	everybody 2:5 23:17 27:3 33:12,21 34:20 37:10,15 40:13 40:16 evidence 11:4 exact 14:5 48:5 exactly 18:15 50:11 55:14 81:2 83:2 examination 98:5 example 84:9 excellent 30:20 excess 23:12 exciting 73:13 exist 79:17 exists 79:17 expect 32:6,6 expense 41:8 82:13 expenses 9:3 41:7 expensive 29:2 experience 26:5 36:2 70:11 expires 98:19 explain 21:3 26:14 express 6:11 86:17 extended 8:6 63:9
e			
earlier 77:3 91:19 easi 71:17 easily 23:11 east 61:8 86:6 eastern 44:5 45:2 87:21 easton 1:10 5:10 20:6 34:19 40:11 41:12 42:19 45:14 46:13 48:14 52:4 58:19 60:4 61:9,20 75:8 82:6,11 83:9 83:13 84:3 86:6,7,11			

[extension - gateway]

Page 10

extension 82:9	fees 20:13	88:16 95:13	frankly 23:2
f	feet 79:11	flag 2:9	free 38:16 39:1
f 1:14	ferry 34:18	floor 38:14	frequently 87:4
faa 73:17,20,21	fewer 12:16	39:3,17,18	88:5
74:18	50:6	48:9,10,10,11	fresh 93:8,17
face 36:3	fiberoptic 82:8	53:10	friendly 44:3
faced 21:12	field 65:3	folks 24:13	friends 40:8
facilities 71:13	figure 57:15	86:21 87:9	91:3
facing 32:1	figures 46:10	89:1	front 73:13
fact 32:21	47:10	follow 46:7	80:19 81:4
43:14 45:19	filed 59:1 61:13	49:1	full 78:8 94:10
factor 10:13	63:2 67:7	following 11:8	fund 48:2
12:11 23:14	fill 76:13	force 94:17	74:13,14,17
failure 7:19	final 7:5 36:14	form 57:11	75:3
familiar 19:19	72:2	former 44:12	funded 48:15
family 59:2	finally 37:21	44:13	funding 42:12
91:3,11	88:10	forms 26:21	76:19 77:17,18
far 15:17	finance 4:14	forward 7:7	78:5,11 81:5
fatter 22:21	40:10	72:7 74:14	funds 30:16
favorite 73:5,9	financial 84:15	75:3 78:4 91:3	38:20 39:2
feasible 63:10	financials 28:9	91:16	41:3,11 71:21
federal 77:17	find 25:15	found 26:10	74:9 77:5 78:7
fee 20:11 22:1	33:16 65:2	80:16	78:16
feed 83:5 84:8	88:4	foundation	further 53:9
feedback 15:11	first 3:15 5:4	40:11 41:10	79:21 98:5,8
54:15	9:17 17:12	77:11,21	98:10
feeding 22:18	31:12 40:7	four 5:14 6:2	future 29:9
42:1	68:15 69:19	15:3,4 17:5	53:18 91:17
feel 8:20 9:15	fiscal 70:7	56:5 63:8,13	fy25 70:7
10:4,11 11:21	fish 76:20 78:7	63:15 65:5	g
35:14 51:3	five 5:10 11:12	fourth 26:1	garrett 12:19
feels 52:5	19:1 20:11,20	frame 13:13	gateway 58:18
	21:5 36:15	frank 45:13	58:19
	58:20 87:9		

[general - hartmann's]

Page 11

general 39:2 40:2 42:18 66:12 generate 4:20 generated 36:6 generations 89:16 genesis 13:8 gentleman 26:8 george 24:19 25:1 28:16 38:7 70:3 getaway 51:5 getting 55:3 72:7 74:5 give 5:2 32:11 75:4 84:10 given 19:8 20:15,18 54:7 gives 25:8 32:10 41:2 giving 30:14 glad 73:8 gm 44:12 go 2:3,7 9:8,10 17:21 20:6 21:2 23:2 24:16 29:2 33:3,4,18 38:20 50:10 55:12 58:5,14 63:6 73:17 75:2 77:18 88:4	goes 20:1 22:17 26:20 64:1 83:6 going 2:5 7:11 17:17 22:11,12 22:17,20 23:21 25:8 28:10 31:5 35:9,14 43:21 44:9 45:4,6 53:18 53:21 57:14,15 75:5,9 84:3 88:13 good 3:10 4:5 15:18 18:6,16 18:17 20:3 24:21 33:13 42:17 43:7 44:17 45:12 60:17 68:12 73:11 74:1 76:7,16 83:1 84:1 85:19,19 88:18 90:19 93:20 94:5 97:11,11,11 government 77:18 80:6 grace 8:3,6 16:5 53:4 grand 30:7 grant 8:2 76:19 77:11 80:5 81:5	gratitude 86:17 87:1 great 62:14 68:8 83:12 90:6 92:10,11 93:15 94:1,1 94:11,12,15 95:20 green 77:1 79:2 greg 94:14 ground 27:3 65:10,13,14,14 group 74:18 87:10 groups 12:10 growing 20:10 guarantee 31:4 guess 23:20 45:16 66:11,16 88:1 89:7,8 guests 28:11,12 28:20 43:2 44:18 45:7 gunsallus 45:12,13 48:14 guys 3:16 29:17 34:17 35:2 37:19 94:4	hand 32:17 60:17 94:14 95:13 98:13 handed 49:20 handle 32:4,13 handout 18:7 74:16 hands 60:1,16 62:8 66:2 67:21 hanukkah 91:9 92:14 93:14 happen 34:9 88:14 happened 31:18 happening 29:3 happens 34:6 57:8 happy 91:1,11 92:14 93:14 95:9 hard 31:21 84:17 94:4,13 95:8 hardships 30:4 harmful 12:5 hartmann 34:15,16,17,18 37:8,18 hartmann's 45:18
---	---	---	---

[hause - inaudible]

Page 12

hause 67:7 haythe 1:16 13:18 14:12,16 16:8,20,21 17:8,16 18:2,9 18:12 50:17,19 52:14 54:2,4,6 55:9 56:7,19 56:20 58:5 67:8 69:1,14 69:15 71:9,10 72:8 73:2,3 75:13 76:3,4 78:21 81:6,18 81:19 83:17,19 84:6,12,21 85:14,15 92:12 96:15 97:7,8 heading 91:13 heads 41:14 health 64:19,20 81:4 health's 65:20 hear 35:19 40:14 88:20 92:16 heard 15:11 20:16,17 36:18 51:1 hearing 2:16 15:11 34:20 36:19 37:1 45:17 55:3 60:20 62:12	66:6 68:5 heartening 86:20,20 heavily 57:17 held 6:8 36:21 62:13 68:6 96:2 hello 27:17 29:17 34:17 help 41:7 42:9 51:8 77:21 78:1 79:14 83:9 95:3 helping 94:17 helps 41:8 84:19 hi 40:8 high 28:20 65:10 95:18 96:10 higher 12:14 hilton 43:17 historic 38:8 hold 17:11 27:7 41:12 52:19 holiday 92:7,8 97:12 holidays 91:10 home 7:15 93:11 homeless 93:6 homelessness 89:4	hope 27:2 35:2 hospitality 12:5 30:9 hostess 37:7 hotel 42:19 43:5,19,20 44:20,21 hotelier 43:16 hotels 43:17 houlihan 1:21 98:2,16 house 34:18 38:7 55:13 housekeepers 21:13 housekeeping 21:18 30:19 houses 65:17 housing 45:1 91:18 howard 12:17 hoyle 29:16,17 29:19 30:3 huge 41:13 hugely 30:10 huh 47:2 54:3 58:8 hundred 70:4 hundreds 89:9 hurt 12:2	identifying 19:12 ils 73:19,20 immediate 58:21 61:12 62:21 67:6 impact 14:1,6 35:9,14 41:13 impactful 30:10 imperative 8:21 implement 79:7 implementati... 77:7 78:13 79:11 implemented 78:9 implementing 76:21 important 9:7 9:15 10:3,12 10:12 23:16 28:4 31:2 impose 8:1 13:2 30:4 imposed 13:4 impress 10:2 improved 63:9 improvement 13:1 inaudible 17:8 17:9 18:11,12
---	---	--	---

[inaudible - know]

Page 13

18:13 include 50:1 included 55:20 72:4 includes 14:21 49:12,13 incorporated 71:17 increase 7:6,13 9:20 13:11 17:4 23:18,19 33:8 36:17 53:17 56:4 increased 9:14 12:13 increases 21:19 79:15 increasing 15:4 28:2 incredibly 95:1 independent 35:1 indirectly 14:8 individual 10:8 18:21 45:7 individually 23:7 industrial 66:11,12 industry 10:14 12:6 13:20 14:2 34:12 42:5 43:8	inflation 22:2 influence 12:8 12:9 information 5:1,8 19:9 28:8 29:7 49:1 informed 29:6 37:11 48:18 infrastructure 25:13 26:20 42:3 77:1 79:2 83:11 84:3 initially 38:18 inn 19:15 23:9 25:3 27:20 38:6 42:19 44:12 51:4 input 37:2 53:9 inside 83:7 inspected 75:1 inspection 73:19 installation 71:15 installed 74:2 75:1 instance 44:7 44:20 interested 4:11 98:12 interns 80:13 interrogated 98:4	introduce 35:3 59:13 60:17 introduced 55:2 60:18 62:9 66:4 68:1 introduction 58:12 59:11 62:8 invest 52:5 invested 57:16 investing 49:6 involved 21:19 38:10 74:20 irving 92:7 issue 19:18 29:13 52:18 53:5 56:2 issues 53:3 65:6 item 18:3,4 69:19 71:12 82:4	jobs 14:13 36:5 36:7 johnny 5:18 51:14 johnson 27:12 27:17,18 judy 4:8 7:14 8:14 jump 29:16 95:11 juncture 17:18 jurisdictions 6:14 12:12 13:3,8 40:1 92:1
			k
			keasha 1:16 keep 30:12 91:12 95:17,17 kevin 29:12 34:15,17 63:2 90:17 kids 89:13 kind 32:2 35:16 57:18 know 6:15 8:15 22:16 23:20 25:21 28:13,17 32:1,2,3 36:12 41:16 44:2 46:1 48:8,18 49:17 51:16,20 52:1,3 53:20

[know - lot]

Page 14

55:1,4 58:11 73:15 83:9 86:21 87:3 88:16 89:2,6,7 90:3,6 92:13 knowledge 63:19 67:10 known 62:11 66:5 68:4 knows 32:19	lease 74:1 leaving 44:17 left 22:10 82:4 90:18 legislation 16:3 16:5 38:18 47:16 55:17 56:3,4 legislative 54:11 55:16 legislators 5:17 legislature 8:9 51:13 lenses 95:15 lesher 1:15 3:11 15:7,8,21 16:16,17 17:2 17:10,17,20 19:2 21:3,7,9 46:7 47:1,3,8 47:12 48:12,21 49:6,9,14,17 50:4,15 52:16 52:17,21 53:2 53:16,20 54:7 54:17,21 55:15 56:1,15,16 57:4 60:2,12 60:18 61:21 62:4,9,9 63:12 63:16,18,21 64:8 66:1,3 67:15 68:1 69:2,10,11	70:18 71:5,6 72:19,20 73:8 75:20,21 79:2 80:3 81:14,15 82:18 85:10,11 91:7,8 95:21 96:1 97:3,4 lesher's 85:2 letter 16:1 17:3 53:6 56:2,9 60:9 61:19 67:13 letters 36:15 54:9 level 51:13 79:15 license 35:21 life 95:14 likes 11:8,9 line 25:7 35:8 41:1 82:11 linear 79:11 list 24:17 27:8 27:9 49:20 86:1 90:15 listed 96:6 listen 36:2,9 listening 24:9 literally 30:14 75:5 little 33:4 35:12 64:1 87:7	live 26:17 lives 89:9 93:4 living 79:3,6,11 80:9 llc 61:14 local 13:7 77:18 80:6 located 58:18 61:8 62:19 67:3 location 25:4 79:18 lodging 14:19 14:20 26:7,9 34:12 35:17 36:4 37:3 logic 25:13 long 9:17 32:18 53:3 55:11 look 2:14,20 3:8 65:9 91:16 94:5 looking 33:11 49:2 72:6 91:3 looks 46:17 64:1 looming 7:8 loop 84:5 lot 21:13 23:7 24:8,8 30:6 32:19 33:7 40:14 41:12,15 42:11 63:9 64:9 65:15
l			
l 1:17 labor 28:18 ladies 40:7 laid 5:18 land 65:3,8 81:3 landward 79:18 lane 61:9 large 26:17,18 45:4 83:2 84:19 largest 11:16 late 38:11 law 8:4 50:12 50:20,21 51:9 51:13 52:11,13 54:1 59:9 98:4 lay 7:12 lead 95:6 learn 91:20			

[lot - michelle]

Page 15

<p>90:4,11 97:9 love 10:3 40:19 57:16 lower 43:15 lowered 34:10 lowering 33:14 lowest 9:5 33:1 34:11 43:10,11 lynn 1:17 92:5 92:18 93:7</p>	<p>make 7:14 13:10,15 18:19 19:6 29:5,8 30:21 33:7,20 35:16 37:10,11 37:15 42:21 50:21 51:14 70:15 84:13 95:4 makes 37:11 making 42:1 92:20 manage 78:15 management 70:1,3,12 78:17 manager 42:18 68:11,13 73:6 73:12 85:17 managing 19:14 mandated 48:9 mandates 47:4 manner 98:7 map 58:20 61:10 62:20 67:4 maps 64:16,18 marching 73:15 maritime 80:5 market 6:13 9:1 10:5 30:8,8 30:13,13 39:10</p>	<p>marketing 23:8 23:13 42:4 marsh 79:12,13 79:16 martha 3:19,21 4:14 7:11 martha's 13:12 maryland 1:1 1:10 8:3 12:13 14:10 40:11 43:11 51:5 58:19 61:9 62:20 67:4 88:2 91:14 98:1,2 maryland's 91:17 matched 41:19 matching 77:5 78:14 materials 28:19 math 63:21 88:21 matter 37:1 98:7 mautz 5:18 mayor 52:4 mcneal 59:2 md 98:13 mean 17:13 53:19 80:17 84:16 88:3 89:12</p>	<p>means 98:7 measure 13:4 meeting 1:4 5:7 5:16,19,20 6:9 26:10 49:19 59:15,17 96:2 96:7,9,11,14 97:13 meetings 48:20 50:2 86:9 88:8 members 1:13 4:9,11 15:9 88:9 91:13 memo 79:10 memorandum 82:6 83:15 memory 14:4 mentoring 89:3 merry 91:1 92:8,13 93:13 93:16 micah 73:6,11 76:7 michael's 22:7 michaels 5:14 20:7 22:14 25:3,8,15 26:5 26:8 27:18 29:1 31:19 32:7 38:5,16 39:12 46:14 51:21 michelle 29:16 29:19</p>
m			
<p>ma'am 29:21 maco 91:15 madam 16:10 56:8 58:13 61:1 62:14 69:4 70:20 72:13 75:15 81:8 85:4 96:18 made 86:14 94:5 main 34:21 35:20 83:6 maintained 73:21 maintenance 71:13 major 42:5 majority 35:11 38:20 39:20 43:12</p>			

[microphone - noticed]

Page 16

microphone 25:1 mid 43:12 middle 9:9 mielke 1:17 3:2 14:18 15:1,6 16:18,19 18:11 52:20 53:15 54:3,5,16,19 55:4 56:17,18 58:7,9 69:12 69:13 71:7,8 72:10,21 73:1 75:12 76:1,2 81:16,17 85:12 85:13 92:6 97:5,6 mike 30:1 mile 6:19 million 14:3,12 20:5,13 22:19 23:12,14 25:9 39:14 46:20 78:6 mills 29:12,13 63:2 mind 2:7 19:11 46:1 76:13 minus 63:15 minutes 2:19 2:20 3:1,4 18:21 mitigation 79:13	modernization 73:14 74:4 money 6:16 21:13 22:11,17 23:8,21 25:8 25:12 26:15 28:10 31:15 32:4 39:13 44:17 47:18,20 47:21 50:12,20 51:3,21 52:2 75:10 77:17 monster 22:18 22:19,20 24:1 41:21 42:1 montgomery 12:17 month 8:11 16:6 32:9 monthly 31:16 31:16 32:8 months 8:19 75:10 86:10 90:8,8 morris 3:20 27:15 motion 15:20 15:21 16:1,4,8 16:9 17:10,11 56:1,9 69:1,3 70:16,19 72:8 72:12 75:11,14 81:7 85:2,3 96:13,17	mou 82:11 mount 82:21 move 7:7 17:2 75:12 81:5 83:15 moved 96:15 moves 3:3,12 moving 78:4 multiple 11:14 19:3,3 municipalities 46:19 50:9 51:2,7 53:10 53:12 municipality 52:15 murphy 70:3 museum 80:5 n n 1:16 name 19:13 25:1 27:11,14 27:15,17 29:19 40:8 45:12 86:5 named 98:3 naranjo 68:20 national 74:18 76:20 78:7 native 38:8 nearly 49:3,6 neavitt 82:10	neck 62:19 need 5:1 13:6 15:20 22:5 24:2 25:1,12 25:14 41:3 52:13,14 74:14 74:17 76:14 needed 7:5 needs 26:19 28:7 52:19 88:20 91:17 negatively 28:3 28:5 35:10 neighborhood 46:19 net 22:7 never 23:1,1 new 21:1 36:1 52:7 68:17 72:4 73:19 74:5,7 75:2 86:10 91:1,9 nfwf 80:7 nice 92:15 night 21:17 97:11 nonprofit 86:3 87:15 notary 98:2,17 noted 74:15 96:14 notes 98:6 noticed 90:7
--	--	--	---

[notorial - paid]

Page 17

notorial 98:13 number 4:9,10 6:10 28:4 35:9 68:5 86:9 numbered 58:13 numbers 14:5 14:11 19:21 20:2 22:5 23:17 33:16 48:6 49:3 89:1	offered 77:6 office 41:16 59:9 officer 40:10 76:10 official 45:15 officials 87:3 offset 13:7 41:4 41:7 42:13 47:19 50:13 oh 4:3 27:9 47:1 53:1 61:3 okay 2:3,4,11 2:12,16,18 3:5 3:10,12,14 7:16 8:13 16:9 17:1,17,20 18:2,19 19:7 24:15 27:5 29:11,15 31:7 38:2 40:6 45:10 46:5,6 47:3 48:21 52:14 53:16 55:21 56:6,8 56:21 58:4,11 59:3,20,21 60:16 61:1 62:7,14 66:8 66:18 67:19 68:3,10,21 69:3 70:13,17 70:19 72:12 75:11 76:5	78:19 81:7,20 82:17 84:6 85:3,20 89:19 90:11,14,19,19 92:4 94:19 96:17 97:9 old 25:2 27:19 51:4 67:3 88:3 ones 8:6 19:3,4 36:5,6 open 50:2 74:7 75:2 96:4,12 operating 21:19 25:4 40:10 operation 70:2 84:11 operators 26:7 26:9 opinion 11:7 opportunity 24:10 33:8 82:18 83:12 oppose 11:19 order 8:21 25:19 49:3 57:4 ordered 75:1 ordinance 31:12 organization 19:2 77:19 89:1	organizations 87:11,16 original 52:12 outcome 98:12 outlines 4:18 outside 18:10 outweigh 11:5 overly 12:8 overview 5:2 overwhelming 6:15 owned 38:6 73:20 77:15 owner 29:20 44:13 59:7 63:4 owners 25:2 30:5 36:7 65:12 owns 7:3 19:15 oxford 5:12 20:6 46:14 52:2 oxford's 52:3 oyster 79:13
o			p
o'clock 96:3,10 oak 19:16 oaks 19:15 21:16 23:11 obtain 77:11 obtained 78:5 obviously 77:14 88:17 occasion 95:5 occupancies 33:19 occupancy 33:8 occupied 91:12 occurred 45:16 ocean 29:2 58:18,19 october 2:21 55:8 offer 88:13			p.m. 1:7 60:21 62:13 68:7 96:3,4 97:13 package 36:15 packet 4:17 paid 8:10,11 21:14 31:16

[pain - pools]

Page 18

pain 40:14	passed 31:13	28:1,4 30:6,16	placement 82:7
parcel 60:4,7	32:5 38:19	33:15 34:2	plan 58:17 59:8
60:11 62:21	46:13 55:12	35:11 39:4,4,4	60:10 61:7
63:8 64:21	past 77:3	39:7,7,8,19,19	62:18 63:6
66:10,17 67:5	pay 10:6 11:8	39:20 43:14,21	64:3 66:16
77:15	11:10 14:9	56:5 75:7	67:2 73:18
parcels 58:20	44:18 75:4	percentage	77:1
61:10 66:12	82:12	45:4 57:10	planning 59:17
parks 69:20	paying 21:13	percentile	74:18 76:10,17
parsonage 38:6	40:17 43:3	35:13	plant 29:14
part 8:3 13:21	45:3,6	period 7:20 8:3	planted 80:15
31:18 32:14	payment 7:19	8:7 16:5 32:16	plants 80:18
35:1 39:2	16:6	33:5,9 53:4	platter 30:14
44:19 57:7	penalty 8:1,12	permitting	pleasant 83:1
60:14 73:14	penetrate	82:14	please 9:4
78:15 82:9	65:16	perry 23:9	27:14 29:5
94:10,10	pennsylvania	44:12	56:10
particular 18:2	19:19	person 6:3 88:5	pledge 2:8,10
18:4 91:16	penny 34:10	personal 26:4	plenty 83:8
parties 98:11	people 10:5	personally 98:3	plus 48:4 63:15
98:11	11:6 14:7 20:2	perspective	point 20:4 23:9
partner 19:14	26:9 32:2	43:7 44:16	23:14 24:5
41:15,17 51:6	36:12 40:17	perspectives	36:14 42:21
partnered 77:9	41:6 43:12	37:16	59:12 66:15
77:20	44:1 45:1,5,21	pete 1:15 78:21	73:5
partnering	86:15 88:15,18	phase 80:11,12	points 35:5
83:14	88:18,19 89:10	phases 80:8	40:12 64:16
partners 4:11	89:16 95:13	phil 86:3,5	police 22:11
23:6 35:17	percent 8:1,12	pie 24:8	25:14,16 42:3
40:15 44:4	12:17,18,19,20	piggybacking	68:19 94:17
48:17 73:17	12:21 13:1,11	71:19	policy 95:7
partnership	15:3,4 17:5,6	place 50:9	pool 70:1
14:9 19:15	20:11,20 21:5	54:11 83:4	pools 70:2,4,12
77:4,16	22:8 23:19	98:4	

[poor - pulling]

Page 19

<p>poor 65:10</p> <p>portion 53:21 72:2 78:11 80:15 82:14</p> <p>portions 46:15</p> <p>positive 70:12</p> <p>possibly 33:13</p> <p>potential 65:8</p> <p>power 91:17,17</p> <p>powerpoint 4:17</p> <p>practices 92:1</p> <p>praise 95:11</p> <p>prayer 2:8,10</p> <p>precise 49:2</p> <p>prepare 59:10</p> <p>prepared 86:19</p> <p>presence 98:9</p> <p>present 5:7 6:4 23:4 24:10</p> <p>presentation 3:15 4:17 5:20 13:19 19:17 46:9</p> <p>presented 5:4 6:1</p> <p>presenting 59:13</p> <p>president 45:13</p> <p>press 73:16</p> <p>pretty 31:21 83:3 89:4</p>	<p>prevent 79:20</p> <p>price 6:12</p> <p>primary 87:6</p> <p>principle 22:18</p> <p>printed 98:6</p> <p>prior 70:9</p> <p>priority 58:21 61:12 63:1 67:6</p> <p>private 7:3 77:19</p> <p>proactive 32:16</p> <p>probably 53:9 89:15</p> <p>problems 65:17</p> <p>proceedings 2:1</p> <p>process 9:9 15:17 32:12 35:1,18 50:10 52:19 74:20</p> <p>proclamations 86:18</p> <p>procure 73:18</p> <p>procured 71:19</p> <p>procuring 74:19</p> <p>professional 15:12</p> <p>profit 28:14</p> <p>program 73:14 96:11</p>	<p>programs 89:12</p> <p>project 61:17 72:6 77:6,8,12 78:1,2,5,9,13 78:16 82:16 84:4</p> <p>project's 79:9</p> <p>promote 34:11 39:5 41:4,9 42:4</p> <p>promoting 33:19 38:15,21 39:16 51:4</p> <p>promotion 33:18 47:12 49:7 53:14</p> <p>promotional 41:17</p> <p>properly 95:17</p> <p>properties 24:7 38:8 58:18 61:8,17</p> <p>property 59:7 60:13 62:1,5 62:19 63:4,11 65:7,12 67:3 82:20</p> <p>proposal 4:18 4:20 5:5,11,13 5:15,18 7:9,12 11:18 13:8,12 26:6 33:17 60:13</p>	<p>proposed 7:6</p> <p>prosper 24:7</p> <p>protecting 81:3 81:3 94:19</p> <p>protection 22:12</p> <p>proud 95:9</p> <p>provide 8:6 10:17 30:19 66:17</p> <p>provided 79:10</p> <p>providers 36:4 37:3</p> <p>providing 83:19</p> <p>public 5:5,20 6:8 7:18 15:10 17:12,18 18:1 26:7 36:21 49:19 50:2 59:14 60:20 62:12 66:6 68:5 82:19 84:9 85:21 87:3,3 88:12 88:20 96:12 98:2,17</p> <p>publicized 88:12 90:12</p> <p>publicly 11:12 11:14</p> <p>pulled 46:9</p> <p>pulling 27:4 39:14</p>
--	--	--	---

[punitive - relationship]

Page 20

punitive 13:4	60:1 66:2	really 8:21	65:21 70:10
pursuant 59:1	89:18	9:15 10:2,12	recommended
61:12 63:1	raised 12:19	10:21 13:9	17:6
67:6	21:4 95:13	20:3 24:21	reconvene
put 15:17	raising 33:11	33:12,13 35:20	96:14
17:10 26:6	34:10	83:12 90:5	record 35:4
30:17 31:5	ramifications	92:15 94:1,5	46:2 87:17,18
53:11 54:13	37:6	94:16 95:8	88:11
56:1 80:18	range 21:11	reason 10:11	recorded 98:6
83:5	35:13 48:3	64:5	recoup 84:19
puts 44:15	ranges 89:2	recall 47:3	recreation
putting 41:1	rapidly 54:10	67:15 80:3	69:21
q	rash 29:8	receive 59:6	reduce 8:9 16:5
quaker 62:19	rate 7:13 9:5	60:8 61:18	65:8
qualified 88:17	13:11 20:19	63:3 67:13	redundancy
quarter 46:20	21:9 53:6	87:1	83:20 84:10,14
queen 6:5 52:9	55:19	received 15:2	redundant
question 35:9	rates 12:8,14	15:12 20:6,12	25:6
46:7 50:17	12:15 21:5,10	20:14 61:15	refurbished
52:12 57:6	21:21 28:12,20	66:10 80:5	74:5
83:17 84:1,12	33:1,8	receives 20:11	regard 87:19
questions	rationale 64:12	recent 60:5	regards 45:19
15:19 57:18	ray 59:5 67:20	62:4 67:16	regenerate
59:21 67:19	reach 27:3	86:10	79:16
78:19	48:16	recently 62:1,2	region 43:12
quick 27:21	reached 11:17	reclassify	regulations
quite 23:2	read 32:11	58:17 61:7	52:8
quote 92:6	58:14	62:18 67:2	reimbursement
quoting 14:4	ready 75:1	recognize	75:6
r	real 14:6 33:5	13:20 86:19	related 47:19
raise 26:2	58:17 61:7	recommend	98:11
28:19 32:18	62:18 67:2	12:4 39:17	relationship
37:6 55:18	reallocation	recommenda...	70:15
	25:18	15:15 59:15	

[relocated - sand]

Page 21

relocated 74:6 remaining 59:18 remap 58:17 61:7 62:18 67:2 remember 64:8 83:2 remind 18:9 40:13,16 47:9 renew 70:1 rental 7:4 35:21 rentals 20:9 30:9,12 44:14 rents 33:19 replacement 65:3 68:18 72:3 report 68:13 85:17 reported 1:20 represent 15:14 representative 8:16 representing 19:3 request 6:6,7 6:15 7:17 8:8,9 11:13,15 16:2 16:4 17:4 51:14 55:6,9 55:15 61:19	69:20 71:12 72:9 73:16 75:6 76:11 requested 5:19 55:6 requesting 56:3 69:21 71:14 76:18 82:5 required 8:2 requirement 38:14 39:3 research 12:7 87:7,8,8 reserve 45:21 reserves 74:12 resident 27:18 86:6,10 residential 61:17 residents 10:9 29:9 resilient 77:12 resolution 58:13,15 59:10 61:3,5 62:12 62:16 64:6,7 64:10,15 65:21 66:6,21 68:5 resolutions 59:19 respect 11:7 37:4 53:15	respectfully 40:13 respectively 61:11 responded 35:11 responsible 32:14 rest 41:1 restrictions 50:6 resulted 12:15 results 7:2 36:20 retained 46:16 return 46:8 58:1 revenue 4:20 4:21 6:18 13:6 14:14 20:10 39:2 40:3 review 4:21 59:10 64:18 reviewed 70:9 ridden 22:1 riggin 86:2,3,5 86:6 89:21 90:3,9,12 riggin's 95:11 right 4:4,16 45:21 47:7 48:12 59:20 63:19 73:15 75:5	rise 79:15 95:4 risher 73:6,10 73:11 76:6,8 rising 65:14 road 62:19 67:3 roads 42:2 room 20:19 21:5,9,10,16 21:21 33:19,19 36:3 38:11 50:5 83:8 rooms 23:10 34:2 round 34:1 route 61:8 royal 19:16 rules 18:20 run 27:19 43:5 65:6 76:12 runway 74:7 75:2
			s
			s 58:21 61:11 61:12 62:21 63:6 67:5 safe 91:2,11 safety 84:9 sales 38:12 57:7,9,19 sampling 80:14 sand 79:14

[saying - signature]

Page 22

saying 34:7 36:10,11 44:17 74:9 says 44:6 scenario 21:1 65:9 79:7 scenes 88:7 scheme 30:7 schneider 42:17,18 school 96:11 scientific 87:8 scott 19:13 25:6 28:16 screening 30:20 sea 79:14 seal 98:13 season 70:4 92:7,9 second 16:8,10 17:1 53:4,5,6 56:6,7,9 69:2,4 70:14,18,20 72:10,11,13 73:8 75:13,14 78:11 80:11 81:6,8 85:1,4 96:16,18 secretary 16:10 16:12,14,16,18 16:20 56:8,11 56:13,15,17,19 58:13,15 60:20	61:2,3,5 62:11 62:15,16 66:5 66:19,21 68:4 69:4,6,8,10,12 69:14 70:20 71:1,3,5,7,9 72:13,15,17,19 72:21 73:2 75:15,16,18,20 76:1,3 81:8,10 81:12,14,16,18 85:4,6,8,10,12 85:14 96:18,20 97:1,3,5,7 sections 83:6 sectors 15:13 security 94:15 see 20:9 29:1 39:11 82:21 91:21 95:14 seek 5:8 65:20 seeking 59:7 63:5 66:15 seem 30:6,17 33:10 seems 88:15 seen 23:1,2 seldom 92:16 senate 55:13 senator 5:18 send 56:9 57:21 senior 93:6	sensitive 6:12 sent 19:9 separate 7:13 52:18 separately 15:19 53:8 september 5:11 5:13,15 46:10 98:19 septic 65:13 service 30:20 63:7 86:16 88:11 services 10:7 11:10 71:16 76:20 78:8 session 5:5 52:15 54:12,17 55:2,8 96:4,5 sessions 91:16 set 38:14 39:17 54:1,8 95:7 98:4 seven 12:17,18 several 21:14 68:14 90:10 91:13 severity 79:15 sewer 29:14 58:16 59:8 60:10 61:6 62:17 63:6,7,9 64:3,3 66:16 66:17 67:1	82:10 83:6 share 53:12 sharing 83:10 sheet 19:8 20:18 shelters 93:6 shift 51:20 shore 44:5 45:2 87:21 shoreline 79:4 79:6,12,20 80:1,9,10,14 short 7:3 20:8 20:10 30:12 35:21 show 48:19 60:16 62:7 67:21 showed 6:10 46:10 shown 58:19 61:10 62:20 67:4 shows 12:7 19:20 side 44:20 49:21 50:1 61:8 82:20 83:1 sides 29:7 sign 18:10 signature 98:15
---	--	--	---

[signed - status]

Page 23

signed 24:14 38:1 77:4 92:20	small 18:14 20:18 36:7	spend 41:18 47:10 50:12,13 51:21 84:16 88:7	85:16 86:2 90:16 94:8,20 95:3
significant 33:21 36:17	soils 65:11	spending 23:7 23:11 39:12 48:4 49:3	standing 2:7
significantly 37:5	somebody 11:10 44:6	spent 26:15 39:15,20 92:19	standpoint 44:2 84:15
sills 79:12	sorry 19:11 29:15 63:12 66:20 89:6	split 53:2	stands 39:1 40:1
silver 30:14	sort 7:12 45:16	spoke 52:4	start 2:13 15:21 16:4 17:21 54:9 74:8,19
simple 12:6 13:6	sorted 46:13	sponsorship 66:3	started 2:4,5
simply 11:18 55:15 78:15	sorts 87:2	spreadsheet 19:10,20	starting 83:5
simultaneously 57:13	sought 78:4	st 5:14 20:7 22:7,14 25:3,8 25:15 26:5,8 27:18 29:1 31:19 32:7 38:5,16 39:12 46:14 51:21	starts 20:1 54:17
singles 9:18	sounds 85:19 92:10,10	staff 49:13 77:9 82:14 94:4	state 5:16,17 7:8 9:6,10,12 10:16 12:12 14:10 16:2 17:3 33:1 34:1 34:12 41:2 47:4 50:19 51:5,13 54:7 54:12 55:10 56:2 77:17 88:1 92:2 98:1 98:2
sir 24:18 27:5 27:10 42:16 45:10 57:3 86:4	source 14:19 42:12 80:7	stamp 4:2 18:14 24:13,16 24:19 27:6,12 27:16 29:12,15 31:9 34:15 37:21 38:3 68:12 69:16 71:11 73:4 76:9 82:1,4 83:21 84:7	state's 92:3
sit 29:21 40:9	south 61:9		stated 11:17
site 77:13	space 74:1 83:11		statement 96:6
sitting 92:16 93:9	sparks 4:14,14 7:17 16:7		states 51:9
situation 21:6 64:14	speak 19:4 22:2 31:12 36:12 93:2		status 59:1 61:12 63:1
situations 21:14	speakers 92:3		
six 17:6 56:5 58:20	speaking 52:1		
size 83:1	species 80:16 80:18		
sizeable 83:3	specific 77:12		
sleeve 82:8	specifically 6:9 22:6 31:3 51:10		
	specifics 55:19		

[status - tax]

Page 24

67:6 stay 31:2 40:18 43:13,19 44:9 44:10 58:7 stenographic 98:6 stenographic... 98:6 step 9:8,16 stepp 1:18 2:12 16:14,15 17:15 56:13,14 60:19 62:9 66:4 68:2 69:8,9 70:14 71:3,4 72:11 72:17,18 75:18 75:19 81:12,13 84:15 85:1,8,9 90:21 91:6 96:16 97:1,2 steps 5:2 9:8 sterile 80:20 stipulations 98:8 storm 79:15 story 31:17 stress 30:3 40:14 strs 20:8 structures 79:8 struggle 20:16 study 8:19 14:9 subdividable 63:18,20	subject 38:3 67:16 subjects 95:15 submitted 6:6 submitting 7:8 successful 70:15 sufficient 71:21 suggest 25:19 suggested 53:11 suggestion 25:17 suggestions 88:14 suitable 65:2 sullivan 86:8 sum 49:2 70:5 summarize 10:19 support 5:9,11 5:12,14 6:3,7 7:9 11:13,14 11:18,21 13:10 13:12 42:7,8 46:2 51:8 60:9 93:5,7 95:5 supported 89:2 supporting 51:18,19 61:20 67:14 suppose 47:17 sure 13:16 18:19 30:3,21	35:17 37:10,15 42:1 47:11 50:18,21 84:13 93:18 surpasses 87:19 survey 6:20 7:2 28:1 35:1,5,6,6 35:12 36:20 surveyed 28:5 suspect 89:14 sustain 42:4 sustained 80:2 system 65:13 72:5 73:19,20 74:18 t table 29:6 44:18 56:2 tabled 28:7 tabling 25:20 26:12 tad 31:9 take 2:14,20 3:7 9:2 22:8 33:17 36:10 50:8 95:5 taken 5:3 takes 54:11 talbot 1:1 3:16 4:7,15 5:6 7:10 7:18 8:5 10:15 13:21 14:2	17:4 20:7,11 27:19 29:5,9 30:11 32:21 33:3 34:19 35:7 36:4,8 37:13 40:9,21 42:6 43:6,10 44:4,10 45:1 48:10 56:5 58:16 61:6 62:17 67:1 76:17 96:8 98:3 talented 88:18 talk 30:1 talking 60:8 92:18 talks 79:10 tarleton 76:10 76:15,16 79:5 81:21 tax 4:21 6:21 7:6,18,20 8:20 9:14 10:1,8,9 11:16 12:1,7 12:14 13:11 14:18 16:6 17:5 20:17,21 23:1,2 26:2,16 26:21 28:2 33:1,11 38:12 39:15 40:15,17 41:6,20 43:15 43:18 45:3,6
--	--	--	--

[tax - tonight]

Page 25

46:3,12 48:16	34:13,14,19	23:3,16 27:6	tier 64:16,18
49:10 52:9	35:18 37:17,18	33:4 34:7,8,9	tight 27:7
53:13 55:18	37:19 38:2	34:21 35:12	tilghman 77:1
56:4 57:7,9,19	40:4,5 42:14	37:4,8,14	77:10,20
58:20 61:10	42:15,17 45:8	38:19 40:3	time 9:17,17
62:20 67:4	45:9 46:4	43:7 44:15,15	13:13 18:9
taxed 34:12	48:21 50:4,15	44:16 51:17	24:4 32:18
taxes 11:9,9	57:1,2 58:3	52:17,18,20	34:5 36:20
13:4 20:5	66:1 68:9,12	54:10 57:13,20	37:3,17 42:14
21:15,18 28:15	69:16 71:11	64:15 65:19	45:8 54:14
32:9 38:10,11	73:4,10 76:6	78:21 87:18	66:15 73:13,16
taxpayers	80:3 81:21	88:3,10,19	74:3 79:16
26:15	82:1,2 84:1,11	89:18	80:2 82:14
team 94:6	85:17 90:13	thinking 90:10	83:4 88:7 90:1
technical 57:6	91:6 92:4 93:8	third 73:9	90:4 91:2
tell 18:20 23:8	93:11,21 94:3	80:12	94:10 98:4
26:4 31:17	94:6,11,18,19	thorough 48:6	times 11:14
47:8 83:7	95:3,19	thoroughly	timetable 54:8
ten 8:1,12 26:2	thanked 87:4	70:9	tired 93:10,10
39:7,8 64:19	thanks 90:11	thought 31:14	today 20:21
80:3,4	97:9	thousands	21:12 34:20
term 7:3 20:8	theirs 12:19	89:10	92:18,20
20:10 30:12	thing 9:7 34:4	threats 25:16	together 10:14
35:21 54:10	34:5 37:14	three 5:12 6:7	27:4 37:13
testimonies	57:5 64:17	18:21 19:6	83:6
45:17	87:5,6 89:20	25:10 33:15	told 22:13
thank 2:11	things 30:7	65:1 80:8 90:8	25:12 38:19
3:18 4:5 10:17	46:11 49:15,21	thrilled 83:13	tom 51:15
13:18 14:12,16	65:7,19 68:14	thursday 33:6	tonight 4:10
15:6,8,16 24:4	86:13 87:2	33:20	5:3 23:4 29:18
24:10,12 27:1	think 3:21 9:20	tidewater	31:11 36:19
27:4,5 29:10	13:9 14:6	23:10 29:20	45:18 51:2
29:11,15,17	17:15,16 20:2	44:13	57:14 59:11
31:8,10,11	20:3 22:3,5,16		78:10 86:12

[tonight's - unprogrammed]

Page 26

tonight's 74:8	tower 71:16	travis 27:12,17	types 79:7
took 20:19	84:9,11	treasurer	typically 26:20
tool 33:2	town 5:10,12	31:19 32:6	64:21
top 22:9	5:13,20 6:1,4	treatment	u
toss 7:11	22:13 38:16	65:15	uh 47:2
total 39:15	41:9,12 45:13	trend 39:9	ultimately 60:7
43:18 47:15	48:17 52:3,9	tried 64:15	65:16 66:13
70:5 78:6	61:19 66:13,14	trippe 61:13	79:20
touch 28:16	67:9,11,14	true 48:8 98:7	unanimous
tourism 3:16	town's 48:11	truly 80:17	2:17 3:4,13
4:7,8,10,11,18	towns 5:8 6:17	88:18,18 93:3	15:15
5:4 6:8 7:10	10:6 11:2,12	trust 59:2	unanimously
8:16,17 9:3	32:10 33:5	80:13	8:18 9:18
10:12,16 11:1	36:15,18,19,21	try 13:4 95:8	under 15:2
11:3,13 12:3,5	41:2 42:7,13	trying 22:4	21:1 30:17
13:1,5,7,20	47:18 50:5	28:18 32:15	31:6 52:11
14:2 15:8 17:6	51:1,17 60:9	tuesday 33:5	68:13
20:14 22:4,12	transcribed	33:20 60:21	undereducated
22:15 26:1,18	98:6	62:13 66:7	37:5
31:21 35:7	transcript 2:1	68:6 96:2,8	understand
36:3 38:15,21	transcription	turn 75:5,9	6:17 22:3,5
39:5,9,16,21	98:7	turning 46:18	23:17 24:3
40:9 41:4,13	transforming	tweaked 19:10	understanding
42:5,8,20 43:6	93:3	twice 49:4,6	60:7 77:14,16
43:8 44:20	transients	two 5:16 13:1,9	82:6 83:16
45:7 47:5,10	12:10	13:11 15:19	understands
47:19 48:1,17	transport 28:9	26:9 30:6,16	37:16
49:7,21 50:14	trappe 5:21 6:1	31:20 33:17	understood
50:21 51:4,10	52:7 66:13,14	34:11 43:14,21	49:14 50:15
51:19 53:13	67:3,4	47:16 53:3	unincorporated
tourists 25:14	travel 12:11	64:6 70:6	34:19 46:15
25:15	40:19 91:1	89:16	unprogrammed
toward 53:13	traveling 43:1	type 83:20	58:21 61:11
	45:5 91:2		

[unprogrammed - wildlife]

Page 27

62:21 67:5 updated 4:17 upgrade 74:3 use 11:11 25:13 32:21 39:1 40:2 41:21 42:13 47:18,20 47:21 74:9 used 6:16 39:4 uses 4:21 using 10:7 utilities 82:7,12 83:9,14 84:4 utilizing 64:16	ventures 61:14 versus 24:6 vetted 70:9 79:12 villages 82:10 virtually 80:20 87:19 visit 10:9 82:19 visitor's 12:8 visitors 11:11 30:21 voice 35:18 volunteer 87:10,14 volunteered 87:10,14 vote 15:19 16:11 35:19 36:21 37:4 45:16 48:17,19 52:21 53:17 56:10 69:5 70:21 72:14 75:15 81:9 85:5 96:19 voted 5:10,12 5:14 6:2,7 8:18 11:12,14 36:16 45:20 votes 37:4 46:1 voting 9:18 vrbo 30:13 vrbos 31:4	w w 58:21 61:11 61:12 67:5 wage 21:18 wagner 18:6,15 18:17 19:6,8 19:13,13 21:6 21:8,10 57:5 58:3 wait 58:10 waiver 62:2 67:17 want 2:4 3:17 8:15 15:8,18 17:11 22:16 23:20 24:5,6,7 24:16 27:1 29:1 31:1 37:10,14,15 40:16 42:21 44:10 59:3 66:2 87:5,13 88:4,10 89:19 90:2 93:21 94:3,10,14 wanted 10:2 23:3 35:16 84:13 wants 58:9 water 58:16 59:8 60:10 61:6 62:17 63:5 64:3,21	65:4,9,10,14 66:16 67:1 waterfront 19:15 waters 81:4 wave 22:2 way 10:20 11:21 25:21 32:12 33:13 55:12 74:17,21 75:3 98:11 we've 2:19 3:7 5:3 9:17 42:9 46:11 53:2 54:13,15 90:7 93:21 94:1 wednesday 33:6,20 week 19:10,17 85:17 94:16,16 weeks 90:10 weighed 11:3 weighty 86:14 welcome 2:4 3:17 50:3 93:18 wicomico 8:5 71:20 wide 89:4 widely 93:1 wiggle 50:5 wildlife 76:20 78:8
v			
vacation 44:14 vacations 29:20 vanhooser 3:18 3:21 4:3,6,16 8:14 10:19 14:3,14,21 15:5 35:6 46:8 46:21 47:2,7 47:11,13 48:13 49:5,8,12,15 49:19 50:11 51:12 55:5,11 55:17 57:1 variety 89:4 vast 43:11 venture 88:1			

[willing - zoning]

Page 28

willing 44:18 88:1 wilson 24:19 24:21 25:2 win 24:6,6 wire 26:11 wish 90:21 wishes 91:8 withdrawing 46:2 witness 98:13 won 57:14 words 41:21 work 5:5 15:9 23:4 26:13,14 26:19 28:11 33:21 37:12 42:11 52:15 86:19 93:11 94:2 95:7,9 worked 59:9 77:9 94:4,13 working 78:15 workman 27:9 27:11,15,16 37:21 38:5,5 works 59:14 74:17 75:3 82:19 workshop 91:19 world 13:3 writing 6:6	wrong 31:14 33:3,4 40:3	yup 19:5 24:20 57:2 82:3 86:4 91:5 95:19
	y	z
	yards 80:19 yeah 3:11 14:17 17:16 18:15 29:13 52:17 54:2,6 54:19 58:11 67:12 83:18 90:3,17 94:8,9 94:19 year 21:5 22:9 22:20 23:12 25:11 36:1 39:8 46:20 54:12 74:2 75:6 77:3 80:16 91:1 94:1,4,12 year's 91:9 years 8:19 9:19 9:21 15:2 20:4 20:12,18,20 21:14 25:5,10 26:3 31:14,20 39:6 43:5,6,8 43:16 44:16 47:17 64:19 70:7 80:4 89:2 yesterday 52:5 youth 89:3,12 93:4	zero 5:10,12 6:7 38:17 40:2 zone 65:16 zoning 62:2 67:17