



TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

County Council

MINUTES

March 10, 2026

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

- I. Agenda – Mr. Leshner requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Agenda for Tuesday, March 10, 2026.
- II. Minutes – Mr. Leshner requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Minutes of Tuesday, February 24, 2026.
- III. Disbursements – Mr. Leshner requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Disbursements of Tuesday, March 3, 2026, and Tuesday, March 10, 2026.
- IV. Proclamation: Endometriosis Awareness Month – March 2026 – The Clerk read a proclamation into the record which spoke of the prevalence of endometriosis, affecting 1 in 10 women of childbearing age, management of symptoms of the disease, available treatments and the long-term physical and psychological effects to those individuals who have the disease. Shannon Hannawald, Founder, Endo Warriors of the Eastern Shore, shared her personal story of struggle with the disease for over two decades and encouraged those who have the disease to advocate for themselves. Council members expressed their appreciation to Ms. Hannawald for sharing her story and for offering hope to others. Upon motion by Ms. Mielke, seconded by Mr. Stepp, the Council approved the proclamation by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

Mr. Stepp presented the proclamation to Ms. Hannawald who accepted on behalf of Endo Warriors of the Eastern Shore.

- V. Request from State’s Attorney for Council Support of State Legislation to Increase Salary for Talbot County State’s Attorney – Joseph Coale, Talbot County State’s Attorney – Mr. Coale briefed the Council on the rationale for his request for a letter in support of state legislation for an increase in the salary for the Talbot County State’s Attorney; which, if approved by the Council and the Maryland General Assembly, would take effect in July 2028. He stated that the salary of the Talbot County State’s Attorney is the lowest in the state of Maryland of the 23 jurisdictions and that most of the counties on the Western Shore are equal to or above the salaries of the District Court or Circuit Court judges in their respective jurisdictions, He outlined comparisons between neighboring Queen Anne’s County and Talbot County with regard to number of staff and cases and

stated that the salary of the Queen Anne’s State’s Attorney is equal to 100% of the salary for the District Court judge in the county which is approximately \$40,000 less than the State’s Attorney’s salary for Talbot County. He stated that, in his opinion, salary is important for hiring and retention. Council discussion again ensued with Mr. Coale who stated that several counties have requested that the State Legislature allow the County Council/County Commissioners in their jurisdictions to set the salary for their State’s Attorney; Council discussion again ensued with Mr. Coale. Upon motion by Ms. Mielke, seconded by Mr. Stepp, the Council approved forwarding a letter to the local delegation requesting introduction of legislation amending § 15-421 of the Criminal Procedure Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland to provide that the County Council be delegated the authority to set the salary of the Talbot County State’s Attorney beginning in 2028, by voting 4 – 1 as follows:

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

VI. Introduction of Administrative Resolution:

ADMINISTRATIVE RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING THE OFFICE OF COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for introduction. Prior to introduction, Mr. Stamp stated that the administrative resolution is being brought forward for Council’s consideration as a potential solution to growing challenges by non-profits in the Talbot County community to serve individuals experiencing homelessness, hunger and/or other needs. He stated that nonprofits are seeing an increasing need for services and a decrease in funding from grants, the federal government and the State government, and the County receives numerous requests for funding each year from nonprofits so they can provide services to those in need in the community. He stated that Council requested that staff devise a process to ensure that funding provided by the County gets to the right place and the right people. Mr. Stamp then outlined the framework by which the Office of Community Partnerships, if approved, would be structured to provide efficient and effective oversight, alignment, and sustainable community impact of County funding provided to various community nonprofits and agencies. He stated that the County would benefit from a budgetary standpoint as budget requests to Council would be prioritized and coordinated by the proposed Office of Community Partnerships prior to coming to Council. Nancy Andrew, Executive Director, Talbot Family Network, Andy Hollis, Executive Director, Neighborhood Service Center, the County’s Community Action Agency, and Linda Webb, Director, Talbot County Department of Social Services provided Council with a snapshot of what they see happening in the community with the individuals served by their organizations, concurring with Mr. Stamp’s statements that the need is becoming greater, while funding is remaining flat or decreasing. Each of the representatives expressed their support for the establishment of a coordinating office that all the nonprofits can work through collectively to ensure that they are not competing with each other, not duplicating services, and are providing the best services they can to the citizens of Talbot County. Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved the administrative resolution by voting 4 – 0 – 1 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye (via telephone)
Mr. Stepp – Aye
Mr. Leshner – Aye

Ms. Mielke – Aye
Ms. Haythe – Abstain

VII. Introduction of Numbered Resolutions:

A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE WATER AND SEWER PLAN TO RECLASSIFY AND REMAP SIX PARCELS OF REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 25516 BUSHEY HEATH ROAD, 25520 BUSHEY HEATH ROAD, 25524 BUSHEY HEATH ROAD, 25533 BUSHEY HEATH ROAD, 25575 BUSHEY HEATH ROAD, AND 25608 BUSHEY HEATH ROAD/SOLITUDE ROAD AND SHOWN ON TAX MAP 40 AS PARCELS 98, 86, 2, 82, 4, AND 110, RESPECTIVELY, FROM “UNPROGRAMMED” TO “S-1” IMMEDIATE PRIORITY STATUS PURSUANT TO APPLICATIONS FILED BY DANIEL D. HALEY AND DAWN A. HALEY, JACQUELINE H. SMITH AND FEDERAL QTIP RESIDUARY TRUST OF JERRY B. HOOK, KATHERINE A. HEIKES, KENNETH R. ADAMI AND BETH ADAMI, AND THE HARRY G. BROADMAN FAMILY TRUST was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for introduction. Prior to introduction, County Engineer, Ray Clarke, stated that extension of public sewer to the properties the subject of the resolution, are, in the opinion of the Public Works Advisory Board, a feasible extension of sewer from an environmental standpoint as the extension would remove the six properties from septic systems. Mr. Clarke stated that information on the properties had been requested from the Office of Environmental Health; however, no information has been received to date but is expected to be received prior to the public hearing date. The resolution was introduced by Mr. Callahan, Ms. Haythe, Ms. Mielke, and Mr. Stepp as Resolution No. 392. A public hearing was scheduled for Tuesday, April 14, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the Bradley Meeting Room, South Wing, Talbot County Courthouse, 11 North Washington Street, Easton, Maryland 21601.

A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE WATER AND SEWER PLAN TO RECLASSIFY AND REMAP A 26-ACRE PORTION OF CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 25662 AND 25664 ST. MICHAELS ROAD, ST. MICHAELS, MARYLAND AND SHOWN ON TAX MAP 32 AS A PORTION OF PARCEL 31, CONSISTING OF 112.0718± ACRES IN TOTAL, FROM “UNPROGRAMMED” TO “S-1” IMMEDIATE PRIORITY STATUS PURSUANT TO AN APPLICATION FILED BY JAMES EDWARD HEIKES, TRUSTEE OF THE RESIDUARY TRUST UNDER THE WILL OF JAMES IRVING HEIKES was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for introduction. Prior to introduction, County Engineer, Ray Clarke, outlined the request and Council discussion ensued with Mr. Clarke. The resolution was introduced by Mr. Callahan, Ms. Haythe, Ms. Mielke, and Mr. Stepp as Resolution No. 393. A public hearing was scheduled for Tuesday, April 14, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the Bradley Meeting Room, South Wing, Talbot County Courthouse, 11 North Washington Street, Easton, Maryland 21601.

VIII. Public Hearing:

Bill No. 1624, A BILL TO AMEND CHAPTER 190 (ZONING, SUBDIVISION, AND LAND DEVELOPMENT) OF THE TALBOT COUNTY CODE FOR THE PURPOSES OF PROVIDING THAT CANNABIS GROWING AND THE PROCESSING OF CANNABIS GROWN ON-SITE SHALL BE PERMITTED BY SPECIAL EXCEPTION IN THE AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION, COUNTRYSIDE PRESERVATION, AND WESTERN RURAL CONSERVATION ZONING DISTRICTS, PROVIDING THAT THE PROCESSING OF CANNABIS GROWN OFF-SITE SHALL BE PERMITTED BY SPECIAL EXCEPTION IN THE VILLAGE

MIXED, GENERAL COMMERCIAL, AND LIMITED INDUSTRIAL ZONING DISTRICTS, AND PROVIDING THAT CANNABIS DISPENSARIES SHALL BE PERMITTED BY SPECIAL EXCEPTION IN THE LIMITED COMMERCIAL, GENERAL COMMERCIAL, AND LIMITED INDUSTRIAL ZONING DISTRICTS, EACH SUBJECT TO CERTAIN CONDITIONS, AND DEFINING TERMS ASSOCIATED THEREWITH, was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for public hearing. Prior to the public hearing, County Attorney, Patrick Thomas, stated that the purpose of the legislation is to regulate cannabis growing, processing, and dispensaries in Talbot County. He stated that the legislation proposes 1,000-foot setbacks from residential and institutional uses, including schools; increases the minimum lot size requirement to 75 acres, both of which are a significant increase over the previous legislation requiring 500-foot setbacks and a minimum lot size of 20 acres, respectively. Mr. Thomas stated that the dispensary requirements are as strict as they can be under current State law; the legislation provides that growing, processing and dispensaries are only permitted by Special Exception through the Board of Appeals. Council discussion ensued with Mr. Thomas who clarified that should the County choose not to enact cannabis legislation State law would control and is much more liberal than the provisions in Bill No. 1624. Members of the public were afforded an opportunity to comment on the legislation. Bill No. 1624 is eligible for vote on Tuesday, March 24, 2026.

Mr. Callahan left the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

- IX. Request from Planning and Zoning for Approval of Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) Proposed Easement Sale Prioritization Formula – Bryce Yelton, Assistant Planning Officer, outlined the MALPF land preservation program and the prioritization process for selection of preservation easements on farmland. Mr. Yelton requested Council consideration for approval to update Talbot County’s farmland prioritization formula ranking sheet, last updated in 2011, to better match the current MALPF program terminology and data for the average farm size in Talbot County. He stated that the Talbot County Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Board voted to approve the recommendations of the Department of Planning and Zoning for amendments to the ranking sheet. If approved by Council, the updated ranking sheet will be forwarded to the State MALPF Board for consideration. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Mr. Stepp, the Council approved forwarding the recommendations to the State by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

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

- X. County Manager’s Report:

- A. Request for Letter of Support – Requested Council approval for a letter in support of Habitat for Humanity Choptank’s Home Repair Program’s application for Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development Operating Assistant Grant (OAG) Funds; if approved, the funding would be utilized for weatherization, roof repairs, accessibility improvements, etc.; no County funding is required. Upon motion by Ms. Mielke, seconded by Ms. Haythe, the Council approved the request by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Leshner – Aye

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

- B. Bid No. 26-02, FURNISHING OF AASHTO M43, SIZE NO. 8 DOUBLE WASHED AGGREGATE WITHIN TWENTY-FIVE (25) MILE RADIUS OF 605 PORT STREET, EASTON, MARYLAND 21601 – Requested Council approval of the recommendation of the Superintendent of Roads and County Facilities to award Bid No. 26-02 to the sole bidder, Vulcan Construction Materials, LLC, in the sum of \$45.50 per ton for a total bid of approximately \$136,000; funding for the project is available in the budget. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved the award as outlined by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

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

- C. Bid No. 26-03, FURNISHING AND DELIVERY, WITH POSSIBLE APPLICATION OF CRS-2L EMULSIFIED ASPHALT WITH POLYMER – Requested Council approval of the recommendation of the Superintendent of Roads and County Facilities to award Bid No. 26-03 to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, Slurry Pavers, Inc. in the sum of \$2.63 per gallon, furnished and delivered; and \$3.15 per gallon, furnished, delivered, and applied. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Mr. Stepp, the Council approved the award as outlined by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

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

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

XI. Council Comments:

Ms. Haythe - No comments.

Mr. Stepp - No comments.

Ms. Mielke - Ms. Mielke stated that on Saturday she, Mr. Stepp and Mr. Leshner had attended the last of the fire department banquets for this year and, in her opinion, it was a wonderful event and wonderful to see all the volunteers and the community they create by being in the fire company, including spouses and children. She stated that, in her opinion, we are so fortunate to have such dedicated volunteers who do so much for the county and who often don't get enough praise or thanks.

Mr. Leshler - Mr. Leshler concurred with Ms. Mielke’s statements and stated that he had joined Ms. Mielke for the event, as had Mr. Stepp, and that, in his opinion, it was a wonderful show in that part of the county.

Upon motion by Ms. Haythe seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council voted to reconvene on Thursday, March 12, 2026 and Thursday, March 19, 2026, at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom with Providence Strategies for a briefing on the Maryland General Assembly legislative session - the meeting is open to the public; to reconvene on Thursday, March 12, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. for a work session on the FY27 Budget; on Tuesday, March 17, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. for a work session on the FY27 Budget, on Thursday, March 19, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. for a work session on the FY27 Budget; to reconvene on Tuesday, March 24, 2026, at 2:00 p.m. for a work session on the FY27 Budget, and at 4:00 p.m. in Open Session, then adjourn into Closed Session as listed on the statement for closing that meeting, and for the regularly scheduled meeting at 5:00 p.m. by voting 4 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Leshler - Aye
 Mr. Stepp – Aye
 Ms. Mielke – Aye
 Ms. Haythe - Aye

The meeting ended at 6:16 p.m.

The transcript of the Tuesday, March 10, 2026, County Council meeting is available for review in the Office of the Talbot County Manager during regular office hours.

XII. Summary of Closed Session Held on March 10, 2026:

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

Time of closed session: 4:05 p.m. End 4:25 p.m.
 Place of closed session: County Council Office
 Purpose of the closed session: To consider various matters as set forth in the statement for closing the meeting

2. Record of the vote of each member as to closing the session:

Names of members voting aye: Leshler, Haythe, Mielke, Stepp
 Members opposed: None
 Abstaining: None
 Absent: Callahan

3. Statutory authority to close session and listing of each topic actually discussed, persons present, and each action taken in the session:

Topic Description	Statutory Authority	Reason for Closed Session Discussion	Persons Present	Action Taken
To discuss appointments to various County	GP § 3-305(b)(1)(i)	Public discussion would discourage individuals from	Pete Leshler, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Clay	No action

boards and committees		volunteering to serve	Stamp Jessica Morris, Patrick Thomas	
To discuss personnel matter in the County Manager's Office	GP § 3-305(b)(1)(i)	Discussion involves a specific individual	Pete Leshner, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Clay Stamp Jessica Morris, Patrick Thomas	No action



**TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND
WEEKLY CASH STATEMENT
3/3/2026**

OPERATING FUNDS - SHORE UNITED BANK

OPERATING FUNDS AT **2/24/2026** **\$ 37,617,449.39**

Total ADP Payroll PPE 2/13/2026	(1,015,897.62)
Community Center Sales & Use Tax Due 2/20/2026	(607.47)
Golf Course Sales & Use Tax Due 2/20/2026	(108.85)
Roads Sales & Use Tax Due 2/20/2026	(826.92)
Airport Merchant Portal Hosting 1/2026	(11.00)
Repurposing Merchant Portal Hosting 1/2026	(15.00)
Roads Merchant Portal Hosting 1/2026	(15.00)
Returned Paymentus Payments	
Bank Charges 1/2026	(3,928.30)

Deposits	1,330,162.76
Checks	(132,324.58)
ACH Disbursements	(1,665,610.89)
EFT's	(344,218.35)
Wire Transfers	(7,717,968.36)

OPERATING FUNDS AT **3/3/2026** **\$ 28,066,079.81**

PETTY CASH FUNDS **\$ 17,855.00**

INVESTMENT FUNDS

	<u>Yield</u>		
Maryland Local Government Investment Pool (MLGIP)	3.71%	\$	23,982,824.99
Bayvanguard Bank	3.89%	\$	11,521,961.25
Shore United Money Market Account	3.64%	\$	64,511,509.69

INVESTMENT FUNDS TOTAL **\$ 100,034,150.93**

TOTAL ALL CASH AND INVESTMENTS **\$ 128,100,230.74**



**TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND
WEEKLY CASH STATEMENT
3/10/2026**

OPERATING FUNDS - SHORE UNITED BANK

OPERATING FUNDS AT	3/3/2026	\$	28,065,544.41
Total ADP Payroll PPE 2/27/2026			(1,063,631.98)
Deposits			11,013,205.41
Checks			(109,582.73)
ACH Disbursements			(647,244.01)
EFT's			(534,266.24)
Wire Transfers			(2,750,344.80)
Voided Checks			640.08

OPERATING FUNDS AT	3/10/2026	\$	33,974,320.14
---------------------------	------------------	-----------	----------------------

PETTY CASH FUNDS		\$	17,855.00
-------------------------	--	-----------	------------------

INVESTMENT FUNDS

		<u>Yield</u>	
Maryland Local Government Investment Pool (MLGIP)	3.70%		\$ 23,982,824.99
Bayvanguard Bank	3.89%		\$ 11,521,961.25
Shore United Money Market Account	3.64%		\$ 64,511,509.69

INVESTMENT FUNDS TOTAL		\$	100,034,150.93
-------------------------------	--	-----------	-----------------------

<u>TOTAL ALL CASH AND INVESTMENTS</u>		\$	134,008,471.07
--	--	-----------	-----------------------