



TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

County Council

MINUTES

September 8, 2026

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

- I. Agenda – The Agenda for Tuesday, September 8, 2026, was brought forward for approval. Mr. Stepp made a motion to remove Item C. under *Section VIII, Introduction of Numbered Resolutions*, and Item D. of the County Manager’s Report, *Request from Department of Corrections to Utilize FY27 Capital Budget Funds for the Replacement of the Fire Alarm System in the Talbot County Detention Center*; Mr. Leshner seconded the motion and the Council approved the Agenda, as amended, by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye
Mr. Stepp – Aye
Mr. Leshner – Aye
Ms. Mielke – Aye
Ms. Haythe – Aye
- II. Minutes – Mr. Callahan requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Minutes of Tuesday, August 25, 2026.
- III. Disbursements – Mr. Callahan requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Disbursements of Tuesday, September 1, 2026, and Tuesday, September 8, 2026.
- IV. Proclamation: Constitution and Citizenship Week – September 17 – 23, 2026 – The Clerk read a proclamation into the record in commemoration of Constitution and Citizenship Week, celebrated September 17 – 23 each year to recognize the vital importance of the U.S. Constitution to our individual freedoms and democracy which, although tested many times, has endured for 239 years since the document was signed in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on September 17, 1787, and which remains the bedrock of the rule of law for the nation. Constitution and Citizenship Week encourages citizens to recognize the rights and responsibilities which come with citizenship and to reaffirm the freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution. Richard Holman, Co-Founder and Chairman, Board of Directors, MidShore Constitution Alliance, Michelle Ewing and Paul Callahan, members, Board of Directors, MidShore Constitution Alliance, briefed the Council on upcoming events to promote Constitution and Citizenship Week in Talbot County. Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Ms. Haythe, the Council approved the proclamation by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

Mr. Stepp presented the Proclamation to Mr. Holman, Ms. Ewing, and Mr. Callahan, who accepted on behalf of the MidShore Constitution Alliance.

- V. Proclamation: Suicide Prevention Month – September 2026 – The Clerk read a proclamation into the record in recognition of September as “*No Matter What... You Matter*” Suicide Prevention Month. The proclamation spoke of the prevalence of suicide, particularly among youth, the percentage of middle and high school aged youth in Talbot County who have contemplated suicide, and the efforts by both public and private organizations to reduce the number of suicides through the provision of adequate and accessible behavioral healthcare services for citizens of all ages facing mental health challenges. Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Ms. Haythe, the Council approved the proclamation by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

Beth Anne Dorman, MS, President & CEO, For All Seasons, Inc. (For All Seasons) stated that 2026 marks the 10th year of For All Seasons’ *No Matter What – You Matter* campaign and briefed the Council on new peer support programming for first responders and veterans, communities which are seeing higher rates of suicide. She stated that For All Seasons had recently acquired VAMSA (Veterans and Military Support Alliance) based in Queen Anne’s County following a request from the organization to assume operations. She stated that a new Center for Veterans and Military Families has opened, along with the Center for First Responders. Ms. Dorman stated that For All Seasons works closely with all the VFWs in the area and outlined the services provided to over 6,000 veterans and their families last year, including assistance with obtaining benefits in addition to providing mental health services. She stated that For All Seasons also partners with Shore Regional Health to provide educational programming to hospital personnel which provide emergency services. Dr. Sharon Pepukayi, Superintendent, Talbot County Public Schools and Member, Board of Directors, For All Seasons, Inc., stated that in recent years more and more demands have been put on youth, particularly through social media, and that being proactive by having programs available to the youth is very valuable; she expressed her appreciation to Ms. Dorman for her leadership and for the partnership of For All Seasons with Talbot County Public Schools. Craig Postlewait, Member, Board of Directors, For All Seasons, Inc., expressed his appreciation to For All Seasons for bringing awareness as to the prevalence of suicide and suicidal thoughts and to letting people know that they can talk about it without the fear of stigma and that help is available. Ms. Dorman provided information on upcoming events on prevention of suicide and Council discussion ensued with Ms. Dorman, Dr. Pepukayi and Mr. Postlewait.

Ms. Haythe presented the Proclamation to Ms. Dorman, Dr. Pepukayi and Mr. Postlewait who accepted on behalf of For All Seasons, Inc.

- VI. Introduction of Stephanie Mervine, Newly appointed Director, Talbot County Department of

Economic Development and Tourism – County Manager, Clay Stamp, introduced the new Director of the Department of Economic Development and Tourism, Stephanie Mervine. He stated that Ms. Mervine is originally from Worcester County, and during her career has worked in Wicomico County, New York City and Oklahoma, where she gained experience and credentials in the areas of economic development and tourism. Ms. Mervine stated that she looks forward to working for Talbot County and is deeply committed to protecting what makes this community special; its heritage industries, vibrant small businesses, natural beauty, and the sense of place that defines life here, while at the same time advancing economic resiliency outlined in the Strategic Plan. Council welcomed Ms. Mervine to Talbot County.

VII. Introduction of Numbered Resolutions:

A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE WATER AND SEWER PLAN TO RECLASSIFY AND REMAP CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 27414 FERRY BRIDGE ROAD, EASTON, MARYLAND, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 24 AS PARCEL 205, LOT 1, FROM “UNPROGRAMMED” TO “S-1” IMMEDIATE PRIORITY STATUS PURSUANT TO AN APPLICATION FILED BY CATHERINE G. W. MURPHY was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for introduction. Prior to introduction, County Engineer, Josh Elliott, stated that the resolution proposes to reclassify the property which is the subject of the resolution from “Unprogrammed” to “S-1”, immediate priority status which would permit the property to abandon its onsite sewage disposal system, portions of which are within 100 feet of the shoreline, and connect to public sewer. He stated that the application is requesting one (1) Equivalent Dwelling Unit (EDU) for the 25+ acre parcel. He stated that the Talbot County Office of Environmental Health is supportive of connection of the property to public sewer. The resolution was introduced by Mr. Callahan, Ms. Haythe, Mr. Leshner, Ms. Mielke, and Mr. Stepp as Resolution No. 396. A public hearing was scheduled for Tuesday, October 13, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the Bradley Meeting Room, South Wing, Talbot County Courthouse, 11 N. Washington Street, Easton, Maryland 21601.

A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE WATER AND SEWER PLAN TO RECLASSIFY AND REMAP CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 5586 LEEWARD LANE, TILGHMAN, MARYLAND, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 44 AS PARCEL 35, LOT 7, FROM “UNPROGRAMMED” TO “S-1” IMMEDIATE PRIORITY STATUS PURSUANT TO AN APPLICATION FILED BY STEPHANIE ALLEN was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for introduction. Prior to introduction, County Engineer, Josh Elliott, stated that the resolution proposes to reclassify the property which is the subject of the resolution from “Unprogrammed” to “S-1”, immediate priority status which would permit the property to abandon its onsite sewage disposal system, He stated that the application is requesting one (1) Equivalent Dwelling Unit (EDU) for the 2.39 acre parcel located in a village mixed district in the Region V (Tilghman) Sanitary District and is one of the six properties on Leeward Lane currently not in the sewer service area. He stated that the property satisfies the stringent connection criteria outlined in Resolution No. 394 and the connection is supported by the Talbot County Office of Environmental Health. The resolution was introduced by Mr. Callahan, Ms. Haythe, Mr. Leshner, Ms. Mielke, and Mr. Stepp as Resolution No. 397. A public hearing was scheduled for Tuesday, October 13, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the Bradley Meeting Room, South Wing, Talbot County Courthouse, 11 N. Washington Street, Easton, Maryland 21601.

A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE WATER AND SEWER PLAN TO RECLASSIFY AND REMAP TWENTY-ONE PARCELS OF REAL PROPERTY, ALL OF WHICH ARE LOCATED ON GOOSE NECK ROAD, ROYAL OAK, MARYLAND, AND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: 1) 25869 GOOSE NECK ROAD, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 46 AS PARCEL 84; 2) 25883 GOOSE NECK ROAD,

SHOWN ON TAX MAP 46 AS PARCEL 23; 3) 25911 GOOSE NECK ROAD, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 47 AS PARCEL 67; 4) 25927 GOOSE NECK ROAD, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 47 AS PARCEL 92; 5) 25977 GOOSE NECK ROAD, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 47 AS PARCEL 4; 6) 25989 GOOSE NECK ROAD, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 47 AS PARCEL 8; 7) 26009 GOOSE NECK ROAD, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 47 AS PARCEL 74; 8) 26041 GOOSE NECK ROAD AND 26043 GOOSE NECK ROAD, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 47 AS PARCEL 61; 9) 26079 GOOSE NECK ROAD, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 47 AS PARCEL 9; 10) 25882 GOOSE NECK ROAD, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 47 AS PARCEL 65, LOT 2; 11) 25900 GOOSE NECK ROAD, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 47 AS PARCEL 65; 12) 25910 GOOSE NECK ROAD, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 47 AS PARCEL 79; 13) 25932 GOOSE NECK ROAD, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 47 AS PARCEL 66; 14) 25934 GOOSE NECK ROAD, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 47 AS PARCEL 120, LOT 1; 15) 25968 GOOSE NECK ROAD, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 47 AS PARCEL 54, LOT 2; 16) 25972 GOOSE NECK ROAD, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 47 AS PARCEL 63; 17) 26020 GOOSE NECK ROAD, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 47 AS PARCEL 7; 18) 26040 GOOSE NECK ROAD, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 47 AS PARCEL 59; 19) 26048 GOOSE NECK ROAD, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 47 AS PARCEL 1; 20) 26107 GOOSE NECK ROAD, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 47 AS PARCEL 10; AND 21) 26090 GOOSE NECK ROAD, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 47 AS PARCEL 57, FROM UNPROGRAMMED TO “S-1” IMMEDIATE PRIORITY STATUS was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for introduction. Prior to introduction, Council discussion ensued with County Engineer, Josh Elliott, who stated that each of the properties outlined in the resolution is currently developed and has an existing septic system. The resolution was introduced by Mr. Callahan, Ms. Haythe, Mr. Leshner, Ms. Mielke, and Mr. Stepp as Resolution No. 398. A public hearing was scheduled for Tuesday, October 13, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the Bradley Meeting Room, South Wing, Talbot County Courthouse, 11 N. Washington Street, Easton, Maryland 21601.

VIII. Introduction of Legislation:

A BILL TO AMEND CHAPTER 190 (ZONING, SUBDIVISION, AND LAND DEVELOPMENT) OF THE TALBOT COUNTY CODE FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING THAT NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS ON NEW AND RENEWAL SHORT-TERM RENTAL LICENSES SHALL BE PROVIDED TO OWNERS OF ALL PROPERTIES WITH A PROPERTY LINE WITHIN 1,000 FEET, INCLUDING IN LINE OF SIGHT WITHIN 1,000 FEET ACROSS WATERWAYS OF THE SHORT-TERM RENTAL DWELLING, OR THE 50 PROPERTIES NEAREST TO THE SHORT-TERM RENTAL DWELLING, WHICHEVER IS LESS was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for introduction. Prior to introduction, County Attorney, Patrick Thomas, stated that the proposed legislation had been requested by Mr. Stepp. Mr. Thomas stated that currently, public hearing requirements for new and renewal short-term rental license applications are to be sent to owners of all properties with a property line within 1,000 feet, including a line of sight within 1,000 feet across waterways, of the proposed short-term rental dwelling. He stated that the proposed text amendment would permit notices to be sent to those properties or to the 50 properties nearest to the dwelling, whichever is less. Bryce Yelton, Assistant Planning Officer, stated that similar legislation had been introduced in May 2026 and the Planning Commission had reviewed it, as well as other short-term rental legislation in the past calendar year. Mr. Yelton stated that it was the Planning Commission's recommendation to do a distance calculation, by restricting the distance to which notices have to be sent to avoid having to send out so many notices; the current distance is 1,000 feet; it was the Planning Commission's recommendation to consider 500 or 750 feet versus a strict cap on the number of individuals to which notices would be sent. Council discussion ensued with Mr. Yelton and Mr. Thomas. Mr. Leshner requested that the Office of Law draft amendments to the proposed legislation which would incorporate the Planning Commission's previous recommendations on the standard of review, composition of the Short-Term Rental Review Board, etc. The legislation was introduced by Mr. Callahan, Ms. Haythe, Mr. Leshner, Ms. Mielke, and Mr. Stepp as Bill No. 1653. A public hearing was scheduled for Tuesday, October 13, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.

in the Bradley Meeting Room, South Wing, Talbot County Courthouse, 11 N. Washington Street, Easton, Maryland 21601.

A BILL TO AMEND CHAPTER 182 (VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY SERVICES LONGEVITY AWARD PROGRAM) OF THE TALBOT COUNTY CODE FOR THE PURPOSES OF CLARIFYING THE DEFINITION OF “ACTIVE VOLUNTEER MEMBER” AND AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS FOR CONSISTENCY THEREWITH, PROVIDING THAT QUALIFYING ACTIVE VOLUNTEER MEMBERS SHALL RECEIVE MONTHLY BENEFITS IN A MINIMUM AMOUNT OF \$100 FOR LIFE, WITH THE ABILITY TO EARN ADDITIONAL MONTHLY BENEFITS, SUBJECT TO CERTAIN CONDITIONS, AND AMENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS REGARDING RECORDS OF VOLUNTEER MEMBERS AND THE POINT SYSTEM FOR QUALIFYING FOR BENEFITS was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for introduction. Prior to introduction, County Attorney, Patrick Thomas, stated that the proposed legislation had been requested by Mr. Callahan. Mr. Thomas stated that currently, active volunteer members of the County’s volunteer members who have reached the age of 62 and have completed at least 25 years of certified active volunteer service are eligible to receive monthly benefits of \$100 per month for life, subject to the County budget. He stated that the proposed legislation would provide additional benefits in the minimum amount of \$50 per month for life for each additional five (5) years of service, up to a minimum of \$200 per month for those individuals with 45 or more years of certified service. Council discussion ensued with Brian LeCates, Director, Department of Emergency Services, and Phil Starkey, Vice-President, Talbot County Volunteer Fire & Rescue Association who stated that each of the seven (7) volunteer fire departments are aware of the proposed changes and are in favor of same. The legislation was introduced by Mr. Callahan, Ms. Haythe, Mr. Leshner, Ms. Mielke, and Mr. Stepp as Bill No. 1654. A public hearing was scheduled for Tuesday, October 13, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. in the Bradley Meeting Room, South Wing, Talbot County Courthouse, 11 N. Washington Street, Easton, Maryland 21601.

IX. Public Hearings:

TALBOT COUNTY COMMUNITY REPAIR AND REINVESTMENT FUND (CRRF) DISTRIBUTION PLAN was brought forward for public hearing. Prior to the public hearing, Nancy Andrew, Director, Office of Community Partnerships, and Executive Director, Talbot Family Network, the Local Management Board, stated that Bill No. 1620, approved by the Council in October 2025, tasked the Local Management Board, the Talbot Family Network Board of Directors, with administration of monies received from the Talbot County Community Repair and Reinvestment Fund (CRRF). Ms. Andrew stated that the CRRF was created by the Maryland General Assembly in 2023 for the purpose of reinvesting cannabis revenue in communities disproportionately impacted by past cannabis enforcement and related disparities. She stated that in 2025, the Maryland General Assembly approved legislation requesting that local jurisdictions develop a distribution plan, in consultation with their communities, and instituted a deadline of October 1, 2026, to have the Distribution Plans in place. Ms. Andrew outlined efforts to date toward the drafting of a Distribution Plan which identifies three initial priority areas: economic stability and mobility, housing stability and child development and educational opportunity, while recognizing behavioral health, transportation, food security, and access to services as important contributing factors supported by data. Council discussion ensued with Ms. Andrew. Members of the public were then afforded an opportunity to comment on the Draft Distribution Plan. Written comments on the Draft Plan will be accepted until Friday, September 18, 2026. The final Distribution Plan will be scheduled for approval at the Council meeting on Tuesday, September 22, 2026.

Resolution No. 395, A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT A TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON THE PROCESSING, REVIEW, AND APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS, SITE PLANS, PERMITS, AND OTHER AUTHORIZATIONS FOR THE LOCATION, CONSTRUCTION, AND/OR OPERATION OF DATA CENTERS FOR A PERIOD OF TWELVE (12) MONTHS TO ALLOW THE COUNTY SUFFICIENT TIME TO ENACT REASONABLE, THOUGHTFUL, AND LAWFUL ZONING REQUIREMENTS AND OTHER REGULATIONS PERTAINING THERETO AS DEEMED NECESSARY TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE, 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 legislation, if approved, would institute a 12-month moratorium on data centers to allow County staff and the Planning Commission to make recommendations to the Council on any proposed legislation to regulate data centers in the unincorporated areas of Talbot County. Members of the public were afforded an opportunity to comment on the legislation. The Council approved Resolution No. 395 by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

Resolution No. 395 is effective immediately.

X. County Manager's Report:

- A. Administrative Charging Committee – Requested Council approval for the reappointment of William Belding to a two-year term on the Administrative Charging Committee; said term will expire on August 1, 2028. Upon motion by Mr. Leshner, seconded by Ms. Haythe, the Council approved the reappointment by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

- B. Emergency Services Advisory Board – Requested Council approval for the appointment of Debbie Timms to the Emergency Services Advisory Board as an at-large member; Ms. Timms will complete the unexpired term of Lisa Stone, M.D. who relocated out of the area; said term will expire on February 1, 2027. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Mr. Stepp, the Council approved the appointment by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

- C. Talbot Family Network Board of Directors – Requested Council approval for the reappointment of Victoria Billings, Jennifer Villacorta, and Lauren Weber to three-year terms on the Talbot Family Network Board of Directors as representatives of the Private Sector; said terms will expire on June 30, 2029. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Ms. Mielke, the Council approved the reappointments by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

- D. Request from Chesapeake College – Requested Council approval for a letter in support of Chesapeake College’s application for a Regional Institution Strategic Enterprise (RISE) zone designation. Stephanie Mervine, Director, Department of Economic Development and Tourism, stated that the RISE zone is a designation of a geographical area connecting the resources of a college, university or other qualified institution with local economic development efforts; this is the initial step by Chesapeake College toward the designation. Mr. Stamp stated that no County funding is required; Council discussion ensued with Mr. Stamp. Upon motion by Ms. Haythe, seconded by Mr. Leshner, the Council approved a letter of support by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

- E. Request from Department of Public Works – Requested Council approval of the County Engineer’s recommendation to submit an application for Waterway Improvement Funding in the sum of \$100,000; if approved, the funding will be utilized for mechanical spot dredging of Knapps Narrows in Tilghman due to severe shoaling at the northern entrance to Knapps Narrows. County Engineer, Josh Elliott, briefed the Council on the reason for the request, stating that the spot dredging will keep the waterway open until a time when U.S. Corps of Engineer funding for dredging becomes available, anticipated to be in 2028/2029. Council discussion ensued with Mr. Elliott and Mr. Stamp, who stated that the County designated \$30,000 in the FY27 Budget for location of a dredged spoil site. Upon motion by Mr. Stepp, seconded by Ms. Haythe, the Council approved submittal of the application as outlined by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

- F. Request from Eastern Shore Land Conservancy – Requested Council approval of a request from Eastern Shore Land Conservancy in support of a *Coalition Letter Supporting a Dedicated Bay Crossing Land Preservation Mitigation Fund* to the Maryland Transportation Authority in support of the establishment of a dedicated Bay Crossing Land Preservation Mitigation Fund as it relates to the new Chesapeake Bay Bridge crossing. Bryce Yelton, Assistant Planning Officer, stated that the State of Maryland is currently finalizing its report for NEPA (the National Environmental Policy Act) which will detail the environmental impact locations for the proposed construction of a new bridge crossing. He stated that Eastern Shore Land Conservancy has been meeting with other environmental groups, as well as staff from Caroline, Queen Anne's and Talbot counties, and is urging the Maryland Transportation Authority to include funding toward preservation in a future budget for the Bay Bridge crossing project. Mr. Yelton stated that if Talbot County becomes a signatory to the letter, the County can continue to be in the planning process as to how any funding for preservation might be allocated. Council discussion ensued with Mr. Yelton. Upon motion by Mr. Leshner, seconded by Ms. Haythe, the Council approved signing the Coalition Letter by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

- G. Request from Town of Easton – Requested Council approval of a letter in support of the Town of Easton's letter to the Maryland State Highway Administration for installation of safety corridor speed monitoring systems on U.S. Rt. 50 in the Town of Easton from the southern end of the Easton Bypass (MD Rt. 322) in the Town of Easton to the intersection of MD Rt. 309 (Black Dog Alley) and Airport Road. Council discussion ensued with Greg Wright, Deputy Chief of Police, Town of Easton, regarding the need for speed monitoring systems, the number of systems proposed to be installed, their proposed location(s), and the timeframe for advance notice that such systems will operational. At Council's request, Deputy Chief Wright will obtain more information on the proposed speed monitoring systems and relay the Council's concerns to Mayor Cook. Council will reconsider the Town's request for a letter of support at a future Council meeting.
- H. Request from County Manager – Requested Council approval to have the County enter into a Contract for Sale and Purchase of Real Property located at 25826 Orchard Terrace, Bellevue, Maryland in the sum of \$535,000. Mr. Stamp stated that the 1.6-acre property is located to the right of the County owned Bellevue Park and the County has the opportunity to acquire the property and outlined proposed use of the space. He stated that, if approved, the purchase would initially be made with monies from the General Fund; however, the County will seek funding from Program Open Space (POS) for reimbursement to the General Fund. Upon motion by Mr. Leshner, seconded by Ms. Haythe, the Council approved entering into the contract by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

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

XII. Council Comments:

Mr. Stepp – No comments.

Mr. Leshner – No comments.

Ms. Mielke- No comments.

Ms. Haythe - Ms. Haythe stated that she and her colleagues had the opportunity to attend the funeral of Phil Foster and encouraged everyone to keep Mr. Foster's family in their prayers during their time of bereavement. She stated that Mr. Foster had called her prior to the last election (2022) and asked, "What do they call the fifth Council person?" – to which he said "Councilwoman". Ms. Haythe stated that Mr. Foster was indicating that fifth or first, she was still taking the seat. She stated that, in her opinion, Mr. Foster was an encourager and an active member in politics.

Mr. Callahan - No comments.

Upon motion by Ms. Mielke, seconded by Ms. Haythe, the Council voted to adjourn and to reconvene on Tuesday, September 22, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. for a meeting with representatives of the Maryland Association of Counties; then adjourn into Closed Session at as listed on the statement for closing that meeting, and for the regularly scheduled meeting at 5:00 p.m. by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

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

The meeting ended at 6:40 p.m.

The transcript of the Tuesday, September 8, 2026, County Council meeting is available for review in the Office of the Talbot County Manager during regular office hours.

XIII. Summary of Closed Session Held on September 8, 2026:

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

Time of closed session: 3:45 p.m. End 4:15 p.m.
 Place of closed session: County Council Office
 Purpose of the closed session: To consider various matters as set forth in the statement for closing the meeting

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

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

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

Topic Description	Statutory Authority	Reason for Closed Session Discussion	Persons Present	Action Taken
To discuss appointments to various County boards and committees	GP § 3-305(b)(1)(i)	Public discussion would discourage individuals from volunteering to serve	Chuck Callahan, Pete Leshner, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Clay Stamp, Jessica Morris, Patrick Thomas	No action
To consider the acquisition of property in Queen Anne for a public purpose	GP § 3-305(b) (3)	To protect the County's bargaining position regarding the possible acquisition of real property for a public purpose	Chuck Callahan, Pete Leshner, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Clay Stamp, Jessica Morris, Patrick Thomas	No action
For legal advice regarding application for a solar array	GP § 3-305(b) (7)	Attorney-client privilege	Chuck Callahan, Pete Leshner, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Clay Stamp, Jessica Morris, Patrick Thomas	No action
For legal advice regarding possible road transfer	GP § 3-305(b) (7)	Attorney-client privilege	Chuck Callahan, Pete Leshner, Keasha Haythe, Lynn Mielke, Dave Stepp, Clay Stamp, Jessica	No action

			Morris, Patrick Thomas	
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- XIV. Work Session with Talbot County Agricultural Community – The Council met with Shannon Dill, D.B.A., Assistant Director of Operations and Principal Agent, University of Maryland Extension – Talbot County; John Swaine, III, Vice President, Talbot County Farm Bureau and Chairman, Talbot Soil Conservation District; Shawn Smith, District Manager, Soil Conservation District. Also in attendance were Nicole Walker, Area Extension Director for Talbot, Dorchester and Wicomico counties and Extension Advisory Council members, Ryan Snow and Laura Heikes. Ms. Dill briefed the Council on current vacancies at the Extension Office for an Agricultural Agent and Nutrient Management and stated that agents from other offices on the Eastern Shore are currently filling in until the positions are filled. She updated the Council on activities of the Talbot County Corn Club, started through 4-H, and now in its 75th year and the annual Corn Club Banquet which is scheduled for January 6, 2027. Mr. Swaine stated that Farm Bureau continues to seek support for its noxious weed program to keep weeds such as Johnson Grass and Thistle under control. Mr. Leshner inquired about new interest in farming as a vocation – Mr. Swaine stated that a new generation seems interested in pursuing farming; Ms. Heikes stated that the Easton High School FFA (Future Farmers of America) is very active. Mr. Smith stated that the Talbot Soil Conservation District began in 1958 and each District in the state is tasked with agricultural conservation, urban and erosion control and education outreach. He provided statistical information as to the acreage under cover crop in Talbot County, excluding harvest grains, in 2025 (36,000); stated that 46 conservation plans were written for approximately 7,000 acres in 2025; stated that his office had worked with 21 farmers to implement 37 practices; and outlined the criteria under which the completion an erosion sediment control plan is required and is approved by the Soil Conservation Office; after which the Maryland Department of the Environment inspects the projects. Mr. Smith stated that 160 erosion sediment control plans were reviewed and completed in 2025 and outlined the Soil Conservation District's partnership with the Talbot County Department of Public Works for approval of stormwater management plans for agricultural structures. With regard to education outreach, Mr. Smith stated that the Soil Conservation District office is supporting the Easton High School FFA chapter and is hoping to reinstitute the Talbot Envirothon which provides an opportunity for high school students to meet with and learn from professionals in the industry, including the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Department of the Environment, and soil and wetland scientists, and to participate in a local competition. He stated that the winner would move on to the State competition; the winner of the State competition would participate in the national competition. Mr. Smith will provide more information to the Council as the program progresses. Mr. Smith stated that Kyle Hutchison will be recognized in the near future for his 20 years of volunteer service on the Talbot Soil Conservation District Board of Supervisors and Mildred Bullock will be recognized as the 2025 Cooperator of the Year on Wednesday, October 14, 2026. Mr. Smith concluded his presentation by briefing the Council on the Whole Watershed Act, passed by the Maryland General Assembly in 2024. He stated that the five-year pilot program targets five watersheds throughout the state which focus on bringing positive change to their particular watershed in a short period of time. He stated that the Talbot Soil Conservation District has partnered with ShoreRivers and Envision the Choptank; Envision the Choptank's application for the Upper Choptank Watershed was selected for additional funding with a focus on seeing what milestones can be met which provide a meaningful impact for reducing nitrogen and phosphorus in the watershed which can then be utilized throughout the state. Council discussion ensued with the representatives as various items were brought forward.

		TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND			
		WEEKLY CASH STATEMENT			
		9/1/2026			
OPERATING FUNDS - SHORE UNITED BANK					
OPERATING FUNDS AT				8/25/2026	\$ 52,368,558.71
TOTAL ADP MONTHLY PAYROLL PPE 8/31/2026					(17,023.09)
Deposits					1,542,309.81
Checks					(241,310.51)
ACH Disbursements					(2,864,551.79)
Voided Checks					11,591.48
OPERATING FUNDS AT				9/01/2026	\$ 50,799,574.61
PETTY CASH FUNDS					\$ 18,455.00
INVESTMENT FUNDS					
				<u>Yield</u>	
Maryland Local Government Investment Pool (MLGIP)				3.77%	\$ 24,426,167.42
Bayvanguard Bank				3.89%	\$ 11,743,519.58
Shore United Money Market Account				3.63%	\$ 65,684,403.99
INVESTMENT FUNDS TOTAL					\$ 101,872,545.99
TOTAL ALL CASH AND INVESTMENTS					\$ 152,672,120.60

		TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND		
		WEEKLY CASH STATEMENT		
		9/8/2026		
OPERATING FUNDS - SHORE UNITED BANK				
OPERATING FUNDS AT		9/1/2026	\$	50,799,574.61
Total ADP Payroll PPE 8/28/2026				(1,129,629.12)
Returned Paymentus Payments				(66,874.02)
Airport Merchant Portal Hosting 8/2026				(11.00)
Repurposing Merchant Portal Hosting 8/2026				(15.00)
Roads Merchant Portal Hosting 8/2026				(15.00)
Deposits				6,246,009.84
Checks				(79,705.61)
ACH Disbursements				(422,728.79)
EFT's				(1,385,744.74)
Wire Transfers				(12,704,597.30)
OPERATING FUNDS AT		9/08/2026	\$	41,256,263.87
PETTY CASH FUNDS			\$	18,455.00
INVESTMENT FUNDS				
			<u>Yield</u>	
Maryland Local Government Investment Pool (MLGIP)		3.76%	\$	24,426,167.42
Bayvanguard Bank		3.89%	\$	11,743,519.58
Shore United Money Market Account		3.63%	\$	65,684,403.99
INVESTMENT FUNDS TOTAL			\$	101,872,545.99