



TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

County Council

MINUTES

December 21, 2021

Present – President Chuck Callahan, Vice President Pete Leshner, Frank Divilio, Corey Pack, Laura Price, County Manager Clay Stamp, and County Attorney Patrick Thomas.

- I. Agenda – The Agenda of Tuesday, December 21, 2021 was brought forward for approval. Mr. Leshner made a motion to amend the agenda to remove *Item VI, Presentation and Request by Talbot County Board of Elections* at the presenter’s request; Mr. Divilio seconded the motion. The Council approved the Agenda of Tuesday, December 21, 2021, as amended, by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye
Mr. Divilio – Aye
Mr. Leshner – Aye
Ms. Price – Aye (via telephone)
Mr. Pack - Aye

- II. Minutes – Mr. Callahan requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Minutes of November 23, 2021.

- III. Disbursements – Mr. Callahan requested and received unanimous consent for approval of the Disbursements of Tuesday, December 21, 2021.

- IV. Introduction of Dionne Church, New Election Director, Talbot County Board of Elections – Joe Secrist, President, Talbot County Board of Elections, introduced Ms. Dionne Church as the new Election Director for the Talbot County Board of Elections. Mr. Secrist stated that Ms. Church comes to Talbot County after having served as the Deputy Director at the Wicomico County Board of Elections. Council members welcomed Ms. Church to Talbot County.

- V. Presentation and Request by Talbot County Board of Elections – Lyndsey Ryan, Attorney, Talbot County Board of Elections – The item had been previously removed from the agenda at the request of the presenter.

- VI. Eligible for Vote:

Resolution No. 310, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TRANSFER OF ANY INTEREST TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND HOLDS IN FLOOD AVENUE TO THE TOWN OF EASTON AND THE EXECUTION OF A QUITCLAIM DEED TO EFFECTUATE THE SAME was read into the record by the Clerk and brought forward for vote. Prior to the vote, Clay Stamp, County Manager, stated that after the December 14, 2021 Council meeting, Ray Clarke, County Engineer, meet with the Engineer for the Town of Easton regarding an issue related to possible flooding on Flood Avenue. He stated Mr. Clarke has confirmed that the issue has been resolved and the County is okay to proceed with approval of the resolution at this time. The Council approved Resolution No. 310 by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye

Mr. Divilio – Aye
Mr. Leshner – Aye
Ms. Price – Aye (via telephone)
Mr. Pack – Aye

Resolution No. 310 is effective immediately.

- VII. Discussion of Expiration of Deferment of Interest and Penalties on Sewer Bills – Joye Nagle, Talbot County Finance Director – Ms. Nagle introduced Tracy Smith, Tax Accountant, Talbot County Finance Office. She stated that sewer bills for the next quarter are scheduled to be sent out soon and is requesting direction from Council as to whether or not interest and penalties on delinquent sewer bills would continue to be waived. She stated that the Council had previously approved a waiver for the periods April 2020 to December 2020, January 2021 to June 2021, and July 2021 to December 31, 2021 for the purpose of assisting individuals and businesses who had experienced financial hardship during the pandemic. She provided statistical information on the number of delinquent accounts (200) in December 2019, prior to the pandemic, and since the waiver of interest and penalties began (143), stating that although the number of delinquent accounts has decreased, the outstanding balance has grown from \$97,000 to \$111,000; the total quarterly billing is approximately \$450,000. Ms. Nagle stated that it was her recommendation that the County not extend the deferral of interest and penalties. Council discussion ensued with Ms. Nagle who outlined the timeframe by which citizens could bring a delinquent account current prior to the 2022 tax sale, anticipated to be held in May 2022. Council discussion again ensued with Ms. Nagle and Mr. Smith. Mr. Divilio made a motion to end the deferment on the waiver of interest and penalties on sewer bills as of December 31, 2021; the motion was seconded by Mr. Pack. The Council voted to end the deferment as outlined in the motion by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye
Mr. Divilio – Aye
Mr. Leshner – Aye
Ms. Price – Aye (via telephone)
Mr. Pack – Aye

VIII. County Manager’s Report:

- A. Talbot County Weed Control Committee - Requested Council approval for the appointment of Michael Weaver to the Talbot County Weed Control Committee; said term will complete the unexpired term of Mr. Gordon Behrens and will expire on July 1, 2022. Upon motion by Mr. Pack, seconded by Mr. Divilio, the Council approved the appointment by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan – Aye
Mr. Divilio – Aye
Mr. Leshner – Aye
Ms. Price – Aye (via telephone)
Mr. Pack – Aye

- B. Board and Committee Volunteer Opportunities – Mr. Stamp stated that there are a number of opportunities for members of the public to serve on County boards and committees should they wish to do so. Those boards and committees which currently have vacancies may be found on the County’s website: www.talbotcountymd.gov under “County Council”.

- C. Request from Department of Public Works – Requested Council approval to have the Department of Public Works submit grant and loan applications to the Maryland Water Quality Financing Administration Water Quality Infrastructure Finance Program for seven (7) environmental projects which County Engineer, Ray Clarke, outlined as follows: (1) Replacement of The Preserve at Wye Mills Wastewater Treatment Plant ; (2) Replacement of the Martingham Water and Wastewater Emergency Generator; (3) Region I (Unionville, Tunis Mills, and Copperville) and Region II (Royal Oak, Newcomb and Bellevue) Force Main Pressure Sensors and Region II (Martingham) Vacuum Collection System Sensors; (4) Bar Neck and Fairbank Sewer Extension to 110 properties; (5) Region V (Tilghman) Sewer Collection System Inflow and Infiltration Improvements; (6) Region II (Unionville, Tunis Mills and Copperville) Replacement of E-1 Grinder Pumps; and (7) Design and Planning for Region V (Tilghman) Wastewater Treatment Plant Connection to the Region II (St. Michaels) Wastewater Treatment Plant. Council discussion ensued with Mr. Clarke as each proposed project was brought forward. Upon motion by Mr. Pack, seconded by Mr. Divilio, the Council approved submission of the grant and loan applications as outlined by voting 5 – 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan - Aye
Mr. Divilio – Aye
Mr. Leshner – Aye
Ms. Price – Aye (via telephone)
Mr. Pack – Aye

- E. Update on Talbot County Courthouse Fire – Mr. Stamp stated that on Sunday, December 19th at 11:45 a.m., 9-1-1 received an alarm for a fire in the Courthouse. He stated that Easton Volunteer Fire Department and several other fire companies responded to the fire on the first floor of the North Wing of the Courthouse. The fire, which was isolated to the Clerk of Court’s Office, burned a countertop and extended toward the ceiling but was extinguished when sprinkler heads activated causing approximately 10,000 gallons of water to be released, resulting in extensive water damage as well as smoke damage. Mr. Stamp stated that Royal Plus Disaster Kleenup responded within two hours with 15 vehicles, a tractor-trailer and 40 people who used specialized equipment to evacuate the water from the building, scrubbed the air and addressed moisture issues. Mr. Stamp stated that the company is working with the County and its insurance company and the State to get the Clerk of Court’s Office and the Register of Wills Office open again. He asked that in the interim, individuals who have business with those offices go their respective websites for up-to-date information. He expressed his appreciation to the State and County staff for cooperation.
- F. County Offices Closed – Mr. Stamp stated that County Offices will be closed on Thursday, December 23, 2021, Friday, December 24, 2021, and Friday, December 31, 2021. He wished everyone a happy holiday.

IX. Public Comments: There were no comments.

X. Council Comments:

Mr. Pack - Mr. Pack wished everyone a joyous, merry, and safe Christmas and New Year and asked that individuals stay safe as they meet with friends and family. He stated that he had an opportunity over the weekend to attend the funeral of Mr. Francis Wilson, a barber in

Easton, and the uncle of Karen Roberts, a member of County staff, and Eddie Roberts, a Talbot County EMT. He stated that while listening to the service for Mr. Wilson he was reminded of all the things Mr. Wilson had done for the Talbot County community. He stated that Mr. Wilson was a 1957 graduate of Moton High School and at the age of 25 in 1963 opened his own barber shop on West Street; in 1977 at the age of 39, he purchased the building at 18 Glenwood Avenue in Easton, working as a barber for 55 years. He stated that Mr. Wilson also drove a school bus in Talbot County for 25 years. He stated that Mr. Wilson had trained a number of young men, including his nephew, Eddie Roberts, who also cut hair there for a number of years. Mr. Pack stated that, in his opinion, a haircut gives one confidence, whether a young man gets a haircut as he is going off to college or going down the aisle, a haircut is much more than just a haircut. He stated that, in his opinion, a barber is a counselor, tax advisor, etc., and the local barber shop is like a working man's country club, you see people from all walks of life, from postal carriers to truck drivers to politicians. Mr. Pack concluded his comments by stating that he just wanted to highlight Mr. Wilson's remarkable career and the many lives he touched along the way, including his own. He offered his condolences to Mr. Wilson's family.

Mr. Divilio - Mr. Divilio stated that as the Christmas season approaches, to him it means generosity of spirit, but noted it can be an emotionally difficult time for some individuals. He stated that, in his opinion, mental health has been a big concern over the past couple of years and during this time when individuals would usually go out, and grandparents would get together with parents and grandchildren but don't feel comfortable doing so, he asked everyone to try to think of ways the holiday season can be different but still enjoyed by all so there is no pressure on anyone who may not feel comfortable or safe doing some activities. He asked that everyone keep an eye and ear out for the neighbor that you may not see too often or does not get out too much, to give them a phone call or send them a card – it would mean a lot. He encouraged everyone to be generous and to think of others during this time of year, reminding everyone that technology is a challenge for some senior citizens so instead of trying to talk to them on FaceTime, he suggested picking up the phone and giving them a call.

Ms. Price - Ms. Price wished everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and Happy New Year. She stated that she had the opportunity to meet with Governor Hogan as she and the president of the Maryland Municipal League (MML) presented the legislative initiatives from each of their organizations (MML and MACo). She stated that the Governor, in her opinion, was very receptive to hearing the matters that the organizations wants to put forth. She stated that the number one issue for both MML and MACo is the return of the Highway User Revenues to local jurisdictions, which Governor Hogan was very supportive of, even when he was initially running for governor. She stated that, in her opinion, she expects there will be strong support from the Governor on the issue. She stated that it had been an honor to sit with the Governor and her counterpart from MML for about an hour. Ms. Price concluded her comments by again wishing everyone Happy Holidays.

Mr. Leshner - Mr. Leshner extended his wishes to everyone for a safe and healthy holiday. He stated that as we hear more about cases of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, there are some high profile cases of vaccinated and boosted individuals with breakout cases, reminding everyone that the vaccines are not intended to prevent transmission of the disease, but are designed to save individuals from serious illness and death, and, in his opinion, they are working well to do just that. He stated that vaccines are available at the Talbot County Health Department's location on Marlboro Road and encouraged those who are not yet

vaccinated or had a booster and are eligible, to schedule an appointment – the life you save may be your own.

Mr. Callahan – Mr. Callahan wished everyone a happy holiday and expressed his appreciation to the Council for their hard work and the hard decisions they had made over the past year. He expressed his appreciation to the County employees for all they do and stated that, in his opinion, there are situations where you see the true colors of people, commenting how blessed we are that everyone came together when we had a fire in the Courthouse building. He stated that there was one goal, to make it safe – and that’s what we’ve done in the past few days. Mr. Callahan concluded his comments by expressing his appreciation to members of the public for coming to the Council meetings and providing their comments.

- XI. Upon motion by Mr. Divilio, the Council voted to adjourn and to reconvene on Tuesday, January 4, 2022 at 3:30 p.m. in the Wye Oak Room at the Talbot County Community Center (10028 Ocean Gateway, Easton) for a work session to discuss the creation of a Police Accountability Board for Talbot County as required by recent State legislation; and at 5:30 p.m. for a Joint Dinner Meeting with the Talbot County Board of Education at 12 Magnolia Street, Easton; and to reconvene on Tuesday, January 11, 2022, at 3:30 p.m. in the Bradley Meeting Room in Open Session and immediately adjourn into Closed Session for discussion of legal, personnel and real estate matters as listed on the statement for closing the meeting, and at 6:00 p.m. for the meeting by voting 5– 0 as follows:

Mr. Callahan - Aye
Mr. Divilio – Aye
Mr. Leshner – Aye
Ms. Price – Aye (via telephone)
Mr. Pack – Aye

The meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

The transcript of the December 21, 2021 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 December 21, 2021:

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

Time of closed session: 5:00 p.m. to 5:55 p.m.
Place of closed session: County Council Office South Wing, Courthouse, 11 North Washington Street, Easton, MD
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, Divilio, Leshner, Pack, Price
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 of specific appointees could discourage individuals from volunteering to serve on County boards and committees	Chuck Callahan, Frank Divilio, Pete Leshner, Corey Pack, Laura Price, Clay Stamp, Jessica Morris, Patrick Thomas	No action
Legal advice on code enforcement matter involving property in Easton	GP § 3-305 (b) (7)	Confidential attorney-client discussion regarding potential dispute resolution	Chuck Callahan, Frank Divilio, Pete Leshner, Corey Pack, Laura Price, Clay Stamp, Jessica Morris, Patrick Thomas	No action
Legal advice on potential litigation (Petition 21-02/Preserve Talbot History, Inc.)	GP § 3-305 (b) (7)(8)	Confidential attorney-client discussion regarding status of litigation	Chuck Callahan, Frank Divilio, Pete Leshner, Corey Pack, Laura Price, Clay Stamp, Jessica Morris, Patrick Thomas	Council directed County attorney to file motion to dismiss
To discuss possible acquisition of property in Easton for a public purpose	GP § 3-305 (b) (3)	To protect County’s bargaining position regarding the potential acquisition of a specific parcel of real property for a public purpose	Chuck Callahan, Frank Divilio, Pete Leshner, Corey Pack, Laura Price, Clay Stamp, Jessica Morris, Patrick Thomas	Council directed staff to prepare a Request for Proposals

CASH STATEMENT 12/21/2021

BALANCE 12/14/2021	53,968,674.04
STATE REPORT NOVEMBER 2021	(180,167.20)
CIGNA CLAIMS PD THRU 12/13/2021	(122,508.71)
SANITARY PAYMENTS FOR TALBOT COUNTY OWNED PROPERTIES	(627.75)

WF/FG EQUIP LEASE PYMT	(4,092.00)
USDA/RD QTRLY BOND PYMT #92-11	(60,886.00)
USDA/RD QTRLY BOND PYMT #92-09	(26,240.00)
INTEREST ON ACCOUNTS 11/2021	3,753.89

DEPOSITS	1,534,139.83
CHECKS	(449,423.05)
VOIDED CHECK(S)	

BALANCE 12/21/2021	54,662,623.05
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INVESTMENTS - CERTIFICATES OF DEPOSIT

<u>Certificate Date</u>	<u>Maturity Date</u>	<u>Yield</u>	<u>Amount</u>
PNC-MLGIP INVESTMENTS TOTAL		0.04%	20,500,000.00
BAYVANGUARD BANK			10,204,248.25

TOTAL INVESTED	<u>30,704,248.25</u>
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PETTY CASH BALANCE	<u>12,175.00</u>
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<u>GRAND TOTAL ALL FUNDS</u>	<u>85,379,046.30</u>
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