

Page 1

COUNTY COUNCIL OF TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

Council Meeting

June 9, 2026; 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

1 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

2

3 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. So I want to welcome
4 everybody to the Council meeting tonight.

5 So let's go ahead and stand and do the
6 prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance of the
7 Flag.

8 (Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.)

9 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Let's go ahead and
10 get started on the agenda. The agenda is
11 before us. Is there any additions, deletions,
12 or corrections to the agenda, Council?

13 MS. HAYTHE: Yes, President Callahan.

14 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

15 MS. HAYTHE: I have one addition to amend
16 the agenda for this evening.

17 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

18 MS. HAYTHE: If we could amend the agenda
19 for a Proclamation for Cassandra Vanhooser this
20 evening.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

1 MS. MIELKE: Second.

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

5 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

6 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

7 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

8 MR. STEPP: Aye.

9 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

10 MR. LESHER: Aye.

11 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

12 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

13 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

14 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. So Cassandra is not
16 here. So probably what we'll do is when she
17 comes in here, we'll start down the agenda and
18 just kind of fill in when she gets here. Okay.

19 MR. STAMP: Just got a text she's on her
20 way in.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. That sounds good.

1 All right. So let's start with the
2 minutes of May 5th. Council has had a chance
3 to take a look at the minutes. Is there any
4 deletions or corrections to the minutes?

5 MS. HAYTHE: No.

6 MS. MIELKE: No.

7 MR. STEPP: None here.

8 MR. CALLAHAN: That's all good, Council.
9 Okay. Hearing none, the chair moves that the
10 minutes be accepted as unanimous consent.

11 Okay. Next is the disbursements of
12 June 2nd and June 9th. We've had a chance to
13 take a look at them. Is there any additions,
14 deletions, or corrections to the disbursements,
15 Council?

16 MS. MIELKE: No.

17 MS. HAYTHE: No.

18 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Hearing none, the
19 chair moves that the disbursements be accepted
20 as unanimous consent.

21 Okay. First up tonight is Ken Kozel.

1 Come on up. It's an up to date on the
2 University of Maryland on our new hospital.

3 How are you?

4 MR. KOZEL: I'm doing great.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Great.

6 MR. KOZEL: Good afternoon, everyone.

7 MR. CALLAHAN: Yes, sir.

8 MR. KOZEL: Great to see you, as always.

9 MR. CALLAHAN: Yes, sir.

10 MR. KOZEL: Thank you for giving me a few
11 minutes on your busy agenda today.

12 What I thought I'd do is update you on
13 three quick things, if time allows. I'll be
14 brief.

15 But I thought it would be important to
16 share with you the latest CMS star ratings,
17 which are national ratings for how hospitals
18 provide quality, safety, and experience across
19 the country. So I'll give you a little brief
20 background on the star rating system and tell
21 you where our scores landed for Shore Regional

1 Health. Then I'll get into the sale of the
2 Easton Hospital property, just so everyone is
3 aware of the latest and greatest news on that
4 information. And then finally, I'll give you a
5 brief update on the construction project of the
6 regional medical center out near the Community
7 Center.

8 And then certainly after that, can answer
9 any questions you have.

10 MR. CALLAHAN: Sure. That sounds great.

11 MR. KOZEL: All right. Let's start with
12 the CMS star rating.

13 So what you may not know is that the CMS
14 star rating helps patients compare clinical
15 quality across hospitals across the country.
16 It's a public ranking that helps to simplify
17 complex data into a star rating system. One
18 star is the lowest score you can achieve, five
19 stars is the highest score you can achieve.

20 And it's used to compare hospitals,
21 nursing homes, and the Medicare Advantage Plan

1 throughout the United States.

2 These are publicly-reported ratings.
3 They're on the CMS website. And they're used
4 to evaluate multiple measures of what the
5 hospitals do across the country, and they focus
6 on five key elements of performance.
7 Mortality, safety, readmissions, patient
8 experience, and timely care. Those are the
9 five criteria that CMS looks at when they're
10 evaluating hospitals.

11 And four of those five are each weighted
12 the same. They're all 22 percent each. The
13 fifth, timely care, has a rating of 12 percent.
14 So that totals up to your 100 percent rating
15 system.

16 And what I find interesting is when we're
17 looking at mortality as an example, the data
18 that CMS is looking at to rate our scores in
19 May of 2026, is July 2021 to June 2024. So the
20 data at its longest period is about five years
21 old. And the shortest period, if they're

1 taking it through June 2024, is two years old.
2 So there's that window of time that they're
3 looking in the past to give us an overall
4 rating.

5 Another example is patient experience,
6 though. That rating starts from July 2024 to
7 June 2025. So it's different for each of the
8 five key metrics that are measured. But the
9 ratings do go back in time and assess our
10 performance back in time.

11 So this May of 2026, we received our
12 results from CMS for the rating system at Shore
13 Regional Health. And I'm very proud to share
14 that our Chester River Hospital up in
15 Chestertown received five stars out of five.
16 And our Easton Hospital here in Easton received
17 four stars out of five.

18 So just to give you a sense of how
19 challenging achieving those scores are, only
20 12 percent of hospitals across the country
21 receive five stars and only 29 percent of

1 hospitals across the country receive four stars
2 or higher. So it's very, very tough to get
3 that kind of high rating. And it really I
4 think serves as an example of the quality of
5 care that we provide in our organization here
6 at Shore Regional. So just wanted to share
7 that with you, show the pride that our team
8 feels for achieving those scores.

9 And just know that just as important as a
10 regional medical center is to our community, so
11 too is the quality of care that we provide
12 either in our existing facility or in the new
13 regional medical center when it's built. So
14 wanted to put that into perspective for you a
15 little bit.

16 So any questions about the CMS star
17 ratings and the Shore results?

18 MR. LESHER: Congratulations.

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup.

20 MR. KOZEL: Thank you.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: Congratulations.

1 MS. MIELKE: Yes. Great job.

2 MR. KOZEL: Thank you.

3 MR. LESHER: And that's good, not just for
4 Shore Health, it's good for the community.

5 MR. KOZEL: Absolutely. It's a reflection
6 of the care and services that we provide our
7 community, and that's what's most important.

8 The second element is the sale of the
9 Easton Hospital here on Washington Street. So
10 if you haven't heard or haven't read the
11 papers, we've actually sold. We ventured into
12 a purchase and sale agreement to sell the
13 hospital and the property located on 219 South
14 Washington Street. We will -- we reached that
15 purchase and sale agreement with Blue Point
16 Living. And the owner and operator of Blue
17 Point Living is Mr. Paul Prager.

18 So what will happen is we will retain
19 ownership of the property and the building
20 until we end up closing on the deal. And the
21 closing period is 60 days from the date we

1 relocate out of the Easton Hospital into the
2 new regional medical center.

3 So if we're anticipating a late summer,
4 early fall relocation in 2028, then we're
5 expecting to close sometime on or before
6 12/31/28. So we'll own that property until
7 then. We'll close 60 days afterwards, at which
8 point in time the property and building will be
9 turned over to Mr. Prager because we do not
10 expect to have any operations in the hospital
11 once we've relocated to the regional medical
12 center.

13 So I think that's exciting news. It's
14 exciting news for this community. I believe
15 it's great news for Shore Regional Health and
16 our project because the proceeds from the sale
17 of this agreement will all go towards the cost
18 of the construction of the regional medical
19 center. So all good on that front.

20 MR. CALLAHAN: That's great. Good job.

21 MR. KOZEL: All right. Any questions on

1 the sale and relocation? Okay.

2 The last thing I just wanted to get you a
3 quick up-to-speed on is the progress we're
4 making with the regional medical center. I was
5 just out there this afternoon. I'm amazed at
6 the progress being made week after week after
7 week with the regional medical center here in
8 the five counties of the midshore.

9 And I can honestly tell you without
10 hesitation that we are building the midshore
11 community the best world-class five-star
12 hospital system that this country has ever
13 seen. It is going to be a state-of-the-art
14 facility that's going to serve the five
15 counties of the midshore region located right
16 here in Talbot County.

17 I am so excited, and I can't wait to offer
18 you the opportunity to come out and see it
19 yourself personally because driving past it or
20 seeing pictures just doesn't warrant what's
21 actually going on on that site.

1 And that's why I didn't bring pictures
2 with me today because I figured they'd be
3 outdated by the time I was able to show them to
4 you.

5 But it is incredible, the progress that
6 we're making. And I just wanted to highlight a
7 couple of key elements of the project that is
8 progressing according to plan.

9 The first is the geothermal well system
10 that's located out in the well field on the
11 property of the new regional medical center.
12 That is such an important part of the project
13 in that it will control the heating and
14 temperature control and air conditioning system
15 within the hospital proper.

16 And that is most important in my world
17 because you've got to have appropriate
18 humidities, you've got to have appropriate
19 temperatures in order to care for patients
20 safely and effectively and to do operating room
21 cases in our operating rooms. So that's

1 critically important. It's an investment we're
2 making in the community, but it will pay
3 dividends in the efficiencies that we'll gain
4 and the operating costs that we'll experience
5 when we open the new regional medical center.
6 So that is going along well.

7 All 1,728 wells have been dug, and now
8 we're going from vertical digging to horizontal
9 digging and connecting those wells to the
10 central utility plant, which is in the back
11 part of the hospital.

12 Hundreds and hundreds of miles of pipes
13 have been dug and are being laid in order to
14 connect this well field to the hospital
15 property.

16 And again, then when you look at the
17 construction site itself, the actual building,
18 by the end of this month, all of the concrete
19 floors will be laid. So you'll recall in the
20 east tower, that's a six-story facility, and
21 the west tower will be five stories. So all of

1 the concrete will be poured and settled on each
2 of those floors.

3 The exterior panels, which you might start
4 to see if you take the back end around the
5 hospital, are starting to go up and starting to
6 enclose the hospital building itself. We
7 expect that those panels will be completed by
8 the end of this calendar year, when we'll seal
9 the outside of the building. And that will
10 allow us to focus on the inside of the building
11 at that point.

12 So you're going to see by the end of this
13 calendar year the building is going to look
14 like a hospital structure. And you're probably
15 going to be asked why aren't we moving in and
16 seeing patients there yet. We still have a lot
17 of work to do on the inside. It's going to
18 take us a couple of years to get the inside
19 building built and structured and ready for
20 patient care. But we are progressing along
21 those lines very well.

1 And the last thing that's an important
2 timeline milestone for us is the reopening of
3 Route 50 and the intersection at Medical Center
4 Parkway. We expect that in the month of July
5 we will have reopened that intersection. So
6 we've got some repaving to do first. But once
7 that's complete, then we'll reopen the entrance
8 to the Community Center and to the hospital.

9 And at some point likely in July, SHA will
10 test the light system on Route 50 and then
11 ultimately turn it on for use shortly after
12 that.

13 So a couple of major milestones with the
14 geothermal system, the construction hitting our
15 timeline targets, and with Route 50 being
16 completed.

17 It's just incredible to see. And again,
18 I'd encourage you, if you want to -- take the
19 opportunity to go on a tour with us and see it
20 up close and personal, I'd encourage you to do
21 that.

1 So that's the update on the construction
2 project.

3 I did want to take a second to thank
4 President Callahan and Mr. Clay Stamp, the
5 county manager, for a couple of things. You
6 guys are present at every meeting we have, and
7 I know we have a number of meetings associated
8 with this project. But it's important that
9 you're there and that you're present and that
10 you're representing the county and the midshore
11 region. So I appreciate your time and talents
12 and focusing on our progress and helping
13 support our progress.

14 But equally importantly, when the Governor
15 came out to visit us a few weeks ago, President
16 Callahan, you were there in person. You really
17 have a great relationship with the Governor.
18 It's great to see that camaraderie.

19 The Governor was incredibly impressed with
20 the progress we're making, incredibly impressed
21 with the fact that the building is starting to

1 take shape and we're not too far along from
2 achieving our vision here.

3 So I just wanted to say thank you on
4 behalf of a grateful organization for your
5 unwavering support and for all you do on our
6 behalf.

7 So with that, I'll answer any questions
8 you have about the regional medical center or
9 anything else going on at Shore Regional.

10 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Any questions?

11 MS. MIELKE: No.

12 MR. LESHER: How are you doing on the
13 schedule?

14 You're marking this progress. This is
15 progress that you are -- are you -- you're
16 hitting the milestones that you are needing to
17 hit?

18 MR. KOZEL: We are. But there are still
19 about two more years in this process.

20 So at this point, if I were a betting man,
21 I'd say late summer, early fall of 2028 is when

1 we would see our first patient.

2 A lot of that depends on when the building
3 is turned over to us from the construction
4 company itself because once they say go, we've
5 got 14 weeks to prep that building and get it
6 ready for patient use.

7 So a lot depends on when the building is
8 turned over to us. And whatever that date ends
9 up being, we've got about 14 more weeks of
10 activation to work on.

11 So at this point, we experienced some
12 delays with weather this most recent winter.
13 So that set us back a little bit. But we're
14 looking at a patient first day sometime late
15 summer, early fall of 2028.

16 MR. LESHER: And I know you've been public
17 about, about the way the budget has grown a
18 bit.

19 Where are you on that front?

20 MR. KOZEL: Yeah. So 99.9 percent of all
21 of the bid packages associated with building

1 this hospital are complete and signed. And
2 they have guaranteed maximum prices associated
3 with each one of those bids, which means that
4 we have set the highest level of price that
5 we're going to pay, and we budgeted for that
6 highest level. So we are confident that the
7 latest budget reports that came out are
8 reflective of how much we're going to pay for
9 this hospital.

10 So we don't anticipate any more cost
11 increases or overruns moving forward.

12 MR. STEPP: Ken, are you anticipating more
13 staff needed to run at the new facility as
14 opposed to the old facility?

15 MR. KOZEL: I do. There will be some
16 additional staff because we're going to have
17 more beds, and those more beds need more nurses
18 and techs to support that additional capacity
19 and additional patient care.

20 But beyond that, I think it's going to be
21 the same staff with respect to the operating

1 staff that's needed to run the hospital.

2 We are always recruiting, though, for new
3 providers. So I do expect that there will be
4 new providers that will join our team sometime
5 between now and when we open the RMC. So those
6 two areas we do expect more staff. But for the
7 balance of what we do, it will be the same.

8 MR. STEPP: Just industry in general, I
9 mean does a new hospital, does that help in
10 recruitment efforts to bring new folks here and
11 possibly, you know, young doctors raising
12 families and growing and making a home here?

13 MR. KOZEL: It certainly does. It really
14 does.

15 And I can look back at stories when I'd
16 interview candidates, physicians who wanted to
17 work with us. And I would tour them through
18 the Easton Hospital, and I would tell them some
19 day we're going to build a regional medical
20 center, so you might want to join us now so
21 you're part of that team.

1 They have a lot of choices.

2 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah.

3 MR. KOZEL: They don't wait for hopes and
4 prayers.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Right.

6 MR. KOZEL: They want to see construction
7 going on.

8 So now that we can show them the site, we
9 can take them on a tour, we can tell them the
10 opening date, it is really helping with
11 recruitment efforts. Not only for providers,
12 too, but for nurses and for nurse techs and
13 others needed to run the hospital.

14 MR. STEPP: Okay. Thank you.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Well. And Ken, the feeling
16 is mutual. I mean you're so transparent. It's
17 really nice every month, you and I, Clay, and
18 the town, the mayor, and Andy, we're all
19 meeting. You're getting us up to speed on
20 everything. You know, I really appreciate the
21 information you're giving us and the public.

1 And back to the tour. It's extremely
2 impressive to even be there and be up in the
3 structure itself is amazing, you know.

4 So but it's hard to believe it's going to
5 be closed in, but they're moving so fast --

6 MR. KOZEL: They really are.

7 MR. CALLAHAN: -- right now. And I see
8 they've taken one of the big cranes down.

9 MR. KOZEL: They have. One of the larger
10 of the two cranes are down.

11 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah.

12 MR. KOZEL: So now it's the other crane
13 that's really putting the panels up to close in
14 the exterior of the facility.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: And it was good to see a
16 lot of the workers out there and all the people
17 that I mean, you know, there's 250 people
18 working there.

19 MR. KOZEL: Yup.

20 MR. CALLAHAN: And it's going to progress
21 to 500 people working there, construction

1 people.

2 MR. KOZEL: That's right. When we close
3 in and all the subs come in to do the interior
4 work, that's when the construction numbers will
5 be at their highest.

6 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah.

7 MR. KOZEL: And I think what's important
8 to note also is the MBE contribution we're
9 making for this project. We set percentage
10 targets for MBE and for local subcontractors.
11 And in the case of MBE, we're exceeding that
12 target we established, which was 32 percent of
13 the overall construction costs of the project
14 would be through MBE. And I believe it was
15 25 percent for local, local teams also, and
16 we're very, very close to hitting that target
17 as well. So giving the opportunity --

18 MR. CALLAHAN: So that's great, that's
19 great.

20 So congratulations on setting some goals
21 here and the four star and the five star. So

1 really congratulations, and really appreciate
2 you being here tonight and telling the public
3 how good you guys are doing.

4 MR. KOZEL: Thank you. Appreciate your
5 time.

6 And thanks again, for your unwavering
7 support. Appreciate it.

8 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. You, too.
9 Appreciate you coming.

10 MS. MIELKE: Great job.

11 MR. CALLAHAN: Good job.

12 Okay. I see we got our special lady just
13 come in here, Cassandra. Yes. Come on up
14 here.

15 Okay. How are you?

16 MS. VANHOOSER: I'm well. Thank you so
17 much.

18 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

19 MS. VANHOOSER: Good to see you this
20 evening.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: Good seeing you. So you

1 want to kind of tell us what your next
2 adventure is going to be?

3 MS. VANHOOSER: I do. So I have accepted
4 the position of --

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Could you tell people who
6 you are first?

7 MS. VANHOOSER: Oh, I'm so sorry.

8 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

9 MS. VANHOOSER: I'm just assuming
10 everybody knows. My apologies.

11 I'm Cassandra Vanhooser. I'm the
12 director, currently the director of Economic
13 Development and Tourism for Talbot County.

14 However, I have accepted the position of
15 managing director of the Maryland Department of
16 Commerce, Office of Tourism.

17 So my journey will take me away from
18 Talbot County, but I will still be living here,
19 by the way. I'm still living here. So and
20 hope to be supporting you all in a different
21 capacity.

1 But I want to say thank you for all of the
2 support and all that you have done over the
3 years. It's been an honor and a pleasure to
4 serve in Talbot County.

5 I -- there's a sign that hangs over the
6 locker room door at the University of
7 Tennessee. It says I will give my all for
8 Tennessee today. And I love that because it's
9 simple and it's direct and it sets a really
10 high bar. And I want you to know that I have
11 always tried to give my all for Talbot County
12 every day that I have worked here.

13 So again, thank you for everything.

14 The economy here is booming. I mean you
15 heard about our generational investment in
16 health care. We've got a huge airport project.
17 We've been successful. I've been on the
18 broadband team. We are the first county in
19 Maryland to bring broadband to every citizen.

20 So we have done some big things. You have
21 done some big things. And it has been my honor

1 to support you and to help carry those
2 initiatives forward.

3 So I feel like that I'm handing it off to
4 you and to the next team in really good shape.
5 And again, thank you.

6 MR. CALLAHAN: Thank you. Thank you.
7 You guys want to?

8 MR. STEPP: I'll start.

9 MR. CALLAHAN: You want to start?

10 MR. STEPP: Yeah. I'll go ahead and start
11 the bidding.

12 Cassandra, well deserved. No ifs, ands,
13 or buts about it. They're lucky to have you.

14 We're just glad here that you're coming
15 from us and the fact you're not going to forget
16 where you came from and you're still going to
17 live here.

18 So you know what, they're going to be
19 blessed to have you and we're glad to have you
20 in there on behalf of all the things you'll be
21 doing that we'll get to reap the benefits of at

1 your level now.

2 So thank you. Congratulations.

3 MS. VANHOOSER: Thank you.

4 MR. STEPP: Can't wait to still continue
5 to see you around here.

6 MR. LESHER: Well, I'll echo those
7 congratulations from Mr. Stepp. And Talbot
8 County is always justly proud when we, when one
9 of our best goes and is able to serve us at the
10 State level for the entire State.

11 I just want to remind you that as that has
12 been done in the past, there's also a precedent
13 for Talbot County's best and brightest when
14 they go back up to the State actually to come
15 back to the county after some period of time.
16 So just planting that seed.

17 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup. Thank you.

18 MS. MIELKE: Cassandra, you will be
19 missed. And I know you said that, you know,
20 you've tried. But you've tried, but you've
21 succeeded.

1 So we will miss you desperately, and I'm
2 glad you're moving on to something that maybe
3 will continue to make you happy. And I'm glad
4 you're still staying here in Talbot County.

5 MS. VANHOOSER: Thank you.

6 MS. HAYTHE: So this is very heartfelt for
7 me. Knowing you I don't even know how many
8 years working, you working in Talbot County and
9 then me in Dorchester. So it's been ten years,
10 yeah, to date since I left Dorchester.

11 And I'm sure it's bittersweet for you
12 today or on June 22nd as it was for me.

13 But I always said, and you put this in
14 your email that you sent to the Tourism Board,
15 that tourism is your super power.

16 And tourism is indeed your super power.
17 And you have so much that you've offered here
18 in Talbot County, but you have so much more
19 that you're going to bring to the State of
20 Maryland.

21 And so I'm so happy for you, so proud of

1 you, and the relationship that we developed in
2 your role as director of Economic Development
3 and Tourism.

4 So thank you for getting the strategic
5 plan done. Good job, good job, good job.

6 And I just look forward to seeing all the
7 great work that you'll do for the State of
8 Maryland.

9 MS. VANHOOSER: Thank you.

10 MR. CALLAHAN: And I'll end it with it's
11 been a pleasure for -- how long have you been
12 here? Has it been about 12 --

13 MS. VANHOOSER: Thirteen and a half.

14 MR. CALLAHAN: Thirteen and a half. Yup.
15 And I've known you for at least 12.

16 And it's been such a pleasure working with
17 you, being on all your boards. You keeping me
18 straight and saying Chuck, this is what you got
19 to do. Okay. Exactly.

20 And it's been a really benefit to the
21 community, too, and the business world, tourism

1 world. You've kept all that stuff on track.

2 I'm not really happy with the State,
3 though, taking you. I'm not happy with them.

4 But, you know, you've got an opportunity,
5 and what an opportunity that you're going to
6 have to all your talent to spread it over the
7 State. And it's really going to just make
8 things better for everybody. That's for sure.

9 So you're a special woman, you're a
10 special person, and we really, really enjoy
11 having you. And we're going to miss you a lot,
12 you know. At least we'll see you around,
13 anyway.

14 MS. VANHOOSER: Of course.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: But like you say, when you
16 sort of get done with this now, you're welcome
17 back.

18 MS. VANHOOSER: Thank you. That means a
19 lot.

20 MR. CALLAHAN: But anyway, it's been a
21 pleasure. And you got a brightness to you and

1 a bright future. And we wish you, wish you
2 luck. Anything that we can do to help you.

3 MS. VANHOOSER: I will give my all for
4 Maryland today.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: I know you will. I know
6 you will. So go ahead.

7 MR. LESHER: Will we read...

8 MR. STAMP: No. I'd just like to take a
9 moment.

10 So I've worked side by side with you,
11 Cassandra, all 13 years. As the emergency
12 director, you were at every snow storm, every
13 hurricane, and COVID to make sure we got
14 messages out in a timely manner.

15 You came up with the idea of creating an
16 economic development dashboard that not only
17 served us, but served the whole region and
18 probably Statewide.

19 You've done amazing things. You've always
20 been passionate to the enth degree. And you're
21 like a dog with a bone. And it's just been an

1 honor.

2 I'm so proud of you. And I know that
3 you'll give all for the State of Maryland. I
4 know Talbot County will make out as well.

5 But thank you for everything, and I'm just
6 so proud of you.

7 MS. VANHOOSER: Thank you. Thank you.

8 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Madam Secretary,
9 would you like to read the recognition, please.

10 SECRETARY: Certificate of Recognition to
11 Cassandra Vanhooser for her outstanding
12 dedication and commitment to the citizens of
13 Talbot County over the past 13 years, bringing
14 her decade-plus professional experience as
15 travel writer and interviewer across the
16 southeastern and Mid Atlantic states for
17 Southern Living Magazine to Talbot County.
18 First, as the director of the Office of
19 Tourism. And since 2016, as the director of
20 the Department of Economic Development and
21 Tourism.

1 Joining with businesses, community
2 organizations, and governmental partners to
3 attract, retain, and expand the business sector
4 of Talbot County and to market the county as a
5 premiere destination for visitors, all while
6 helping to preserve the exceptional quality of
7 life that makes Talbot County unique.

8 Her professionalism, boundless energy,
9 enthusiasm, knowledge of valuable resources,
10 and forward thinking on projects have earned
11 her the respect of those with whom she has
12 worked at the county, State, and regional
13 levels.

14 From early in her tenure when she
15 redesigned the Office of Tourism's website and
16 expanded the county's social media presence, to
17 helping to develop an economic indicator
18 dashboard, providing insight into the health
19 and resilience of local economies and
20 communities, to assisting the county with the
21 challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring

1 that local businesses were financially
2 supported to remain viable, to assisting the
3 county with navigating the current fiscal
4 uncertainties at the federal and State levels,
5 to navigating the preparation and adoption of
6 the 2026 2030 Economic Development and Tourism
7 Strategic Plan, which will help charter the
8 course for economic development and tourism in
9 the future. All have been met with
10 determination.

11 Earning the Talbot County Office of
12 Tourism the 2015 Maryland Office of Tourism
13 Development's Visit Maryland Award and
14 Ms. Vanhooser's distinction as the Maryland
15 Travel and Tourism Summit's 2025 Maryland
16 Tourism Person of the Year.

17 We, the County Council of Talbot County,
18 do hereby bestow upon you as a token of the
19 esteem and gratitude of our community this
20 Certificate of Recognition on this 9th day of
21 June, 2026.

1 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Good job, Madam
2 Secretary.

3 Okay. We got something for you. Come on
4 up.

5 MR. LESHER: We're all coming down for
6 this one.

7 MR. STEPP: Huge congrats.

8 MS. KILMON: All righty, guys. Look over
9 here. Perfect.

10 SPEAKER: All right. Thank you, guys.
11 Congratulations.

12 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Next on the agenda,
13 Sarah, you want to come on up. Thank you.

14 We're going to do Talbot County School.
15 Sarah is going to talk to us about budget
16 transfers.

17 Welcome.

18 MS. JONES: Thank you. Good evening.
19 Good afternoon. Wherever we are in the day.

20 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup, yup. Exactly.

21 MS. JONES: Right?

1 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup.

2 MS. JONES: And it's going to go into the
3 evening, but not my part hopefully.

4 So I'm here. So what do I do? Okay.

5 Thank you. Thank you.

6 SECRETARY: Left click.

7 MS. JONES: Well, when I left click, that
8 happens. Maybe right click?

9 SECRETARY: No. Should be left.

10 MS. JONES: Here we go.

11 I'm here with a request for budget
12 category transfers for the current FY26 year.

13 We are projecting to have a slight overage
14 of about 400,000, which we've outlined in a
15 letter to you and in this chart, in our plant
16 operations department. We had some overruns in
17 the -- we will have had some overruns in
18 contracted services and utilities we think by
19 the end of this month.

20 And so to cover that, we have some savings
21 in a few other categories we'd like to utilize.

1 Our other instructional costs, we had some
2 savings in the tuition that we paid at
3 Chesapeake College. That was, you know, a
4 rough estimate based on expected enrollment and
5 tuition rates. And we've had some savings
6 there.

7 We had some savings in the amounts of
8 money that we're charged by other school
9 districts and other counties for kinship care
10 for those children that attend our -- of our
11 children that attend their school. We did not
12 have as many as we've had in previous years.

13 We had a slight savings in our
14 transportation department we'd like to utilize
15 to cover this overage from some bus driver
16 vacancies.

17 And we had a category of expenditures in
18 our operating budget called capital outlay. We
19 saved about \$136,000 there. And that was
20 because we were able to finally use some ESSER
21 funding, that last little bit of that ESSER

1 funding to build an activity court, activity
2 courts at Easton Elementary School that we had
3 put in our budget. And we were able to grant
4 fund that. So we had some savings.

5 So with all that being said, this is a
6 little bit hard to read, without those, without
7 the transfers, how we look right now, it would
8 appear that we would have close to a \$400,000
9 overrun in our operation of plant if we did not
10 make a budget transfer.

11 The other items, categories highlighted in
12 green are where we're proposing to take some
13 budget away from to cover that 400,000.

14 And that would get us to a budget that
15 looks like this, where these would be the
16 transfers that we're seeking and would end us
17 with basically less than a \$20,000 surplus for
18 the year. We're going to end up there probably
19 one way or the other.

20 The other thing that this allows us to do
21 is it allows us to manage some of the things we

1 need to manage in our FY27 budget with changes
2 that we've made to that.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

4 MS. JONES: So seeking the Council's
5 approval. Our board has approved this.

6 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Great. Okay.
7 Any other questions, Council?

8 MS. MIELKE: No.

9 MR. STEPP: No questions here.

10 MR. LESHER: Just a thanks for bringing
11 this to us at this juncture. It's nice to be
12 able to get this closed out and see where this
13 stands with the projections that you've been
14 able to do before the fiscal year ends. So
15 just wanted to publicly thank you for making
16 this --

17 MS. JONES: You're welcome.

18 MR. LESHER: -- in such a timely fashion.

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup.

20 MR. STEPP: I'll make a motion that we
21 approve the budget transfers as amended. 400

1 into one category and out of four others.

2 MS. MIELKE: Second.

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

6 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

7 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

8 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

9 MR. STEPP: Aye.

10 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

11 MR. LESHNER: Aye.

12 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

13 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

14 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

15 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

16 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thanks a lot.

17 MS. JONES: Thank you so much.

18 MS. MIELKE: Thank you.

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Good job.

20 Okay. Next on the agenda, we've got
21 introduction to legislation. We've got around

1 23 bills. We're going to try to move as
2 quickly as we can through these.

3 So Madam Secretary, you can help us with
4 that.

5 And Martha, you want to go ahead and start
6 us off.

7 MS. SPARKS: I sure can. Martha Sparks,
8 finance director for Talbot County.

9 On May 26, 2026, Council passed Bill 1625,
10 an act to establish the 2026-2027 annual budget
11 and appropriation ordinance.

12 Per the Talbot County Charter, the county
13 budget consists of the current expense budget,
14 the capital budget, and capital program, which
15 includes an itemized list of the capital
16 projects which the agency proposes to undertake
17 in an ensuing fiscal year.

18 While the budget and funding sources of
19 these projects approved by the Council in the
20 budget ordinance Bill 1625, the county also
21 creates capital enabling legislation for each

1 capital improvement project per the county
2 Charter. And each bill is subject to the
3 referendum provisions of the Charter.

4 Budget oversight of these programs is
5 further monitored through the county's
6 procurement policy.

7 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. That sounds good.

8 So Madam Secretary, do we want to go ahead
9 and start with the first one?

10 SECRETARY: Sure.

11 MR. CALLAHAN: That would be great.

12 And just keep in mind. This is just to
13 introduce. So it's a raise our hands.

14 SECRETARY: A bill to amend Bill Number
15 1607 for the purpose of amending the
16 appropriation for the replacements and
17 improvements at county community pools and
18 associated property.

19 MS. SPARKS: This amends prior
20 authorization with an increase of \$33,000 for
21 lighting at the Bay Hundred Pool and door and

1 window replacements at the George Murphy Pool.

2 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Council, any
3 questions on this bill?

4 MS. MIELKE: No.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

6 SECRETARY: You want to introduce?

7 MR. LESHER: Show of hands?

8 MR. CALLAHAN: Show of hands. Sorry.

9 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Council.

10 SECRETARY: This will be known as Bill
11 Number 1628.

12 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

13 SECRETARY: A bill to amend Bill Numbers
14 1600, 1368, and 1343 for the purpose of
15 amending the appropriation for security
16 enhancements of facilities and properties owned
17 by Talbot County.

18 MS. SPARKS: This amends prior
19 authorization with an increase of 220,000 to
20 continue to improve security at county-owned
21 properties.

1 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Any questions,
2 Council?

3 MS. MIELKE: No.

4 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Raise our hands.

5 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Council.

6 SECRETARY: This is Bill Number 1629.

7 A bill to amend Bill Number 1539 for the
8 purpose of amending the appropriation for the
9 construction of and improvements to a driving
10 range complex at the Talbot County Hog Neck
11 Golf Course.

12 MS. SPARKS: This amends prior
13 authorization with an increase of 600,000 to
14 complete the project.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Council, any
16 questions?

17 MS. MIELKE: No.

18 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Raise our hands.

19 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Council.

20 SECRETARY: This will be known as Bill
21 1630.

1 A bill to amend Bill Number 1594 for the
2 purpose of amending the appropriation for the
3 replacement and improvement of the greens at
4 Talbot County Hog Neck Golf Course.

5 MS. SPARKS: This amends prior
6 authorization with an increase of 320,000 to
7 fund year two of the greens resodding project.

8 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Any questions,
9 Council, on this project?

10 Okay. Raise our hands.

11 MR. LESHER: Sponsored by Council.

12 SECRETARY: This will be known as Bill
13 Number 1631.

14 A bill to amend Bill Number 1595 for the
15 purpose of amending the appropriation for the
16 replacement and improvements of the cart paths
17 and paved areas at the Talbot County Hog Neck
18 Golf Course.

19 MS. SPARKS: This amends prior
20 authorization with an increase of \$500,000 to
21 fund year two of three for cart path repaving.

1 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Council, any
2 questions?

3 Okay. Raise our hands.

4 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Council.

5 SECRETARY: This will be known as Bill
6 Number 1632.

7 A bill to amend Bill Numbers 1531, 1480,
8 1452, and 1393 for the purpose of amending the
9 appropriation for the development of the
10 Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe located
11 at 13213 Lewistown Road, Queen Anne, Maryland.

12 MS. SPARKS: This amends prior
13 authorization with an increase of 658,000 to
14 advance the next phase of the park development.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Council, any
16 questions on this?

17 MS. MIELKE: No.

18 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Raise our hands.

19 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Council.

20 SECRETARY: This will be known as Bill
21 Number 1633.

1 A bill to amend Bill Numbers 1597, 1556,
2 and 1533 for the purpose of amending the
3 appropriation for improvements to the Talbot
4 County Detection Center.

5 MS. SPARKS: This amends prior
6 authorization with an increase of 1.3 million
7 to complete major HVAC upgrades and to replace
8 fire panel systems.

9 MR. CALLAHAN: Council, is there any
10 questions on this one?

11 MS. MIELKE: No.

12 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Raise our hands.

13 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Council.

14 SECRETARY: This will be known as Bill
15 Number 1634.

16 A bill to authorize the replacement and
17 improvements of the roof at Easton Middle
18 School.

19 MS. SPARKS: This is a new project, and it
20 authorizes up to \$1,755,000 for this project.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Council, is there

1 any questions on this one?

2 MS. MIELKE: No.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Raise our hands.

4 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Council.

5 SECRETARY: This will be known as Bill
6 Number 1635.

7 A bill to authorize the exterior repair,
8 improvement, and painting of the Talbot County
9 Education Center building.

10 MS. SPARKS: This is a new CIP project,
11 and it authorizes spending up to \$42,000.

12 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Any questions,
13 Council? If not, raise our hands.

14 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Council.

15 SECRETARY: This will be known as Bill
16 Number 1636.

17 A bill to amend Bill Numbers 1587, 1558,
18 and 1391 for the purpose of amending the
19 appropriation for the replacement and
20 improvement of HVAC systems at facilities owned
21 by Talbot County.

1 MS. SPARKS: This amends prior
2 authorization with an increase of \$50,000 for
3 HVAC replacement at the courthouse.

4 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Any questions on
5 this one?

6 Okay. Raise our hands.

7 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Council.

8 SECRETARY: This will be known as Bill
9 Number 1637.

10 A bill to authorize the assessment of and
11 design for improvements to the Talbot County
12 Courthouse music hall.

13 MS. SPARKS: This is a new CIP. This
14 authorizes spending up to 250,000 for the
15 assessment and design to improve this space.

16 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Any questions on
17 this one?

18 So I do have one question. I want to make
19 sure everybody understands the music hall.

20 Is that the third story?

21 MR. STAMP: Yes. It's the second story

1 rear of the building on the south wing.

2 MR. CALLAHAN: On the south street. I
3 just want to make sure everybody understood
4 that. Okay.

5 Okay. Raise our hands.

6 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Council.

7 SECRETARY: This will be known as Bill
8 Number 1638.

9 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

10 SECRETARY: A bill to amend Bill Numbers
11 1599, 1557, 1534, 1486, and 1424 for the
12 purpose of amending the appropriation to
13 purchase improved or unimproved real property
14 for future county purposes.

15 MS. SPARKS: This amends prior
16 authorization with an increase of 300,000 to
17 plan for future facility needs for the county.

18 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Council, is there
19 any questions on this bill?

20 MS. MIELKE: No.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: Raise our hands to move

1 forward.

2 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Council.

3 SECRETARY: This will be known as Bill
4 Number 1639.

5 A bill to amend Bill Numbers 1605, 1507,
6 1361, 1332, 1307, and 1267 for the purpose of
7 amending the appropriation for the mapping,
8 evaluation, and rehabilitation or replacement
9 of county culverts.

10 MS. SPARKS: This amends prior
11 authorization with an increase of 1.24 million
12 to continue culvert rehabilitation, which is
13 going to be mostly grant funded.

14 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Any questions,
15 Council, on this one?

16 Hearing none, raise our hands.

17 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Council.

18 SECRETARY: This will be known as Bill
19 Number 1640.

20 A bill to authorize improvements to Deep
21 Water Point Road, St. Michael's, Maryland.

1 MS. SPARKS: This is a new CIP. This
2 authorizes up to \$247,000 for road
3 improvements, and this will be funded by the
4 development impact fees.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. This one right here
6 is a big deal for that road. And that's just
7 outside of St. Michael's on the right-hand
8 side. So that's well needed.

9 So any questions on that?

10 MR. LESHER: Just a question since we have
11 our engineering staff present.

12 I trust that we will be doing what we can
13 to minimize the loss of mature trees along that
14 route, which are part of the character of that
15 road?

16 MR. CLARKE: Yes.

17 MR. LESHER: Thank you.

18 MR. CALLAHAN: That's what he wanted to
19 hear.

20 MR. LESHER: I'll be asking those
21 questions in more detail when we get to

1 implementation.

2 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Raise our hands to
3 move forward.

4 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Council.

5 SECRETARY: This will be known as Bill
6 Number 1641.

7 A bill to authorize improvements to county
8 roads in and surrounding the Town of Trappe.

9 MS. SPARKS: This is a new CIP. This
10 authorizes up to \$357,000 for road
11 improvements. And this is also funded by
12 development impact fees.

13 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Any questions on
14 this, Council?

15 MS. MIELKE: Preservation of trees on this
16 one, too.

17 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup, yup. I'll send Pete
18 out there to take a look.

19 All right. Raise our hands.

20 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Council.

21 SECRETARY: This will be known as Bill

1 Number 1642.

2 A bill to amend Bill Number 1613 for the
3 purpose of amending the appropriation for the
4 sewer system extension to the Marine Engineers
5 Beneficial Association, MEBA, engineering
6 school.

7 MS. SPARKS: First, I think as we go into
8 these sanitary CIP bills, I want to note that
9 the following bills related to the sanitary
10 district capital projects will be funded by a
11 combination of federal and State grants,
12 long-term borrowing, and funds from the
13 sanitary district fund.

14 All costs incurred for these capital
15 projects shall be repaid from the revenues
16 generated from fees paid by the users and/or
17 the operation of these facilities and sewer
18 systems.

19 In regard to the sewer system extension to
20 MEBA, this amends prior authorization with an
21 increase of \$30,000 to connect MEBA to the

1 Region II wastewater system.

2 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Any questions on
3 this, Council?

4 MS. HAYTHE: No.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Moving forward, raise our
6 hands.

7 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Council.

8 SECRETARY: This will be known as Bill
9 Number 1643.

10 A bill to amend Bill Number 1573 for the
11 purpose of amending the appropriation for
12 improvements to the vacuum collection system
13 serving the Region II Martingham sewer service
14 area.

15 MS. SPARKS: This amends prior
16 authorization with an increase of 1.42 million.

17 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Any questions on
18 this, Council?

19 MS. MIELKE: No.

20 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Moving forward,
21 raise our hands.

1 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Council.

2 SECRETARY: This will be known as Bill
3 Number 1644.

4 A bill to amend Bill Number 1616 for the
5 purpose of amending the appropriation for
6 replacements and improvements to pump stations
7 and surrounding property in the St. Michael's
8 area in Region II of the Talbot County Sanitary
9 District.

10 MS. SPARKS: This amends prior
11 authorization with an increase of \$500,000.

12 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Any questions on
13 this bill, Council?

14 MS. MIELKE: No.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Moving forward,
16 raise our hands.

17 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Council.

18 SECRETARY: This will be known as Bill
19 Number 1645.

20 A bill to amend Bill Numbers 1535 and 1488
21 for the purpose of amending the appropriation

1 for the upgrade or replacement of the
2 wastewater treatment plant at The Preserve at
3 Wye Mills.

4 MS. SPARKS: This amends prior
5 authorization with an increase of 950,000 for
6 plant upgrade to ENR technology.

7 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Any questions on
8 this bill, Council?

9 Okay. Moving forward, raise our hands.

10 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Council.

11 SECRETARY: This will be known as Bill
12 Number 1646.

13 A bill to amend Bill Numbers 1612 and 1431
14 for the purpose of amending the appropriation
15 for improvements to the Region V, Tilghman,
16 wastewater treatment plant and enhanced
17 nutrient removal, ENR, technology.

18 MS. SPARKS: This amends prior
19 authorization with an increase of 7.85 million.

20 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Council, any
21 questions on this one?

1 Okay. Moving forward, raise our hands.

2 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Council.

3 SECRETARY: This will be known as Bill
4 Number 1647.

5 A bill to authorize replacements and
6 improvements to the Region II, St. Michael's,
7 wastewater treatment plant and enhanced
8 nutrient removal, ENR, technology.

9 MS. SPARKS: This is a new project. This
10 authorizes up to 3.9 million for equipment
11 refurbishments and ENR upgrades.

12 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Council, any
13 questions on this one?

14 Moving forward, raise our hands.

15 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Council.

16 SECRETARY: This will be known as Bill
17 Number 1648.

18 A bill to authorize the sewer system
19 extension to and implementation of an improved
20 approach to providing safe drinking water in
21 the Village of Claiborne.

1 MS. SPARKS: This is a new CIP. It
2 authorizes up to \$5 million for sewer
3 extensions to Region II and evaluation and
4 improvement of the community's water system.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Any questions on
6 this one, Council?

7 MR. LESHER: Well, we've talking with the
8 community of Claiborne for a while about how to
9 move forward on this. We've been through some
10 feasibility studies. It's nice to see this at
11 this next step moving forward.

12 MR. CALLAHAN: It sure is. Yup.
13 Okay. Raise our hands moving forward.

14 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Council.

15 SECRETARY: This will be known as Bill
16 Number 1649.

17 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. And last one, Madam
18 Secretary.

19 SECRETARY: A bill to authorize the
20 rehabilitation of and improvements to the
21 Region V, Tilghman, wastewater treatment

1 collection system and accompanying pump
2 stations.

3 MS. SPARKS: This is a new CIP. This
4 authorizes up to \$6 million for inflow and
5 infiltration reduction pump station upgrades
6 and potential construction of a maintenance
7 storage shed.

8 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Any questions on
9 this?

10 Okay. Moving forward, raise our hands.

11 MR. LESHER: Introduced by Council.

12 SECRETARY: This will be known as Bill
13 Number 1650.

14 The public hearings on these bills will be
15 held on Tuesday, July 14th, at 5:30 p.m.

16 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. All right. Well,
17 good job, good job. Appreciate it. Good job.

18 MS. MIELKE: Thank you.

19 MR. STAMP: Mr. Council President.

20 MR. CALLAHAN: Martha, I'm very proud of
21 you.

1 MS. HAYTHE: Good job.

2 MR. STAMP: So Mr. Council President, I
3 want to take a moment very briefly just to
4 recognize Martha, Kaitlyn Foster-Clark, Patrick
5 Thomas, Jessica Morris, and Susan Moran for
6 their work on this. Just want to recognize
7 them.

8 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup. Sounds good. Good
9 job. Okay.

10 So we're just a little bit behind here on
11 the public hearings. So Madam Secretary, when
12 you get straight, we'll go ahead and start the
13 public hearing on Resolution 394.

14 SECRETARY: Resolution Number 394, a
15 resolution to amend Resolution Number 175
16 entitled a resolution to establish sewer
17 service connection policies from the
18 Unionville, Tunis Mills, and Copperville sewer
19 service area low pressure force main collection
20 system to the Royal Oak pump station for the
21 purpose of providing that connection to the

1 force main from property outside the sewer
2 service area shall be permitted from improved
3 properties where public sewer is available,
4 subject to certain conditions.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. You guys, yup, Josh
6 and Ray, you want to come on up.

7 MR. CLARKE: Thank you, Council. This is
8 coming from I guess the Council asked us to
9 look at this as related to 175 with a couple
10 other resolutions. I think it was 330. I'm
11 sorry. 389 to 391.

12 Through that, the Public Works Advisory
13 Board reviewed those and came back with a
14 recommendation making modifications to
15 Resolution 175.

16 We then had a work session with the County
17 Council on April 28th. And I think what we've
18 done is through that work session, we then had
19 language put together that Patrick Thomas, the
20 county attorney, basically provided you now
21 this.

1 MR. CALLAHAN: Yes, sir.

2 MR. CLARKE: Before you.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. All right. That
4 sounds good.

5 Any questions for Ray, Council?

6 Okay. So I'll go ahead and start the
7 public hearing. So I'll give you three minutes
8 for an individual. And if you're representing
9 an organization, I give you five.

10 So anybody over here to my left would like
11 to come up and talk about -- I'm sorry.
12 Bill...

13 MR. LESHER: Resolution 394.

14 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup. Resolution 394. I'm
15 sorry.

16 Anybody on this side like to say anything
17 about 394? Okay.

18 So at this time, we'll go ahead and, Madam
19 Secretary, we're ready for a vote on this. We
20 can close the public hearing, right?

21 MR. LESHER: We can close it.

1 SECRETARY: Yes. You can vote on it.

2 MR. CALLAHAN: We'll go ahead and close
3 the public hearing. And we'll go ahead now and
4 vote on this.

5 Yes, sir.

6 MR. LESHER: Just an item of discussion
7 here.

8 MR. CALLAHAN: Yeah.

9 MR. LESHER: We went over this. And I
10 still find some of the wording on this to be,
11 to be subject to interpretation or vague or
12 difficult to understand. There are some
13 sections that I'm not sure are even operable
14 because of other sections.

15 But I understand that the intent in doing
16 this was not to, not to rewrite this whole
17 section nor to amend the comprehensive water
18 and sewer plan, but to do the minimal change
19 that was necessary to move this forward, that
20 it pertains only to, to the Resolution 175
21 areas and those impacted, which would include I

1 believe Resolution 250 areas.

2 MR. THOMAS: Yes, that is correct.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Okay. At this time,
4 if there's no other questions, Council will go
5 ahead and vote on it.

6 Madam Secretary, could you call the vote.

7 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

8 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

9 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

10 MR. STEPP: Aye.

11 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

12 MR. LESHNER: Aye.

13 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

14 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

15 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

16 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

17 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. All right. The next
18 bill, Number 1626, Madam Secretary.

19 SECRETARY: Bill Number 1626, a bill to
20 amend Chapter 190, zoning, subdivision, and
21 land development, of the Talbot County Code for

1 the purpose of exempting corporate flags from
2 the sign permit requirements and other
3 requirements set forth in Section 190-42 of the
4 County Code, subject to certain conditions.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Mr. Thomas, you want
6 to kind of tell them what we're trying to
7 achieve here?

8 MR. THOMAS: Yes. So this bill, if
9 passed, would allow for a corporate flag with a
10 name, logo, or trademark to be flown in
11 conjunction with one or more governmental
12 flags. The flags must be no more than 40
13 square feet and flown no more than 30 feet
14 high.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. That sounds good.

16 All right. So I'll go ahead and open this
17 up to the public hearing. So on this side
18 here, if you want to speak about that, come on
19 up. Yeah. Come on up, Zach.

20 MR. LESHER: Before we have, just in case
21 he wants to say anything about this, I would

1 like to request from the dais an amendment for
2 this, which was discussed at the Planning
3 Commission but I think not ultimately
4 incorporated into the recommendation, that the
5 permitted flag not exceed the size of the
6 government flag, as specified in legislation.

7 So that amendment can be available when we
8 bring this up for a vote.

9 MR. THOMAS: That's not a substantive
10 change. So I don't, if that passes, I don't
11 see any issue with moving forward.

12 MR. LESHER: Thank you.

13 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Good.

14 MR. SMITH: Good evening, Council. Thank
15 you for the opportunity. Zach Smith on behalf
16 of the Preston Automotive Group.

17 And as the Council will recall, we're the
18 ones that requested this amendment.

19 Preston has a tradition and a policy of
20 flying a corporate flag across its entire
21 family of dealerships. It's something they do

1 both in terms of recognition for the
2 affiliation, but also as part of their
3 charitable giving program.

4 And when Preston acquired the Toyota
5 dealership just outside of Easton, wanted to
6 fly that flag, as they've done in other
7 locations.

8 Under the current County Code, we weren't
9 allowed to.

10 We talked to Mr. Tarleton's office about
11 that. There didn't seem to be an objection,
12 didn't necessarily find it inappropriate. But
13 under the current Code strictly applied, it was
14 not permitted.

15 And so working with him and Mr. Thomas, we
16 propose this text amendment, which as
17 Mr. Thomas explained, would allow for corporate
18 flags, in addition to other permitted signage
19 but subject to certain limitations.

20 And I think those limitations are
21 important to ensure that the flags are

1 appropriate.

2 I would say that, you know, it's not
3 uncommon in zoning codes to allow for corporate
4 flags. And for example, both Easton and
5 St. Michaels permit corporate flags in
6 addition to other signage in their zoning
7 codes.

8 And also just wanted to mention that the
9 Planning Commission did unanimously support
10 what became Bill 1626.

11 We're here to speak in support of it as
12 well and we would ask the Council to please
13 approve it. So thank you.

14 MR. CALLAHAN: That sounds great.
15 Appreciate it.

16 Okay. Anybody else would like to come up
17 and talk about 1626?

18 Okay. At this time, I'll go ahead and
19 close the public hearing on 1626.

20 Any other questions, Council? Okay.

21 So Madam Secretary, could you call the

1 vote.

2 MS. MIELKE: You have to do the amendment.

3 MR. THOMAS: This is second reader.

4 MS. MIELKE: Amendment.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Oh, we got a second reader?

6 SECRETARY: Only second reader.

7 MR. CALLAHAN: Oh, okay.

8 MR. LESHER: This will go to the next
9 meeting.

10 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. I'm sorry. Okay.

11 Next meeting, then. All right.

12 So then now, okay. All right. So we're
13 done the public hearing. So let's move on.

14 SECRETARY: Yes.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. So next, Madam
16 Secretary.

17 SECRETARY: This is...

18 MR. CALLAHAN: Want to do the presentation
19 of the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation
20 Foundation. Yup.

21 You guys want to come on up?

1 MS. DEFLAUX: Good evening. I'm Elisa
2 Deflaux, Planning & Zoning.

3 I wanted to give you an update on the
4 FY25-26 cycle that just, that was just
5 completed.

6 Your match funds contribution put three
7 first round offers under easement of almost
8 over 500 acres.

9 I've ranked the applications for the
10 FY27-28.

11 And I'm here to answer any questions if
12 you have them.

13 MR. LESHER: So this is far more
14 applications than we typically see in this
15 round.

16 MS. DEFLAUX: Yes.

17 MR. LESHER: That are being recommended to
18 advance.

19 Are we able to do this because of that,
20 that funding that we, that we found that had
21 been set aside for the program?

1 MS. DEFLAUX: The funding that you gave
2 last year contributed to the FY25-26. So that
3 cycle is over. Those easements have been
4 purchased.

5 This, I will be coming to you again in
6 spring or summer of FY27 for another match fund
7 contribution. And those will go towards these
8 easements.

9 MR. LESHER: Ah. Okay. This is simply
10 queuing it up for next year?

11 MS. DEFLAUX: Yes.

12 MR. LESHER: Okay. Terrific.

13 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Any other questions?

14 MS. MIELKE: No.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

16 MR. LESHER: And we need a motion to
17 advance this?

18 MS. DEFLAUX: Yes.

19 MR. LESHER: The request.

20 And the Planning Commission and planning
21 staff has actually prepared a motion for us.

1 And since you went to the effort, I will,
2 rather than do our usual Council level, I
3 concur with the motion of the Agricultural Land
4 Preservation Advisory Board and the Planning
5 Commission to forward the 16 applications to
6 Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation
7 Foundation, MALPF, for the fiscal year 27
8 easement cycle.

9 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

10 MR. STEPP: I guess that's a second.

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

14 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

16 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

17 MR. STEPP: Aye.

18 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

19 MR. LESHNER: Aye.

20 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

21 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

1 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

2 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

4 MR. TARLETON: Thank you.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Good job. Okay.

6 Next on the agenda is the Council
7 consideration, recommendation of the Planning
8 Commission on a request of a proposed text
9 amendment. We're considering development
10 agreement and waivers.

11 You guys want to just hang out for one
12 more second.

13 MR. CLARKE: Sure thing.

14 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

15 MR. THOMAS: Yes. So a few months back,
16 Council Member Haythe had requested a text
17 amendment to amend 190-61 of the Code to
18 provide a waiver for certain requirements
19 pertaining to provisions in developer
20 agreements by the planning director upon
21 recommendation of the Planning Commission for

1 bona fide nonprofits upon a showing of need
2 that the waiver would be in the public
3 interest.

4 And then that was referred to the Planning
5 Commission, and I believe Brennan and Elisa can
6 speak to the Planning Commission's
7 recommendations.

8 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

9 MR. TARLETON: For the record, Brennan
10 Tarleton, planning director, Talbot County
11 Planning & Zoning.

12 The Planning Commission actually reviewed
13 this back at their, was it their March meeting
14 originally that they considered this and
15 offered a small amendment to the language just
16 related to a Code section reference but
17 ultimately voted unanimously to forward this
18 favorably to the County Council for their
19 consideration of approval.

20 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

21 MS. HAYTHE: And I just want to add that a

1 constituent within Talbot County actually
2 contacted me in regards to this matter, and
3 this is how the text amendment recommendation
4 came about.

5 Yeah. It was the Bellevue Passage Museum,
6 Dr. Dennis DeShields. And so this is how. We
7 met with Brennan and then sent this to the
8 Planning Commission to come up with this text
9 amendment.

10 MR. TARLETON: So if Council recalls, I
11 think the county at one point, it may have been
12 almost two years now, entered into a Memorandum
13 of Understanding with the Bellevue Passage
14 Museum for the construction project of that
15 museum facility at the Bellevue Park property.

16 As part of the improvement of that museum,
17 the developer of the museum ultimately
18 proffered additional improvements that
19 warranted a developer agreement that would have
20 to be put into place. I believe that included
21 the surfacing of a pathway that would access

1 ultimately from the parking area, the county
2 has existing at Bellevue Landing all the way up
3 to the museum facility, as well as resurfacing
4 the basketball courts and installing a bus
5 pull-off space for times when classrooms from
6 school students would be visiting the site for
7 exhibits and just touring the museum generally.

8 The Code currently requires under the
9 developer agreement that any of those amenities
10 would have to be bonded with a surety. That
11 cost obviously associated with this project, in
12 conjunction with the construction of the
13 project, presented some challenging
14 opportunities based on the funding sources they
15 were using.

16 So I think they contacted Council Member
17 Haythe, and we discussed opportunities or ways
18 in which the project could move forward,
19 understanding that the county will ultimately
20 be responsible for inspecting the improvements
21 prior to approval of the final permits for the

1 museum facility ultimately.

2 So when those improvements are then turned
3 over to the county, they'll have already been
4 inspected and have been brought up to the
5 standards necessary. And the county would have
6 the responsibility of maintaining those
7 improvements since they would be on the park
8 property otherwise.

9 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

10 MR. LESHER: So with this change, the
11 required improvements will still be done,
12 they'll still be done to the standards, they'll
13 still be completed to these specifications.

14 What this will do is simply relieve the
15 developer, in this case the nonprofit museum,
16 of having to put up a performance bond for
17 this?

18 MR. TARLETON: Yes. And ultimately, it
19 doesn't necessarily give them a blanket
20 approval to do that.

21 What this gives them the opportunity and

1 option to do is request a waiver for relief of
2 those standards in conjunction with a site plan
3 approval for the project.

4 Now, ultimately the site plan has been
5 approved for the project. But they would
6 ultimately be going back and getting a waiver
7 of these provisions or requesting a waiver of
8 those provisions.

9 So it would still be at the discretion of
10 the Planning Commission at the time of the
11 review of an application whether or not that
12 waiver is warranted to be granted based on the
13 standards that are required be met under
14 Section 190-62.

15 So if these standards are theoretically
16 not met in a future application that this may
17 apply to, there is the opportunity for the
18 Planning Commission to essentially deny that
19 waiver. So it's not an ultimate approval just
20 because you are a bona fide nonprofit.

21 MR. LESHER: Thank you.

1 MR. TARLETON: Yes.

2 MR. STEPP: And just a quick
3 clarification. We used the term bona fide
4 nonprofit in the verbiage.

5 I'm assuming we're just using 501(c)(3)
6 status as the marker for the bona fide status?

7 MR. TARLETON: Yes. I believe that was
8 the general consensus we came to in drafting
9 that language.

10 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Anybody else?

11 All right.

12 MS. HAYTHE: So I'll ask that Patrick
13 draft the proposed text amendment for this
14 particular change.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

16 MR. STEPP: I second that motion.

17 MR. THOMAS: Thank you.

18 MR. CALLAHAN: Raise our hands or...

19 MR. THOMAS: No. I just direction to
20 prepare.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: Need a vote?

1 MR. LESHER: No. He's got what he needs.

2 MS. HAYTHE: I mean Dave seconded anyway.

3 MR. THOMAS: So we'll bring it back for
4 introduction.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Good. Thank you.

6 MR. TARLETON: Thank you, Council.

7 MR. CALLAHAN: Thank you, guys.

8 Okay. Now we got some Clay's stuff. He's
9 sitting over there just waiting. He's sitting
10 over there waiting. I see you.

11 MR. STAMP: Good evening, Council. Under
12 county manager report this evening, I have a
13 couple of items for you.

14 Under boards and committee appointments,
15 the first one is the Animal Control Board
16 asking Council to reappoint Karen Roberts,
17 Donna Haddaway, and Margel Highet to serve on
18 that board.

19 MR. STEPP: So moved.

20 MS. HAYTHE: Second.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. We got a motion and

1 second. Madam Secretary, could you call the
2 vote.

3 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

4 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

5 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

6 MR. STEPP: Aye.

7 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

8 MR. LESHNER: Aye.

9 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

10 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

11 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

12 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

13 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

14 MR. STAMP: Next, the Economic Development
15 Commission. Requesting the reappointment of
16 Mr. Ted Bautz.

17 MS. HAYTHE: Motion to approve.

18 MS. MIELKE: Second.

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

21 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

1 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

2 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

3 MR. STEPP: Aye.

4 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

5 MR. LESHER: Aye.

6 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

7 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

8 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

9 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

10 MR. STAMP: Next will be the Ethics
11 Commission. Requesting Council appointment of
12 Dr. Reginal Harrell and Mr. Vernon Jones.

13 MS. MIELKE: So moved.

14 MS. HAYTHE: Second.

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

18 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

20 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

21 MR. STEPP: Aye.

1 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

2 MR. LESHER: Aye.

3 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

4 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

5 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

6 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

7 MR. STAMP: And the next would be Park &
8 Recreation Advisory Board. Requesting the
9 reappointment of Mr. David Fisher serving in an
10 at-large position.

11 MR. STEPP: So moved.

12 MS. HAYTHE: Second.

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

16 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

17 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

18 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

19 MR. STEPP: Aye.

20 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

21 MR. LESHER: Aye.

1 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

2 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

3 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

4 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

5 MR. STAMP: And finally, the Social
6 Services Board of Directors. Requesting the
7 appointment of Geoffrey Cooke and the
8 reappointment of Dori Gowe-Lambert.

9 MS. HAYTHE: Motion to approve.

10 MS. MIELKE: Second.

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

14 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

16 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

17 MR. STEPP: Aye.

18 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

19 MR. LESHER: Aye.

20 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

21 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

1 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

2 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

3 MR. STAMP: Thank you, Council. That
4 concludes the board and committee appointments.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

6 MR. STAMP: I'd like to invite Mr. James
7 Adair forward from the Habitat for Humanity
8 Choptank. He has a request for a letter of
9 support for a grant.

10 And I'll fill in wherever necessary.

11 Greetings, Mr. Adair.

12 MR. ADAIR: Hello, Council. How are you
13 doing this evening?

14 MR. CALLAHAN: How you are?

15 MR. ADAIR: Great, great.

16 MR. CALLAHAN: Welcome. If you don't mind
17 introducing yourself.

18 MR. ADAIR: I'm James Adair. I'm the
19 critical home repair manager for Habitat
20 Choptank.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

1 MR. STAMP: Okay. So Mr. Adair is -- I'm
2 sorry.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: No. Go ahead.

4 MR. STAMP: Okay. Mr. Adair is here this
5 evening requesting a letter of support from the
6 County Council for their grant application to
7 the Maryland Department of Housing and
8 Community Development's local rehabilitation
9 agency services.

10 No county funds are required.

11 And please add any additional information
12 you'd like for Council.

13 MR. ADAIR: Just we appreciate the
14 opportunity to continue serving the citizens of
15 the county.

16 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Good. Good job.

17 MS. HAYTHE: Motion to approve the
18 request.

19 MS. MIELKE: Second.

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

1 vote.

2 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

4 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

5 MR. STEPP: Aye.

6 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

7 MR. LESHER: Aye.

8 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

9 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

10 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

11 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

12 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

13 MR. STAMP: Thank you, James.

14 MR. ADAIR: Thank you, all. Have a great
15 evening.

16 MR. CALLAHAN: Thank you. Yup.

17 Appreciate it.

18 MS. MIELKE: You do great work.

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup.

20 MR. STAMP: And now I would like to invite
21 Mr. Brian LeCates up, your director of

1 emergency services.

2 He's here this evening to request, which
3 is budgeted, a replacement vehicle. He'll give
4 you the details. I'll fill in where necessary.

5 Good evening, Brian.

6 MR. LeCATES: Good evening, Mr. Stamp.
7 Good evening, Council. Thank you for having
8 me.

9 So this request is to purchase a 2026
10 Chevrolet Tahoe. This would be -- it's being
11 purchased, if approved, by piggybacking on the
12 Maryland State contract. It is out-of-state
13 vendor. We had difficulties finding vendors
14 within the State of Maryland that had
15 sufficient inventory.

16 So this is a project that was approved
17 during the FY26 budgeting process. And we've
18 run into some challenges throughout the year
19 trying to find a vehicle that was available.
20 And we have -- I thought the applause was for
21 me.

1 MR. STEPP: You are doing such a wonderful
2 job. We got you.

3 MS. HAYTHE: (Indiscernible.)

4 MR. LeCATES: Thank you.

5 MS. HAYTHE: You're welcome.

6 MR. LeCATES: First applause today.

7 MS. HAYTHE: You deserve it.

8 MR. LeCATES: So this request is for
9 \$57,829, and that is recognizing the State of
10 Maryland contract pricing.

11 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. All right.

12 MR. STEPP: I make a motion we move
13 forward with it.

14 MS. HAYTHE: Second.

15 MR. CALLAHAN: Got a motion and second.
16 Madam Secretary, could you call the vote.

17 SECRETARY: Mr. Callahan.

18 MR. CALLAHAN: Aye.

19 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.

20 MR. STEPP: Aye.

21 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner.

1 MR. LESHER: Aye.

2 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

3 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

4 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

5 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

6 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

7 MR. LeCATES: Thank you, all. I
8 appreciate your support.

9 MR. STAMP: Thank you, Brian.

10 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup.

11 MR. STAMP: Council, that concludes your
12 county manager report for this evening. Thank
13 you, as always, for your support.

14 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thank you. All
15 right.

16 Moving on, we're here, public comment.

17 MR. LESHER: And we have two who have
18 signed up.

19 First is Shari Wilcoxon.

20 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

21 MS. WILCOXON: Hello. My name is Shari

1 Wilcoxon. I'm a Talbot County resident.

2 On January 14, 2025, Mr. Lesher made a
3 motion, seconded by Ms. Mielke, to appoint Hugh
4 Smith to the Talbot County Short-Term Rental
5 Review Board. He was appointed unanimously
6 five to zero.

7 According to the Maryland Campaign
8 Reporting Information System, Hugh Smith was
9 Ms. Mielke's single largest campaign donor.
10 There is no public record of that relationship
11 being disclosed to the Council prior to the
12 vote, and Ms. Mielke did not recuse herself.

13 Later --

14 MR. CALLAHAN: Ms. Wilcoxon, I can't have
15 that type of language with my Council.

16 MS. WILCOXON: This is a public comment.
17 This is -- I'm reading what actually happened
18 in your meeting minutes.

19 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Well, people have
20 already read it. You don't have to reread it.

21 MS. WILCOXON: I think I do have the right

1 to reread it.

2 MR. CALLAHAN: But I have the right to say
3 if we do it or not. This is my meeting.

4 MS. WILCOXON: Okay.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

6 MS. WILCOXON: Well, my request is did the
7 Talbot County Ethics Commission review when
8 Ms. Mielke's failure to disclose --

9 MR. CALLAHAN: See, this meeting right
10 here with public comment, this is kind of for
11 you and me to -- we don't answer questions back
12 and forth.

13 MS. WILCOXON: I'm not asking a question.
14 I'm asking if the Ethics Commission would
15 review whether the failure to disclose this
16 donor relationship prior to the vote is a
17 violation.

18 Do I not have the right to ask --

19 MR. CALLAHAN: That's up to them.

20 MS. MIELKE: That's no facts.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: That --

1 MS. WILCOXON: So we don't have a right to
2 ask, as the public, if something violates
3 ethics?

4 MR. CALLAHAN: I will ask, I will ask --

5 MR. THOMAS: That's really a question for
6 the Ethics Commission.

7 MR. CALLAHAN: Right.

8 MR. THOMAS: It's not a matter for the
9 County Council.

10 MR. CALLAHAN: Right.

11 MS. WILCOXON: The County Council, do they
12 have to follow the Ethics Board, the County
13 Council members?

14 MR. THOMAS: Do they?

15 MS. WILCOXON: Do they have to follow the
16 ethics of the Ethics Review Board?

17 MR. THOMAS: Where it states, the Ethics
18 Code, where it states they have to follow
19 provisions of the Ethics Code.

20 But that's not really an item for public
21 comment.

1 MS. WILCOXON: For me to ask the Ethics
2 Review Board if --

3 MR. THOMAS: You can ask the Ethics
4 Commission.

5 MR. CALLAHAN: I would suggest you go ask
6 them.

7 MS. WILCOXON: Okay.

8 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

9 MS. WILCOXON: All right. All right.
10 Well, thank you very much.

11 MR. CALLAHAN: Thank you. Appreciate it.
12 Okay. Anybody else for public comment?
13 Well, I think, yup. Yes, sir. Come on
14 up.

15 DR. FAHMI: I was glad because
16 (indiscernible) always nice.

17 MR. CALLAHAN: Yes.

18 DR. FAHMI: (Indiscernible.)

19 My name is Fahmi Fahmi. I'm the Talbot
20 County health officer.

21 On June 4th, we had something very new and

1 never happened before to the best of my
2 knowledge. The Health Department has opened
3 something called a community garden in front of
4 Early Head Start, which is across the street
5 from Easton Elementary.

6 And I had the pleasure and honor and the
7 privilege that I know that the whole Council
8 was supporting me. And the Council send the
9 president with my sincere appreciation to the
10 Council and to the president. I can't say
11 enough appreciation for your supporting such an
12 effort.

13 The manager of the county is amazing. He
14 has been hand and parcel in every step of the
15 way.

16 I'm looking at it not just as a garden,
17 I'm looking at it as something that would help
18 us educate the kids before their parents what
19 is the meaning of food, what is good food, how
20 much is our farmers, our producers, our
21 processing is involved, not just opening a can

1 or eating something quick and fried.

2 It's also interaction with the parent.
3 We're also -- that's I think is a very
4 important part of early childhood.

5 This is a bucket beside the fact that we
6 know what is good food, the fact that we have a
7 high BMI, which means overweight. BMI, high
8 BMI is a little bit more involved than just
9 overweight. It's a form of malnutrition.
10 Malnutrition is not just the slim and the bony.
11 People who have their vitamin D, even though
12 their BMI might be good or even above, not
13 unfrequently, actually the majority, we find
14 that vitamin D in their blood level is
15 deficient.

16 So vitamin D is just a marker, just a
17 pointer. So there is other things that we
18 might be able to test or not that also indicate
19 malnutrition.

20 And the other thing we're also hoping to
21 add nutritional classes to the package. And

1 through the rural health transformation, we
2 already put in a request for a grant to have
3 our own pantry. So hopefully we'll have a food
4 pantry next to the garden.

5 We have people in the neighborhood already
6 asking for space in the garden to have their
7 own beds. And that makes me very, very
8 unbelievably happy.

9 On our way out, we give the parents and
10 the kids bags that will accommodate soil and
11 planting ability in the back. So those people
12 who do not have enough space, they would be
13 able to do that.

14 Ms. Kilmon have done a wonderful job in
15 taking wonderful pictures. And I take off my
16 hat for her.

17 We have been presented in the front page
18 of the Star Democrat, and it's very humbling.
19 Thank you for all your support.

20 MR. CALLAHAN: Yup. Thank you, Dr. Fahmi
21 Fahmi. Appreciate you.

1 MR. LESHER: And we do have one other who
2 has signed up just to speak, which is our very
3 own Sarah.

4 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay.

5 MS. KILMON: Hello, guys. This is Sarah
6 Kilmon. So I come to you today as the
7 administrator for Talbot 250.

8 We have a lot of very exciting events
9 coming up. So if you want to see the full
10 slate, you can go to Talbot250.org.

11 But I did want to share definitely this
12 weekend, St. Michaels, who has -- we worked
13 with them to identify a time during the year
14 that was not 4th of July, that they could do a
15 celebration. And they chose Flag Day.

16 And so they have a whole slate of events
17 planned for this weekend during Flag Day. They
18 have already put up lots of flags and
19 celebrated as a community to clean up the town.
20 And that happened the last weekend. So now
21 we're getting into the real fun.

1 Starting on Thursday, June 11th, at 6,
2 join us at Muskrat Park for the concert in the
3 park. This is a special edition. They will be
4 having the United States Naval Academy band
5 electric brigade joining us. Talbot 250 will
6 be there with a table and an activity for
7 children, and we would love you to join.

8 On Saturday, they will do parks and pulls
9 historical walking tour, which will highlight
10 13 stops inspired by the number of original
11 colonies around the Town of St. Michaels. And
12 they'll feature most likely flags I'm just
13 going to guess.

14 But also, the St. Michaels Library stop,
15 which is being hosted by the Constitutional
16 Alliance, will be hosting a augmented reality
17 George Washington and Thomas Jefferson
18 experience. So you can actually -- you won't
19 be able to talk to them, but you'll be able to
20 see them in the room with you and you'll be
21 able to sign a very, very large Declaration of

1 Independence.

2 And finally, and maybe the most exciting,
3 is on June 14th, officially Flag Day, they will
4 have a Flag Day picnic and boat parade. And I
5 don't know the final count on how many boats
6 they had sign up, but it was a lot last time I
7 checked with them. And it will be a free,
8 family fun, friendly community event.

9 The US Army Reserves 78th Army band will
10 be joining with their nine by nine ensemble,
11 and the public viewing party of the boat parade
12 is being held at Chesapeake Bay Maritime
13 Museum. And that is where you will also get a
14 ton of activities.

15 Looks like the YMCA is joining, Classic
16 Cars is joining, the St. Michaels Art League,
17 the Chesapeake Independent Blues Reenactors
18 will be there as well. So plenty of stuff to
19 do on Sunday to celebrate Flag Day in
20 St. Michael's.

21 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. That sounds great.

1 Any questions, Council?

2 MS. MIELKE: No.

3 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. All right. Good
4 job, Sarah. Appreciate it. Thank you. Okay.

5 How is Easton Club East doing?

6 MR. RIGGIN: Sorry?

7 MR. CALLAHAN: How is Easton Club Easton
8 doing?

9 MR. RIGGIN: Easton Club East is doing
10 just fine.

11 MR. CALLAHAN: Perfect.

12 MR. RIGGIN: I appreciate your interest.

13 I'm Phil Riggin. I live at 29736 Sullivan
14 Drive in Easton, Maryland, in Easton Club East.

15 I think I'm changing my idea about whether
16 I'm going to -- what my plans are this weekend
17 after having heard just what I heard. And I
18 was wondering whether Mr. Lesher is being
19 honorary mayor in St. Michaels over the
20 weekend in order to handle some of these
21 things.

1 I'm here to talk about two things.

2 It appears, it appears from what little I
3 know and what little I've learned, and I
4 apologize for not knowing more, that the Senior
5 Citizens Task Force is actually developing into
6 something that I had hoped it would be and I
7 think all of you had hoped it would be. So
8 it's a really good idea.

9 I mean there are lots of well-meaning,
10 nonprofit, community-oriented people who live
11 in Talbot County. Some who are part of
12 organizations, some who are not. But with a
13 little bit of coordination, a little bit of
14 leadership, those services that are being
15 provided are done in a more efficient way. And
16 I think the Senior Citizens Task Force appears
17 to me at least kind of leading the charge on
18 that.

19 So as one of the, as the only member that
20 now in this room, Ms. Mielke, and your interest
21 in having the thing created, congratulations.

1 MS. MIELKE: Thank you.

2 MR. RIGGIN: I look forward to that. I
3 think there's some really innovative ideas of
4 what recently I just read. And you had a
5 meeting earlier this afternoon I think here
6 regarding all that. So just on housing, some
7 pretty innovative ideas on how to try to help.

8 I mean I live in a community. I have five
9 widows that live near me. And it seems to me
10 that -- I'm not saying that in a negative way.
11 It's just that I always wondered about house
12 sharing in terms of what they might do.

13 The other thing I wanted to mention,
14 totally unrelated. After several failed
15 attempts, it does appear as though the State
16 Highway Administration is going to finally come
17 by Easton Club East and talk to us next week.

18 MR. CALLAHAN: Great.

19 MR. RIGGIN: And since we have waited so
20 long to receive that sort of a picture
21 presentation, I think there are a lot of people

1 who are energized about getting some answers
2 and getting some commitments as applies to your
3 priority projects, and one in particular that
4 affects us.

5 So with that, thank you very much. And
6 again, congratulations on the task force.

7 MS. MIELKE: Thank you. Thank you.

8 MR. CALLAHAN: Thank you. Appreciate it.

9 Okay. Anybody else want to come up for
10 public comment? Okay.

11 Okay. Council comment. Dave, you want to
12 start us off?

13 MR. STEPP: Sure. I'll start us off. We
14 have one more meeting before, before our 250th
15 birthday of this country. And so looking
16 forward to that.

17 But in the meantime, we've got, we've got
18 the ability to exercise one of our rights in
19 this great country, which is the right to vote.
20 And just want to remind everyone that early
21 voting starts this Thursday, the 11th. Early

1 voting in Talbot County is at the Easton Fire
2 Hall, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. every single day. So
3 look forward to seeing everyone out there at
4 the polls.

5 And enjoy that process. It's an awesome
6 part of being a citizen to be able to do that.
7 That's all I got.

8 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Mr. Leshner.

9 MR. LESHER: I just wanted to offer
10 congratulations to the graduates of Easton High
11 School, St. Michael's Middle High School, and
12 Chesapeake College. And to Ms. Haythe, who was
13 honored as the graduation speaker at the
14 college and spoke very well. Congratulations
15 to all.

16 MR. CALLAHAN: We heard the applause.

17 MR. STEPP: And course catalog emeritus
18 cover.

19 MS. HAYTHE: That's right.

20 MR. STEPP: Keasha did get --

21 MR. CALLAHAN: That's awesome.

1 MS. HAYTHE: I know.

2 MS. MIELKE: First, ditto that.

3 And second, I appreciate the comment about
4 the Senior Citizens Task Force. It's a
5 wonderful group. I'm glad that we got this
6 started.

7 We did have the workshop this afternoon
8 before this meeting, which went very well. And
9 we got a full report of to date.

10 And the Council is going to permit a
11 feasible study so that we can study what our
12 options are with regard to providing senior
13 homeless housing. So I'm really excited about
14 that. So more to come.

15 And we are going to be looking to a lot of
16 community organizations to assist with this
17 project.

18 And thank you for your comments. I
19 appreciate it.

20 MR. STEPP: You're welcome.

21 MS. HAYTHE: Yeah. And I just want to

1 echo the comments about to all the graduates,
2 Chesapeake College graduates and the graduates
3 of St. Michaels Middle and High School as well
4 as Easton High School. Councilman Leshner and
5 President Callahan and myself was able to
6 attend the Easton High School graduation.

7 And for some reason, every time I go to
8 graduation, I tear up. I have no kids
9 graduating. And it's just an amazing time to
10 see those kids celebrating the four years that
11 they completed at high school and now onto
12 their new beginning. So that was a great
13 moment.

14 And that's all I have. I was going to say
15 early voting and happy to not be on the ballot
16 this time.

17 MR. STEPP: Don't forget, of course,
18 Election Day being the 23rd.

19 MS. HAYTHE: That's right.

20 MR. STEPP: That Tuesday. So there's that
21 early voting period, but there's that ever so

1 important day on the 23rd.

2 MS. HAYTHE: That's right. And that's a
3 time to go out on the 23rd.

4 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. And I will echo the
5 graduation. It was absolutely phenomenal. I
6 was sitting there. And what is special about
7 being there at that moment is knowing that I
8 was there 41 years ago on the same stage. So,
9 you know, it's Chuck --

10 MS. MIELKE: Just like yesterday.

11 MR. CALLAHAN: -- you're getting old.

12 MS. MIELKE: Just like yesterday.

13 MR. CALLAHAN: You're getting old.

14 But it was a lot of fun seeing the kids
15 and all that stuff. And just being a part of
16 their, one of their most important times in
17 their life, you know. So it was pretty nice
18 and seeing the families and all that kind of
19 stuff.

20 So being that's said, I appreciate the
21 staff tonight. Appreciate everything you're

1 doing with the bills. I know that you put a
2 lot into that, and really appreciate all that
3 stuff. You did a good job.

4 Okay. Mr. Leshner.

5 MR. LESHER: The County Council's next
6 meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 30th,
7 beginning at 5 o'clock p.m. This is not our
8 regular meeting night. We have postponed a
9 week so as not to have a meeting on Primary
10 Election Day, June 23rd.

11 The Council will be convening in open
12 session at 3:30 p.m. and then adjourning into
13 closed session, as listed on the statement for
14 closing that meeting.

15 Therefore, is there a motion to adjourn
16 this meeting and reconvene noted?

17 MS. HAYTHE: So moved.

18 MR. STEPP: 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. LESHER: Aye.

7 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.

8 MS. MIELKE: Aye.

9 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.

10 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.

11 MR. CALLAHAN: Okay. Thanks a lot for
12 coming.

13 (Meeting concluded at: 6:29 p.m.)

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STATE OF MARYLAND

I, Diane Houlihan, a Notary Public in and for the State of Maryland, County of Talbot, 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 Notorial Seal this 16th day of June, 2026, at Easton, MD.



Diane Houlihan
Notary Public

My commission expires September 16, 2029

[& - 29736]

Page 1

&	1452 48:8	1630 46:21	2016 34:19
& 73:2 77:11 86:7	1480 48:7	1631 47:13	2021 7:19
1	1486 52:11	1632 48:6	2024 7:19 8:1,6
1,728 14:7	1488 58:20	1633 48:21	2025 8:7 36:15
1,755,000	14th 62:15	1634 49:15	94:2
49:20	103:3	1635 50:6	2026 1:7 7:19
1.24 53:11	1507 53:5	1636 50:16	8:11 36:6,21
1.3 49:6	1531 48:7	1637 51:9	43:9 91:9
1.42 57:16	1533 49:2	1638 52:8	114:13
100 7:14	1534 52:11	1639 53:4	2026-2027
11th 102:1	1535 58:20	1640 53:19	43:10
107:21	1539 46:7	1641 55:6	2028 11:4
12 7:13 8:20	1556 49:1	1642 56:1	18:21 19:15
31:12,15	1557 52:11	1643 57:9	2029 114:19
12/31/28 11:6	1558 50:17	1644 58:3	2030 36:6
1267 53:6	1573 57:10	1645 58:19	219 10:13
13 33:11 34:13	1587 50:17	1646 59:12	22 7:12
102:10	1594 47:1	1647 60:4	220,000 45:19
1307 53:6	1595 47:14	1648 60:17	22nd 30:12
13213 48:11	1597 49:1	1649 61:16	23 43:1
1332 53:6	1599 52:11	1650 62:13	23rd 110:18
1343 45:14	16 75:5 114:19	16th 114:13	111:1,3 112:10
136,000 39:19	1600 45:14	175 63:15 64:9	247,000 54:2
1361 53:6	1605 53:5	64:15 66:20	25 24:15
1362 114:15	1607 44:15	19 35:21	250 23:17 67:1
1368 45:14	1612 59:13	190 67:20	101:7 102:5
1391 50:18	1613 56:2	190-42 68:3	250,000 51:14
1393 48:8	1616 58:4	190-61 76:17	250th 107:14
14 19:5,9 94:2	1625 43:9,20	190-62 81:14	26 43:9
1424 52:11	1626 67:18,19	2	27 75:7
1431 59:13	71:10,17,19	20,000 40:17	28th 64:17
	1628 45:11	2015 36:12	29 8:21
	1629 46:6		29736 104:13

[2nd - afternoon]**Page 2**

2nd 4:12	500 23:21 73:8	99:18 100:13	99:13 102:18
3	500,000 47:20	102:19,19,21	105:5
3 82:5	58:11	108:6 110:5	adair 88:7,11
3.9 60:10	501 82:5	above 99:12	88:12,15,18,18
30 68:13	57,829 92:9	absolutely 10:5	89:1,4,13
30,000 56:21	5:00 1:7	111:5	90:14
300,000 52:16	5:30 62:15	academy 102:4	add 77:21
30th 112:6	5th 4:2	accepted 4:10	89:11 99:21
32 24:12	6	4:19 26:3,14	addition 2:15
320,000 47:6	6 62:4 102:1	access 78:21	70:18 71:6
33,000 44:20	60 10:21 11:7	accommodate	additional
330 64:10	600,000 46:13	100:10	20:16,18,19
357,000 55:10	658,000 48:13	accompanying	78:18 89:11
389 64:11	6:29 113:13	62:1	additions 2:11
391 64:11	7	accurate 114:7	4:13
394 63:13,14	7 108:2	achieve 6:18,19	adjourn 112:15
65:13,14,17	7.85 59:19	68:7	adjourning
3:30 112:12	78th 103:9	achieving 8:19	112:12
4	8	9:8 18:2	administration
40 68:12	8 108:2	acquired 70:4	106:16
400 41:21	9	acres 73:8	administrator
400,000 38:14	9 1:7	act 43:10	101:7
40:8,13	950,000 59:5	action 114:12	adoption 36:5
41 111:8	99.9 19:20	activation	advance 48:14
42,000 50:11	9th 4:12 36:20	19:10	73:18 74:17
4th 97:21	a	activities	advantage 6:21
101:14	a.m. 108:2	103:14	adventure 26:2
5	ability 100:11	activity 40:1,1	advisory 64:12
5 61:2 112:7	107:18	102:6	75:4 86:8
50 16:3,10,15	able 13:3 29:9	actual 14:17	affects 107:4
50,000 51:2	39:20 40:3	actually 10:11	affiliation 70:2
	41:12,14 73:19	12:21 29:14	afternoon 5:6
		74:21 77:12	12:5 37:19
		78:1 94:17	106:5 109:7

[agency - appropriation]

Page 3

agency 43:16 89:9 agenda 2:10,10 2:12,16,18 3:17 5:11 37:12 42:20 76:6 ago 17:15 111:8 agreement 10:12,15 11:17 76:10 78:19 79:9 agreements 76:20 agricultural 72:19 75:3,6 ah 74:9 ahead 2:5,9 28:10 33:6 43:5 44:8 63:12 65:6,18 66:2,3 67:5 68:16 71:18 89:3 air 13:14 airport 27:16 allegiance 2:6,8 alliance 102:16 allow 15:10 68:9 70:17 71:3 allowed 70:9	allows 5:13 40:20,21 amazed 12:5 amazing 23:3 33:19 98:13 110:9 amend 2:15,18 44:14 45:13 46:7 47:1,14 48:7 49:1 50:17 52:10 53:5 56:2 57:10 58:4,20 59:13 63:15 66:17 67:20 76:17 amended 41:21 amending 44:15 45:15 46:8 47:2,15 48:8 49:2 50:18 52:12 53:7 56:3 57:11 58:5,21 59:14 amendment 69:1,7,18 70:16 72:2,4 76:9,17 77:15 78:3,9 82:13 amends 44:19 45:18 46:12 47:5,19 48:12 49:5 51:1	52:15 53:10 56:20 57:15 58:10 59:4,18 amenities 79:9 amounts 39:7 ands 28:12 andy 22:18 animal 83:15 anne 48:11 annual 43:10 answer 6:8 18:7 73:11 95:11 answers 107:1 anticipate 20:10 anticipating 11:3 20:12 anybody 65:10 65:16 71:16 82:10 97:12 107:9 anyway 32:13 32:20 83:2 apologies 26:10 apologize 105:4 appear 40:8 106:15 appeared 114:3 appears 105:2 105:2,16	applause 91:20 92:6 108:16 application 81:11,16 89:6 applications 73:9,14 75:5 applied 70:13 applies 107:2 apply 81:17 appoint 94:3 appointed 94:5 appointment 85:11 87:7 appointments 83:14 88:4 appreciate 17:11 22:20 25:1,4,7,9 62:17 71:15 89:13 90:17 93:8 97:11 100:21 104:4 104:12 107:8 109:3,19 111:20,21 112:2 appreciation 98:9,11 approach 60:20 appropriate 13:17,18 71:1 appropriation 43:11 44:16
---	--	--	---

[appropriation - bellevue]

Page 4

45:15 46:8 47:2,15 48:9 49:3 50:19 52:12 53:7 56:3 57:11 58:5,21 59:14 approval 41:5 77:19 79:21 80:20 81:3,19 approve 41:21 71:13 84:17 87:9 89:17 approved 41:5 43:19 81:5 91:11,16 april 64:17 area 57:14 58:8 63:19 64:2 79:1 areas 21:6 47:17 66:21 67:1 army 103:9,9 art 12:13 103:16 aside 73:21 asked 15:15 64:8 asking 54:20 83:16 95:13,14 100:6 assess 8:9 assessment 51:10,15	assist 109:16 assisted 114:7 assisting 35:20 36:2 associated 17:7 19:21 20:2 44:18 79:11 association 56:5 assuming 26:9 82:5 atlantic 34:16 attempts 106:15 attend 39:10 39:11 110:6 attorney 64:20 attract 35:3 audio 114:3 augmented 102:16 authorization 44:20 45:19 46:13 47:6,20 48:13 49:6 51:2 52:16 53:11 56:20 57:16 58:11 59:5,19 authorize 49:16 50:7 51:10 53:20 55:7 60:5,18 61:19	authorizes 49:20 50:11 51:14 54:2 55:10 60:10 61:2 62:4 automotive 69:16 available 64:3 69:7 91:19 award 36:13 aware 6:3 awesome 108:5 108:21 aye 3:6,8,10,12 3:14 42:7,9,11 42:13,15 67:8 67:10,12,14,16 75:15,17,19,21 76:2 84:4,6,8 84:10,12 85:1 85:3,5,7,9,19 85:21 86:2,4,6 86:17,19,21 87:2,4,15,17 87:19,21 88:2 90:3,5,7,9,11 92:18,20 93:1 93:3,5 113:2,4 113:6,8,10	23:1 29:14,15 32:17 64:13 76:15 77:13 81:6 83:3 95:11 100:11 background 5:20 bags 100:10 balance 21:7 ballot 110:15 band 102:4 103:9 bar 27:10 based 39:4 79:14 81:12 basically 40:17 64:20 basketball 79:4 bautz 84:16 bay 44:21 103:12 beds 20:17,17 100:7 beginning 110:12 112:7 behalf 18:4,6 28:20 69:15 believe 11:14 23:4 24:14 67:1 77:5 78:20 82:7 bellevue 78:5 78:13,15 79:2
		b	
		back 8:9,10 14:10 15:4 19:13 21:15	

[beneficial - call]

beneficial 56:5 benefit 31:20 benefits 28:21 best 12:11 29:9 29:13 98:1 bestow 36:18 better 32:8 betting 18:20 beyond 20:20 bid 19:21 bidding 28:11 bids 20:3 big 23:8 27:20 27:21 54:6 bill 43:9,20 44:2,14,14 45:3,10,13,13 46:6,7,7,20 47:1,1,12,14 47:14 48:5,7,7 48:20 49:1,1 49:14,16 50:5 50:7,15,17,17 51:8,10 52:7 52:10,10,19 53:3,5,5,18,20 55:5,7,21 56:2 56:2 57:8,10 57:10 58:2,4,4 58:13,18,20,20 59:8,11,13,13 60:3,5,16,18 61:15,19 62:12 65:12 67:18,19	67:19 68:8 71:10 bills 43:1 56:8 56:9 62:14 112:1 birthday 107:15 bit 9:15 19:13 19:18 39:21 40:6 63:10 99:8 105:13,13 bittersweet 30:11 blanket 80:19 blessed 28:19 blood 99:14 blue 10:15,16 blues 103:17 bmi 99:7,7,8,12 board 30:14 41:5 64:13 75:4 83:15,18 86:8 87:6 88:4 94:5 96:12,16 97:2 boards 31:17 83:14 boat 103:4,11 boats 103:5 bona 77:1 81:20 82:3,6 bond 80:16 bonded 79:10	bone 33:21 bony 99:10 booming 27:14 borrowing 56:12 boundless 35:8 brennan 77:5,9 78:7 brian 90:21 91:5 93:9 brief 5:14,19 6:5 briefly 63:3 brigade 102:5 bright 33:1 brightest 29:13 brightness 32:21 bring 13:1 21:10 27:19 30:19 69:8 83:3 bringing 34:13 41:10 broadband 27:18,19 brought 80:4 bucket 99:5 budget 19:17 20:7 37:15 38:11 39:18 40:3,10,13,14 41:1,21 43:10 43:13,13,14,18	43:20 44:4 budgeted 20:5 91:3 budgeting 91:17 build 21:19 40:1 building 10:19 11:8 12:10 14:17 15:6,9 15:10,13,19 17:21 19:2,5,7 19:21 50:9 52:1 built 9:13 15:19 bus 39:15 79:4 business 31:21 35:3 businesses 35:1 36:1 busy 5:11 but 28:13
			c
			c 82:5 calendar 15:8 15:13 call 3:3 42:5 67:6 71:21 75:12 84:1,20 85:16 86:14 87:12 89:21 92:16 112:20

[callahan - change]

Page 6

callahan 1:14 2:3,9,13,14,17 2:21 3:2,5,6,15 3:21 4:8,18 5:5 5:7,9 6:10 9:19 9:21 11:20 17:4,16 18:10 22:2,5,15 23:7 23:11,15,20 24:6,18 25:8 25:11,18,21 26:5,8 28:6,9 29:17 31:10,14 32:15,20 33:5 34:8 37:1,12 37:20 38:1 41:3,6,19 42:3 42:6,7,16,19 44:7,11 45:2,5 45:8,12 46:1,4 46:15,18 47:8 48:1,15,18 49:9,12,21 50:3,12 51:4 51:16 52:2,9 52:18,21 53:14 54:5,18 55:2 55:13,17 57:2 57:5,17,20 58:12,15 59:7 59:20 60:12 61:5,12,17 62:8,16,20 63:8 64:5 65:1	65:3,14 66:2,8 67:3,7,8,17 68:5,15 69:13 71:14 72:5,7 72:10,15,18 74:13,15 75:9 75:11,14,15 76:3,5,14 77:8 77:20 80:9 82:10,15,18,21 83:5,7,21 84:3 84:4,13,19,21 85:1,15,18,19 86:13,16,17 87:11,14,15 88:5,14,16,21 89:3,16,20 90:2,3,12,16 90:19 92:11,15 92:17,18 93:6 93:10,14,20 94:14,19 95:2 95:5,9,19,21 96:4,7,10 97:5 97:8,11,17 100:20 101:4 103:21 104:3,7 104:11 106:18 107:8 108:8,16 108:21 110:5 111:4,11,13 112:19 113:1,2 113:11	called 39:18 98:3 camaraderie 17:18 campaign 94:7 94:9 candidates 21:16 capacity 20:18 26:21 capital 39:18 43:14,14,15,21 44:1 56:10,14 care 7:8,13 9:5 9:11 10:6 13:19 15:20 20:19 27:16 39:9 carry 28:1 cars 103:16 cart 47:16,21 case 24:11 68:20 80:15 cases 13:21 cassandra 2:19 3:15 25:13 26:11 28:12 29:18 33:11 34:11 catalog 108:17 categories 38:21 40:11 category 38:12 39:17 42:1	celebrate 103:19 celebrated 101:19 celebrating 110:10 celebration 101:15 center 6:6,7 9:10,13 11:2 11:12,19 12:4 12:7 13:11 14:5 16:3,8 18:8 21:20 49:4 50:9 central 14:10 certain 64:4 68:4 70:19 76:18 certainly 6:8 21:13 certificate 34:10 36:20 certify 114:3,5 114:8,10 chair 4:9,19 challenges 35:21 91:18 challenging 8:19 79:13 chambers 1:10 chance 4:2,12 change 66:18 69:10 80:10
--	---	---	--

[change - community]

Page 7

82:14 changes 41:1 changing 104:15 chapter 67:20 character 54:14 charge 105:17 charged 39:8 charitable 70:3 chart 38:15 charter 36:7 43:12 44:2,3 checked 103:7 chesapeake 39:3 103:12,17 108:12 110:2 chester 8:14 chestertown 8:15 chevrolet 91:10 childhood 99:4 children 39:10 39:11 102:7 choices 22:1 choptank 88:8 88:20 chose 101:15 chuck 1:14 31:18 111:9 cip 50:10 51:13 54:1 55:9 56:8 61:1 62:3	citizen 27:19 108:6 citizens 34:12 89:14 105:5,16 109:4 claiborne 60:21 61:8 clarification 82:3 clark 63:4 clarke 54:16 64:7 65:2 76:13 class 12:11 classes 99:21 classic 103:15 classrooms 79:5 clay 17:4 22:17 clay's 83:8 clean 101:19 click 38:6,7,8 clinical 6:14 close 11:5,7 16:20 23:13 24:2,16 40:8 65:20,21 66:2 71:19 closed 23:5 41:12 112:13 closing 10:20 10:21 112:14 club 104:5,7,9 104:14 106:17	cms 5:16 6:12 6:13 7:3,9,18 8:12 9:16 code 67:21 68:4 70:8,13 76:17 77:16 79:8 96:18,19 codes 71:3,7 collection 57:12 62:1 63:19 college 39:3 108:12,14 110:2 colonies 102:11 combination 56:11 come 5:1 12:18 24:3 25:13,13 29:14 37:3,13 64:6 65:11 68:18,19 71:16 72:21 78:8 97:13 101:6 106:16 107:9 109:14 comes 3:17 coming 25:9 28:14 37:5 64:8 74:5 101:9 113:12 comment 93:16 94:16 95:10 96:21 97:12	107:10,11 109:3 comments 109:18 110:1 commerce 26:16 commission 69:3 71:9 74:20 75:5 76:8,21 77:5 77:12 78:8 81:10,18 84:15 85:11 95:7,14 96:6 97:4 114:19 commission's 77:6 commitment 34:12 commitments 107:2 committee 83:14 88:4 communities 35:20 community 6:6 9:10 10:4,7 11:14 12:11 14:2 16:8 31:21 35:1 36:19 44:17 61:8 89:8 98:3 101:19 103:8 105:10 106:8
---	---	--	--

[community - council]

109:16 community's 61:4 company 19:4 compare 6:14 6:20 complete 16:7 20:1 46:14 49:7 completed 15:7 16:16 73:5 80:13 110:11 complex 6:17 46:10 comprehensive 66:17 computer 114:7 concert 102:2 concluded 113:13 concludes 88:4 93:11 concrete 14:18 15:1 concur 75:3 conditioning 13:14 conditions 64:4 68:4 confident 20:6 congrats 37:7 congratulation... 9:18,21 24:20	25:1 29:2,7 37:11 105:21 107:6 108:10 108:14 conjunction 68:11 79:12 81:2 connect 14:14 56:21 connecting 14:9 connection 63:17,21 consensus 82:8 consent 4:10 4:20 consideration 76:7 77:19 considered 77:14 considering 76:9 consists 43:13 constituent 78:1 constitutional 102:15 construction 6:5 11:18 14:17 16:14 17:1 19:3 22:6 23:21 24:4,13 46:9 62:6 78:14 79:12	contacted 78:2 79:16 contained 114:9 continue 29:4 30:3 45:20 53:12 89:14 contract 91:12 92:10 contracted 38:18 contributed 74:2 contribution 24:8 73:6 74:7 control 13:13 13:14 83:15 convening 112:11 cooke 87:7 coordination 105:13 copperville 63:18 corporate 68:1 68:9 69:20 70:17 71:3,5 correct 67:2 corrections 2:12 4:4,14 cost 11:17 20:10 79:11 costs 14:4 24:13 39:1	56:14 council 1:1,4 1:10,13 2:4,12 4:2,8,15 36:17 41:7 43:9,19 45:2,9 46:2,5 46:15,19 47:9 47:11 48:1,4 48:15,19 49:9 49:13,21 50:4 50:13,14 51:7 52:6,18 53:2 53:15,17 55:4 55:14,20 57:3 57:7,18 58:1 58:13,17 59:8 59:10,20 60:2 60:12,15 61:6 61:14 62:11,19 63:2 64:7,8,17 65:5 67:4 69:14,17 71:12 71:20 75:2 76:6,16 77:18 78:10 79:16 83:6,11,16 85:11 88:3,12 89:6,12 91:7 93:11 94:11,15 96:9,11,13 98:7,8,10 104:1 107:11 109:10 112:11 114:3
---	---	---	--

[council's - deserved]

Page 9

council's 41:4 112:5 councilman 110:4 counsel 114:4,9 114:10,11 count 103:5 counties 12:8 12:15 39:9 country 5:19 6:15 7:5 8:20 9:1 12:12 107:15,19 county 1:1,1 12:16 17:5,10 26:13,18 27:4 27:11,18 29:8 29:15 30:4,8 30:18 34:4,13 34:17 35:4,4,7 35:12,20 36:3 36:11,17,17 37:14 43:8,12 43:12,20 44:1 44:17 45:17,20 46:10 47:4,17 49:4 50:8,21 51:11 52:14,17 53:9 55:7 58:8 64:16,20 67:21 68:4 70:8 77:10,18 78:1 78:11 79:1,19 80:3,5 83:12	89:6,10,15 93:12 94:1,4 95:7 96:9,11 96:12 97:20 98:13 105:11 108:1 112:5 114:2,3 county's 29:13 35:16 44:5 couple 13:7 15:18 16:13 17:5 64:9 83:13 course 32:14 36:8 46:11 47:4,18 108:17 110:17 court 40:1 courthouse 51:3,12 courts 40:2 79:4 cover 38:20 39:15 40:13 108:18 covid 33:13 35:21 crane 23:12 cranes 23:8,10 created 105:21 creates 43:21 creating 33:15 criteria 7:9	critical 88:19 critically 14:1 culvert 53:12 culverts 53:9 current 36:3 38:12 43:13 70:8,13 currently 26:12 79:8 cycle 73:4 74:3 75:8	days 10:21 11:7 deal 10:20 54:6 dealership 70:5 dealerships 69:21 decade 34:14 declaration 102:21 dedication 34:12 deep 53:20 deficient 99:15 definitely 101:11 deflaux 73:1,2 73:16 74:1,11 74:18 degree 33:20 delays 19:12 deletions 2:11 4:4,14 democrat 100:18 dennis 78:6 deny 81:18 department 26:15 34:20 38:16 39:14 89:7 98:2 depends 19:2,7 deserve 92:7 deserved 28:12
		d	
		d 99:11,14,16 dais 69:1 dashboard 33:16 35:18 data 6:17 7:17 7:20 date 5:1 10:21 19:8 22:10 30:10 109:9 dave 1:18 83:2 107:11 david 86:9 day 19:14 21:19 27:12 36:20 37:19 101:15,17 103:3,4,19 108:2 110:18 111:1 112:10 114:13	

[deshields - efficient]

Page 10

deshields 78:6 design 51:11 51:15 desperately 30:1 destination 35:5 detail 54:21 details 91:4 detection 49:4 determination 36:10 develop 35:17 developed 31:1 developer 76:19 78:17,19 79:9 80:15 developing 105:5 development 26:13 31:2 33:16 34:20 36:6,8 48:9,14 54:4 55:12 67:21 76:9 84:14 development's 36:13 89:8 diane 1:21 114:2,16 different 8:7 26:20 difficult 66:12	difficulties 91:13 digging 14:8,9 direct 27:9 direction 82:19 director 26:12 26:12,15 31:2 33:12 34:18,19 43:8 76:20 77:10 90:21 directors 87:6 disbursements 4:11,14,19 disclose 95:8 95:15 disclosed 94:11 discretion 81:9 discussed 69:2 79:17 discussion 66:6 distinction 36:14 district 56:10 56:13 58:9 districts 39:9 ditto 109:2 dividends 14:3 doctors 21:11 dog 33:21 doing 5:4 18:12 25:3 28:21 54:12 66:15 88:13 92:1 104:5,8,9	112:1 donna 83:17 donor 94:9 95:16 door 27:6 44:21 dorchester 30:9,10 dori 87:8 douglass 48:10 dr 78:6 85:12 97:15,18 100:20 draft 82:13 drafting 82:8 drinking 60:20 drive 104:14 driver 39:15 driving 12:19 46:9 dug 14:7,13 e earlier 106:5 early 11:4 18:21 19:15 35:14 98:4 99:4 107:20,21 110:15,21 earned 35:10 earning 36:11 easement 73:7 75:8	easements 74:3 74:8 east 14:20 104:5,9,14 106:17 easton 1:10 6:2 8:16,16 10:9 11:1 21:18 40:2 49:17 70:5 71:4 98:5 104:5,7,7,9,14 104:14 106:17 108:1,10 110:4 110:6 114:13 eating 99:1 echo 29:6 110:1 111:4 economic 26:12 31:2 33:16 34:20 35:17 36:6,8 84:14 economies 35:19 economy 27:14 edition 102:3 educate 98:18 education 50:9 effectively 13:20 efficiencies 14:3 efficient 105:15
--	--	--	--

[effort - extensions]

Page 11

effort 75:1 98:12 efforts 21:10 22:11 either 9:12 election 110:18 112:10 electric 102:5 element 10:8 elementary 40:2 98:5 elements 7:6 13:7 elisa 73:1 77:5 email 30:14 emergency 33:11 91:1 emeritus 108:17 employee 114:11 enabling 43:21 enclose 15:6 encourage 16:18,20 ends 19:8 41:14 energized 107:1 energy 35:8 engineering 54:11 56:5 engineers 56:4	enhanced 59:16 60:7 enhancements 45:16 enjoy 32:10 108:5 enr 59:6,17 60:8,11 enrollment 39:4 ensemble 103:10 ensuing 43:17 ensure 70:21 ensuring 35:21 entered 78:12 114:9 enth 33:20 enthusiasm 35:9 entire 29:10 69:20 entitled 63:16 entrance 16:7 equally 17:14 equipment 60:10 essentially 81:18 esser 39:20,21 establish 43:10 63:16 established 24:12	esteem 36:19 estimate 39:4 ethics 85:10 95:7,14 96:3,6 96:12,16,16,17 96:19 97:1,3 evaluate 7:4 evaluating 7:10 evaluation 53:8 61:3 evening 2:16 2:20 25:20 37:18 38:3 69:14 73:1 83:11,12 88:13 89:5 90:15 91:2,5,6,7 93:12 event 103:8 events 101:8,16 everybody 2:4 26:10 32:8 51:19 52:3 exactly 31:19 37:20 examination 114:5 example 7:17 8:5 9:4 71:4 exceed 69:5 exceeding 24:11 exceptional 35:6	excited 12:17 109:13 exciting 11:13 11:14 101:8 103:2 exempting 68:1 exercise 107:18 exhibits 79:7 existing 9:12 79:2 expand 35:3 expanded 35:16 expect 11:10 15:7 16:4 21:3 21:6 expected 39:4 expecting 11:5 expenditures 39:17 expense 43:13 experience 5:18 7:8 8:5 14:4 34:14 102:18 experienced 19:11 expires 114:19 explained 70:17 extension 56:4 56:19 60:19 extensions 61:3
--	--	---	--

exterior 15:3 23:14 50:7 extremely 23:1	feasibility 61:10 feasible 109:11 feature 102:12 federal 36:4 56:11 feel 28:3 feeling 22:15 feels 9:8 fees 54:4 55:12 56:16 feet 68:13,13 fide 77:1 81:20 82:3,6 field 13:10 14:14 fifth 7:13 figured 13:2 fill 3:18 88:10 91:4 final 79:21 103:5 finally 6:4 39:20 87:5 103:2 106:16 finance 43:8 financially 36:1 find 7:16 66:10 70:12 91:19 99:13 finding 91:13 fine 104:10	fire 49:8 108:1 first 4:21 13:9 16:6 19:1,14 26:6 27:18 34:18 44:9 56:7 73:7 83:15 92:6 93:19 109:2 fiscal 36:3 41:14 43:17 75:7 fisher 86:9 five 6:18 7:6,9 7:11,20 8:8,15 8:15,17,21 12:8,11,14 14:21 24:21 65:9 94:6 106:8 flag 2:7 68:9 69:5,6,20 70:6 101:15,17 103:3,4,19 flags 68:1,12 68:12 70:18,21 71:4,5 101:18 102:12 floors 14:19 15:2 flown 68:10,13 fly 70:6 flying 69:20 focus 7:5 15:10	focusing 17:12 folks 21:10 follow 96:12,15 96:18 following 56:9 food 98:19,19 99:6 100:3 force 63:19 64:1 105:5,16 107:6 109:4 forget 28:15 110:17 form 99:9 forth 68:3 95:12 forward 20:11 28:2 31:6 35:10 53:1 55:3 57:5,20 58:15 59:9 60:1,14 61:9 61:11,13 62:10 66:19 69:11 75:5 77:17 79:18 88:7 92:13 106:2 107:16 108:3 foster 63:4 found 73:20 foundation 72:20 75:7 four 7:11 8:17 9:1 24:21 42:1 110:10
f 1:14 facilities 45:16 50:20 56:17 facility 9:12 12:14 14:20 20:13,14 23:14 52:17 78:15 79:3 80:1 fact 17:21 28:15 99:5,6 facts 95:20 fahmi 97:15,18 97:19,19 100:20,21 failed 106:14 failure 95:8,15 fall 11:4 18:21 19:15 families 21:12 111:18 family 69:21 103:8 far 18:1 73:13 farmers 98:20 fashion 41:18 fast 23:5 favorably 77:18			

[frederick - grants]

Page 13

frederick 48:10	fy27-28 73:10	109:5	11:19,20 23:15
free 103:7	g	go 2:5,9 8:9	25:3,11,19,21
fried 99:1	gain 14:3	11:17 15:5	28:4 31:5,5,5
friendly 103:8	garden 98:3,16	16:19 19:4	37:1,18,19
front 11:19	100:4,6	28:10 29:14	42:19 44:7
19:19 98:3	general 21:8	33:6 38:2,10	62:17,17,17
100:17	82:8	43:5 44:8 56:7	63:1,8,8 65:4
full 101:9	generally 79:7	63:12 65:6,18	68:15 69:13,14
109:9	generated	66:2,3 67:4	73:1 76:5 83:5
fun 101:21	56:16	68:16 71:18	83:11 89:16,16
103:8 111:14	generational	72:8 74:7 89:3	91:5,6,7 98:19
fund 40:4 47:7	27:15	97:5 101:10	99:6,12 104:3
47:21 56:13	geoffrey 87:7	110:7 111:3	105:8 112:3
74:6	george 45:1	goals 24:20	government
funded 53:13	102:17	goes 29:9	69:6
54:3 55:11	geothermal	going 12:13,14	governmental
56:10	13:9 16:14	12:21 14:6,8	35:2 68:11
funding 39:21	getting 22:19	15:12,13,15,17	governor 17:14
40:1 43:18	31:4 81:6	18:9 20:5,8,16	17:17,19
73:20 74:1	101:21 107:1,2	20:20 21:19	gowe 87:8
79:14	111:11,13	22:7 23:4,20	graduates
funds 56:12	give 5:19 6:4	26:2 28:15,16	108:10 110:1,2
73:6 89:10	8:3,18 27:7,11	28:18 30:19	110:2
further 44:5	33:3 34:3 65:7	32:5,7,11	graduating
114:5,8,10	65:9 73:3	37:14,15 38:2	110:9
future 33:1	80:19 91:3	40:18 43:1	graduation
36:9 52:14,17	100:9	53:13 81:6	108:13 110:6,8
81:16	gives 80:21	102:13 104:16	111:5
fy25-26 73:4	giving 5:10	106:16 109:10	grant 40:3
74:2	22:21 24:17	109:15 110:14	53:13 88:9
fy26 38:12	70:3	golf 46:11 47:4	89:6 100:2
91:17	glad 28:14,19	47:18	granted 81:12
fy27 41:1 74:6	30:2,3 97:15	good 3:21 4:8	grants 56:11
		5:6 10:3,4	

[grateful - hitting]

Page 14

grateful 18:4 gratitude 36:19 great 5:4,5,8 6:10 10:1 11:15,20 17:17 17:18 24:18,19 25:10 31:7 41:6 44:11 71:14 88:15,15 90:14,18 103:21 106:18 107:19 110:12 greatest 6:3 green 40:12 greens 47:3,7 greetings 88:11 group 69:16 109:5 growing 21:12 grown 19:17 guaranteed 20:2 guess 64:8 75:10 102:13 guys 17:6 25:3 28:7 37:8,10 64:5 72:21 76:11 83:7 101:5	half 31:13,14 hall 51:12,19 108:2 hand 54:7 98:14 114:13 handing 28:3 handle 104:20 hands 44:13 45:7,8 46:4,18 47:10 48:3,18 49:12 50:3,13 51:6 52:5,21 53:16 55:2,19 57:6,21 58:16 59:9 60:1,14 61:13 62:10 82:18 hang 76:11 hangs 27:5 happen 10:18 happened 94:17 98:1 101:20 happens 38:8 happy 30:3,21 32:2,3 100:8 110:15 hard 23:4 40:6 harrell 85:12 hat 100:16 haythe 1:16 2:13,15,18 3:13,14 4:5,17 30:6 42:14,15	57:4 63:1 67:15,16 76:1 76:2,16 77:21 79:17 82:12 83:2,20 84:11 84:12,17 85:8 85:9,14 86:5,6 86:12 87:3,4,9 88:1,2 89:17 90:10,11 92:3 92:5,7,14 93:4 93:5 108:12,19 109:1,21 110:19 111:2 112:17 113:9 113:10 he'll 91:3 head 98:4 health 6:1 8:13 10:4 11:15 27:16 35:18 97:20 98:2 100:1 hear 54:19 heard 10:10 27:15 104:17 104:17 108:16 hearing 4:9,18 53:16 63:13 65:7,20 66:3 68:17 71:19 72:13 hearings 62:14 63:11	heartfelt 30:6 heating 13:13 held 62:15 103:12 112:6 hello 88:12 93:21 101:5 help 21:9 28:1 33:2 36:7 43:3 98:17 106:7 helping 17:12 22:10 35:6,17 helps 6:14,16 hesitation 12:10 high 9:3 27:10 68:14 99:7,7 108:10,11 110:3,4,6,11 higher 9:2 highest 6:19 20:4,6 24:5 highet 83:17 highlight 13:6 102:9 highlighted 40:11 highway 106:16 historical 102:9 hit 18:17 hitting 16:14 18:16 24:16
h			
habitat 88:7,19 haddaway 83:17			

[hog - inflow]

Page 15

hog 46:10 47:4 47:17 home 21:12 88:19 homeless 109:13 homes 6:21 honestly 12:9 honor 27:3,21 34:1 98:6 honorary 104:19 honored 108:13 hope 26:20 hoped 105:6,7 hopefully 38:3 100:3 hopes 22:3 hoping 99:20 horizontal 14:8 hospital 5:2 6:2 8:14,16 10:9 10:13 11:1,10 12:12 13:15 14:11,14 15:5 15:6,14 16:8 20:1,9 21:1,9 21:18 22:13 hospitals 5:17 6:15,20 7:5,10 8:20 9:1 hosted 102:15	hosting 102:16 houlihan 1:21 114:2,16 house 106:11 housing 89:7 106:6 109:13 huge 27:16 37:7 hugh 94:3,8 humanity 88:7 humbling 100:18 humidities 13:18 hundred 44:21 hundreds 14:12,12 hurricane 33:13 hvac 49:7 50:20 51:3 i idea 33:15 104:15 105:8 ideas 106:3,7 identify 101:13 ifs 28:12 ii 57:1,13 58:8 60:6 61:3 impact 54:4 55:12 impacted 66:21	implementati... 55:1 60:19 important 5:15 9:9 10:7 13:12 13:16 14:1 16:1 17:8 24:7 70:21 99:4 111:1,16 importantly 17:14 impressed 17:19,20 impressive 23:2 improve 45:20 51:15 improved 52:13 60:19 64:2 improvement 44:1 47:3 50:8 50:20 61:4 78:16 improvements 44:17 46:9 47:16 49:3,17 51:11 53:20 54:3 55:7,11 57:12 58:6 59:15 60:6 61:20 78:18 79:20 80:2,7 80:11	inappropriate 70:12 include 66:21 included 78:20 includes 43:15 incorporated 69:4 increase 44:20 45:19 46:13 47:6,20 48:13 49:6 51:2 52:16 53:11 56:21 57:16 58:11 59:5,19 increases 20:11 incredible 13:5 16:17 incredibly 17:19,20 incurred 56:14 independence 103:1 independent 103:17 indicate 99:18 indicator 35:17 indiscernible 92:3 97:16,18 individual 65:8 industry 21:8 infiltration 62:5 inflow 62:4
--	---	--	---

information 6:4 22:21 89:11 94:8 initiatives 28:2 innovative 106:3,7 inside 15:10,17 15:18 insight 35:18 inspected 80:4 inspecting 79:20 inspired 102:10 installing 79:4 instructional 39:1 intent 66:15 interaction 99:2 interest 77:3 104:12 105:20 interested 114:12 interesting 7:16 interior 24:3 interpretation 66:11 interrogated 114:4 intersection 16:3,5	interview 21:16 interviewer 34:15 introduce 44:13 45:6 introduced 45:9 46:5,19 48:4,19 49:13 50:4,14 51:7 52:6 53:2,17 55:4,20 57:7 58:1,17 59:10 60:2,15 61:14 62:11 introducing 88:17 introduction 42:21 83:4 inventory 91:15 investment 14:1 27:15 invite 88:6 90:20 involved 98:21 99:8 issue 69:11 item 66:6 96:20 itemized 43:15 items 40:11 83:13	j	97:21 102:1 103:3 112:6,10 114:13 justly 29:8
		james 88:6,18 90:13 january 94:2 jefferson 102:17 jessica 63:5 job 10:1 11:20 25:10,11 31:5 31:5,5 37:1 42:19 62:17,17 62:17 63:1,9 76:5 89:16 92:2 100:14 104:4 112:3 join 21:4,20 102:2,7 joining 35:1 102:5 103:10 103:15,16 jones 37:18,21 38:2,7,10 41:4 41:17 42:17 85:12 josh 64:5 journey 26:17 july 7:19 8:6 16:4,9 62:15 101:14 juncture 41:11 june 1:7 4:12 4:12 7:19 8:1,7 30:12 36:21	k kaitlyn 63:4 karen 83:16 keasha 1:16 108:20 keep 44:12 keeping 31:17 ken 4:21 20:12 22:15 kept 32:1 key 7:6 8:8 13:7 kids 98:18 100:10 110:8 110:10 111:14 kilmon 37:8 100:14 101:5,6 kind 3:18 9:3 26:1 68:6 95:10 105:17 111:18 kinship 39:9 know 6:13 9:9 17:7 19:16 21:11 22:20 23:3,17 27:10 28:18 29:19,19 30:7 32:4,12 33:5,5 34:2,4

39:3 71:2 98:7 99:6 103:5 105:3 109:1 111:9,17 112:1 knowing 30:7 105:4 111:7 knowledge 35:9 98:2 known 31:15 45:10 46:20 47:12 48:5,20 49:14 50:5,15 51:8 52:7 53:3 53:18 55:5,21 57:8 58:2,18 59:11 60:3,16 61:15 62:12 knows 26:10 kozel 4:21 5:4 5:6,8,10 6:11 9:20 10:2,5 11:21 18:18 19:20 20:15 21:13 22:3,6 23:6,9,12,19 24:2,7 25:4	landed 5:21 landing 79:2 language 64:19 77:15 82:9 94:15 large 86:10 102:21 larger 23:9 largest 94:9 late 11:3 18:21 19:14 latest 5:16 6:3 20:7 law 114:4 leadership 105:14 leading 105:17 league 103:16 learned 105:3 lecatas 90:21 91:6 92:4,6,8 93:7 left 30:10 38:6 38:7,9 65:10 legislation 42:21 43:21 69:6 lesher 1:15 3:9 3:10 9:18 10:3 18:12 19:16 29:6 33:7 37:5 41:10,18 42:10 42:11 45:7,9 46:5,19 47:11	48:4,19 49:13 50:4,14 51:7 52:6 53:2,17 54:10,17,20 55:4,20 57:7 58:1,17 59:10 60:2,15 61:7 61:14 62:11 65:13,21 66:6 66:9 67:11,12 68:20 69:12 72:8 73:13,17 74:9,12,16,19 75:18,19 80:10 81:21 83:1 84:7,8 85:4,5 86:1,2,20,21 87:18,19 90:6 90:7 92:21 93:1,17 94:2 101:1 104:18 108:8,9 110:4 112:4,5 113:5 113:6 letter 38:15 88:8 89:5 level 20:4,6 29:1,10 75:2 99:14 levels 35:13 36:4 lewistown 48:11	library 102:14 life 35:7 111:17 light 16:10 lighting 44:21 likely 16:9 102:12 limitations 70:19,20 lines 15:21 list 43:15 listed 112:13 little 5:19 9:15 19:13 39:21 40:6 63:10 99:8 105:2,3 105:13,13 live 28:17 104:13 105:10 106:8,9 living 10:16,17 26:18,19 34:17 local 24:10,15 24:15 35:19 36:1 89:8 located 10:13 12:15 13:10 48:10 locations 70:7 locker 27:6 logo 68:10 long 31:11 56:12 106:20 longest 7:20
l			
l 1:17 lady 25:12 laid 14:13,19 lambert 87:8 land 67:21 72:19 75:3,6			

[look - medicare]

look 4:3,13 14:16 15:13 21:15 31:6 37:8 40:7 55:18 64:9 106:2 108:3 looking 7:17,18 8:3 19:14 98:16,17 107:15 109:15 looks 7:9 40:15 103:15 loss 54:13 lot 15:16 19:2,7 22:1 23:16 32:11,19 42:16 101:8 103:6 106:21 109:15 111:14 112:2 113:11 lots 101:18 105:9 love 27:8 102:7 low 63:19 lowest 6:18 luck 33:2 lucky 28:13 lynn 1:17	65:18 67:6,18 71:21 72:15 75:12 84:1,20 85:16 86:14 87:12 89:21 92:16 112:20 made 12:6 41:2 94:2 magazine 34:17 main 63:19 64:1 maintaining 80:6 maintenance 62:6 major 16:13 49:7 majority 99:13 make 30:3 32:7 33:13 34:4 40:10 41:20 51:18 52:3 92:12 makes 35:7 100:7 making 12:4 13:6 14:2 17:20 21:12 24:9 41:15 64:14 malnutrition 99:9,10,19	malpf 75:7 man 18:20 manage 40:21 41:1 manager 17:5 83:12 88:19 93:12 98:13 managing 26:15 manner 33:14 114:7 mapping 53:7 march 77:13 margel 83:17 marine 56:4 maritime 103:12 marker 82:6 99:16 market 35:4 marking 18:14 martha 43:5,7 62:20 63:4 martingham 57:13 maryland 1:1 1:10 5:2 26:15 27:19 30:20 31:8 33:4 34:3 36:12,13,14,15 48:11 53:21 72:19 75:6 89:7 91:12,14 92:10 94:7	104:14 114:1,2 match 73:6 74:6 matter 78:2 96:8 114:7 mature 54:13 maximum 20:2 mayor 22:18 104:19 mbe 24:8,10,11 24:14 md 114:13 mean 21:9 22:16 23:17 27:14 83:2 105:9 106:8 meaning 98:19 105:9 means 20:3 32:18 99:7 114:7 measured 8:8 measures 7:4 meba 56:5,20 56:21 media 35:16 medical 6:6 9:10,13 11:2 11:11,18 12:4 12:7 13:11 14:5 16:3 18:8 21:19 medicare 6:21
m			
madam 3:3 34:8 37:1 42:4 43:3 44:8 61:17 63:11			

[meeting - naval]

Page 19

meeting 1:4 2:4 17:6 22:19 72:9,11 77:13 94:18 95:3,9 106:5 107:14 109:8 112:6,8 112:9,14,16 113:13 meetings 17:7 member 76:16 79:16 105:19 members 1:13 96:13 memorandum 78:12 mention 71:8 106:13 messages 33:14 met 36:9 78:7 81:13,16 metrics 8:8 michael's 53:21 54:7 58:7 60:6 103:20 108:11 michaels 71:5 101:12 102:11 102:14 103:16 104:19 110:3 mid 34:16 middle 49:17 108:11 110:3 midshore 12:8 12:10,15 17:10	mielke 1:17 3:1 3:11,12 4:6,16 10:1 18:11 25:10 29:18 41:8 42:2,12 42:13,18 45:4 46:3,17 48:17 49:11 50:2 52:20 55:15 57:19 58:14 62:18 67:13,14 72:2,4 74:14 75:20,21 84:9 84:10,18 85:6 85:7,13 86:3,4 87:1,2,10,20 87:21 89:19 90:8,9,18 93:2 93:3 94:3,12 95:20 104:2 105:20 106:1 107:7 109:2 111:10,12 113:7,8 mielke's 94:9 95:8 miles 14:12 milestone 16:2 milestones 16:13 18:16 million 49:6 53:11 57:16 59:19 60:10 61:2 62:4	mills 59:3 63:18 mind 44:12 88:16 minimal 66:18 minimize 54:13 minutes 4:2,3,4 4:10 5:11 65:7 94:18 missed 29:19 modifications 64:14 moment 33:9 63:3 110:13 111:7 money 39:8 monitored 44:5 month 14:18 16:4 22:17 38:19 months 76:15 moran 63:5 morris 63:5 mortality 7:7 7:17 motion 3:2 41:20 42:3 74:16,21 75:3 75:11 82:16 83:21 84:17,19 85:15 86:13 87:9,11 89:17 89:20 92:12,15 94:3 112:15,19	move 43:1 52:21 55:3 61:9 66:19 72:13 79:18 92:12 moved 83:19 85:13 86:11 112:17 moves 4:9,19 moving 15:15 20:11 23:5 30:2 57:5,20 58:15 59:9 60:1,14 61:11 61:13 62:10 69:11 93:16 multiple 7:4 murphy 45:1 museum 78:5 78:14,15,16,17 79:3,7 80:1,15 103:13 music 51:12,19 muskrat 102:2 mutual 22:16
			n
			n 1:16 name 68:10 93:21 97:19 named 114:3 national 5:17 naval 102:4

[navigating - okay]

Page 20

navigating 36:3,5	news 6:3 11:13 11:14,15	58:20 59:13	34:8 37:1,3,12
near 6:6 106:9	nice 22:17	nurse 22:12	38:4 41:3,6,6
necessarily 70:12 80:19	41:11 61:10	nurses 20:17	42:3,16,20
necessary 66:19 80:5	97:16 111:17	22:12	44:7 45:2,5,12
88:10 91:4	night 112:8	nursing 6:21	46:1,4,15,18
neck 46:10	nine 103:10,10	nutrient 59:17	47:8,10 48:1,3
47:4,17	nonprofit 80:15 81:20	60:8	48:15,18 49:12
need 20:17	82:4 105:10	nutritional 99:21	49:21 50:3,12
41:1 74:16	nonprofits 77:1	o	51:4,6,16 52:4
77:1 82:21	notary 114:2	o'clock 112:7	52:5,9,18
needed 20:13	114:17	oak 63:20	53:14 54:5
21:1 22:13	note 24:8 56:8	objection 70:11	55:2,13 57:2
54:8	noted 112:16	obviously 79:11	57:17,20 58:12
needing 18:16	notes 114:6	offer 12:17	58:15 59:7,9
needs 52:17	notorial 114:13	108:9	59:20 60:1,12
83:1	number 17:7	offered 30:17	61:5,13,17
negative 106:10	44:14 45:11	77:15	62:8,10,16
neighborhood 100:5	46:6,7 47:1,13	offers 73:7	63:9 64:5 65:3
never 98:1	47:14 48:6,21	office 26:16	65:6,17 67:3,3
new 5:2 9:12	49:15 50:6,16	34:18 35:15	67:17 68:5,15
11:2 13:11	51:9 52:8 53:4	36:11,12 70:10	69:13 71:16,18
14:5 20:13	53:19 55:6	officer 97:20	71:20 72:7,10
21:2,4,9,10	56:1,2 57:9,10	officially 103:3	72:10,12,15
49:19 50:10	58:3,4,19	oh 26:7 72:5,7	74:9,12,13,15
51:13 54:1	59:12 60:4,17	okay 2:3,9,14	75:9,11 76:3,5
55:9 60:9 61:1	61:16 62:13	2:17,21 3:2,15	76:14 77:8,20
62:3 97:21	63:14,15 67:18	3:18,21 4:9,11	80:9 82:10,15
110:12	67:19 102:10	4:18,21 12:1	83:5,8,21
	numbers 24:4	18:10 22:14	84:13 85:15
	45:13 48:7	25:8,12,15,18	86:13 87:11
	49:1 50:17	26:8 31:19	88:5,21 89:1,4
	52:10 53:5		89:16,20 90:12
			92:11 93:6,14
			93:20 94:19

[okay - patient]

Page 21

95:4,5 97:7,8 97:12 101:4 103:21 104:3,4 107:9,10,11 108:8 111:4 112:4,19 113:11 old 7:21 8:1 20:14 111:11 111:13 once 11:11 16:6 19:4 ones 69:18 open 14:5 21:5 68:16 112:11 opened 98:2 opening 22:10 98:21 operable 66:13 operating 13:20,21 14:4 20:21 39:18 operation 40:9 56:17 operations 11:10 38:16 operator 10:16 opportunities 79:14,17 opportunity 12:18 16:19 24:17 32:4,5 69:15 80:21 81:17 89:14	opposed 20:14 option 81:1 options 109:12 order 13:19 14:13 104:20 ordinance 43:11,20 organization 9:5 18:4 65:9 organizations 35:2 105:12 109:16 oriented 105:10 original 102:10 originally 77:14 outcome 114:12 outdated 13:3 outlay 39:18 outlined 38:14 outside 15:9 54:7 64:1 70:5 outstanding 34:11 overage 38:13 39:15 overall 8:3 24:13 overrun 40:9 overruns 20:11 38:16,17	oversight 44:4 overweight 99:7,9 own 11:6 100:3 100:7 101:3 owned 45:16 45:20 50:20 owner 10:16 ownership 10:19	park 48:10,14 78:15 80:7 86:7 102:2,3 parking 79:1 parks 102:8 parkway 16:4 part 13:12 14:11 21:21 38:3 54:14 70:2 78:16 99:4 105:11 108:6 111:15 particular 82:14 107:3 parties 114:11 114:11 partners 35:2 party 103:11 passage 78:5 78:13 passed 43:9 68:9 passes 69:10 passionate 33:20 past 8:3 12:19 29:12 34:13 path 47:21 paths 47:16 pathway 78:21 patient 7:7 8:5 15:20 19:1,6 19:14 20:19
		p	
		p.m. 1:7 62:15 108:2 112:7,12 113:13 package 99:21 packages 19:21 page 100:17 paid 39:2 56:16 painting 50:8 pandemic 35:21 panel 49:8 panels 15:3,7 23:13 pantry 100:3,4 papers 10:11 parade 103:4 103:11 parcel 98:14 parent 99:2 parents 98:18 100:9	

park 48:10,14
78:15 80:7
86:7 102:2,3
parking 79:1
parks 102:8
parkway 16:4
part 13:12
14:11 21:21
38:3 54:14
70:2 78:16
99:4 105:11
108:6 111:15
particular
82:14 107:3
parties 114:11
114:11
partners 35:2
party 103:11
passage 78:5
78:13
passed 43:9
68:9
passes 69:10
passionate
33:20
past 8:3 12:19
29:12 34:13
path 47:21
paths 47:16
pathway 78:21
patient 7:7 8:5
15:20 19:1,6
19:14 20:19

[patients - preston]

Page 22

patients 6:14 13:19 15:16 patrick 63:4 64:19 82:12 paul 10:17 paved 47:17 pay 14:2 20:5,8 people 23:16 23:17,21 24:1 26:5 94:19 99:11 100:5,11 105:10 106:21 percent 7:12,13 7:14 8:20,21 19:20 24:12,15 percentage 24:9 perfect 37:9 104:11 performance 7:6 8:10 80:16 period 7:20,21 10:21 29:15 110:21 permit 68:2 71:5 109:10 permits 79:21 permitted 64:2 69:5 70:14,18 person 17:16 32:10 36:16 personal 16:20 personally 12:19 114:3	perspective 9:14 pertaining 76:19 pertains 66:20 pete 1:15 55:17 phase 48:14 phenomenal 111:5 phil 104:13 physicians 21:16 picnic 103:4 picture 106:20 pictures 12:20 13:1 100:15 piggybacking 91:11 pipes 14:12 place 78:20 114:4 plan 6:21 13:8 31:5 36:7 52:17 66:18 81:2,4 planned 101:17 planning 69:2 71:9 73:2 74:20,20 75:4 76:7,20,21 77:4,6,10,11 77:12 78:8 81:10,18	plans 104:16 plant 14:10 38:15 40:9 59:2,6,16 60:7 planting 29:16 100:11 please 34:9 71:12 86:15 89:11 pleasure 27:3 31:11,16 32:21 98:6 pledge 2:6,8 plenty 103:18 plus 34:14 point 10:15,17 11:8 15:11 16:9 18:20 19:11 53:21 78:11 pointer 99:17 policies 63:17 policy 44:6 69:19 polls 108:4 pool 44:21 45:1 pools 44:17 position 26:4 26:14 86:10 possibly 21:11 postponed 112:8 potential 62:6	poured 15:1 power 30:15,16 prager 10:17 11:9 prayer 2:6,8 prayers 22:4 precedent 29:12 premiere 35:5 prep 19:5 preparation 36:5 prepare 82:20 prepared 74:21 presence 35:16 114:9 present 17:6,9 54:11 presentation 72:18 106:21 presented 79:13 100:17 preservation 55:15 72:19 75:4,6 preserve 35:6 59:2 president 2:13 17:4,15 62:19 63:2 98:9,10 110:5 pressure 63:19 preston 69:16 69:19 70:4
---	---	--	---

[pretty - put]

Page 23

pretty 106:7 111:17 previous 39:12 price 20:4 prices 20:2 pricing 92:10 pride 9:7 primary 112:9 printed 114:6 prior 44:19 45:18 46:12 47:5,19 48:12 49:5 51:1 52:15 53:10 56:20 57:15 58:10 59:4,18 79:21 94:11 95:16 priority 107:3 privilege 98:7 probably 3:16 15:14 33:18 40:18 proceedings 2:1 proceeds 11:16 process 18:19 91:17 108:5 processing 98:21 proclamation 2:19 procurement 44:6	producers 98:20 professional 34:14 professionali... 35:8 proffered 78:18 program 43:14 70:3 73:21 programs 44:4 progress 12:3,6 13:5 17:12,13 17:20 18:14,15 23:20 progressing 13:8 15:20 project 6:5 11:16 13:7,12 17:2,8 24:9,13 27:16 44:1 46:14 47:7,9 49:19,20 50:10 60:9 78:14 79:11,13,18 81:3,5 91:16 109:17 projecting 38:13 projections 41:13 projects 35:10 43:16,19 56:10 56:15 107:3	proper 13:15 properties 45:16,21 64:3 property 6:2 10:13,19 11:6 11:8 13:11 14:15 44:18 52:13 58:7 64:1 78:15 80:8 propose 70:16 proposed 76:8 82:13 proposes 43:16 proposing 40:12 proud 8:13 29:8 30:21 34:2,6 62:20 provide 5:18 9:5,11 10:6 76:18 provided 64:20 105:15 providers 21:3 21:4 22:11 providing 35:18 60:20 63:21 109:12 provisions 44:3 76:19 81:7,8 96:19 public 6:16 19:16 22:21	25:2 62:14 63:11,13 64:3 64:12 65:7,20 66:3 68:17 71:19 72:13 77:2 93:16 94:10,16 95:10 96:2,20 97:12 103:11 107:10 114:2,17 publicly 7:2 41:15 pull 79:5 pulls 102:8 pump 58:6 62:1,5 63:20 purchase 10:12 10:15 52:13 91:9 purchased 74:4 91:11 purpose 44:15 45:14 46:8 47:2,15 48:8 49:2 50:18 52:12 53:6 56:3 57:11 58:5,21 59:14 63:21 68:1 purposes 52:14 put 9:14 30:13 40:3 64:19 73:6 78:20 80:16 100:2
--	---	---	--

[put - regard]

Page 24

101:18 112:1 putting 23:13	50:3,13 51:6 52:5,21 53:16 55:2,19 57:5 57:21 58:16 59:9 60:1,14 61:13 62:10 82:18	reality 102:16 really 9:3 17:16 21:13 22:10,17,20 23:6,13 25:1,1 27:9 28:4 31:20 32:2,7 32:10,10 96:5 96:20 105:8 106:3 109:13 112:2	recognizing 92:9 recommenda... 64:14 69:4 76:7,21 78:3 recommenda... 77:7 recommended 73:17 reconvene 112:16 record 77:9 94:10 recorded 114:6 recreation 86:8 recruiting 21:2 recruitment 21:10 22:11 recuse 94:12 redesigned 35:15 reduction 62:5 reenactors 103:17 reference 77:16 referendum 44:3 referred 77:4 reflection 10:5 reflective 20:8 refurbishments 60:11 regard 56:19 109:12
q	raising 21:11 range 46:10 ranked 73:9 ranking 6:16 rate 7:18 rates 39:5 rather 75:2 rating 5:20 6:12,14,17 7:13,14 8:4,6 8:12 9:3 ratings 5:16,17 7:2 8:9 9:17 ray 64:6 65:5 reached 10:14 read 10:10 33:7 34:9 40:6 94:20 106:4 reader 72:3,5,6 reading 94:17 readmissions 7:7 ready 15:19 19:6 65:19 real 52:13 101:21	reap 28:21 reappoint 83:16 reappointment 84:15 86:9 87:8 rear 52:1 reason 110:7 recall 14:19 69:17 recalls 78:10 receive 8:21 9:1 106:20 received 8:11 8:15,16 recent 19:12 recently 106:4 recognition 34:9,10 36:20 70:1 recognize 63:4 63:6	
quality 5:18 6:15 9:4,11 35:6 queen 48:11 question 51:18 54:10 95:13 96:5 questions 6:9 9:16 11:21 18:7,10 41:7,9 45:3 46:1,16 47:8 48:2,16 49:10 50:1,12 51:4,16 52:19 53:14 54:9,21 55:13 57:2,17 58:12 59:7,21 60:13 61:5 62:8 65:5 67:4 71:20 73:11 74:13 95:11 104:1 queuing 74:10 quick 5:13 12:3 82:2 99:1 quickly 43:2			
r			
raise 44:13 46:4,18 47:10 48:3,18 49:12			

[regarding - righty]

Page 25

regarding 106:6 regards 78:2 reginal 85:12 region 12:15 17:11 33:17 57:1,13 58:8 59:15 60:6 61:3,21 regional 5:21 6:6 8:13 9:6,10 9:13 11:2,11 11:15,18 12:4 12:7 13:11 14:5 18:8,9 21:19 35:12 regular 112:8 rehabilitation 53:8,12 61:20 89:8 related 56:9 64:9 77:16 114:11 relationship 17:17 31:1 94:10 95:16 relief 81:1 relieve 80:14 relocate 11:1 relocated 11:11 relocation 11:4 12:1 remain 36:2	remind 29:11 107:20 removal 59:17 60:8 rental 94:4 reopen 16:7 reopened 16:5 reopening 16:2 repaid 56:15 repair 50:7 88:19 repaving 16:6 47:21 replace 49:7 replacement 47:3,16 49:16 50:19 51:3 53:8 59:1 91:3 replacements 44:16 45:1 58:6 60:5 report 83:12 93:12 109:9 reported 1:20 7:2 reporting 94:8 reports 20:7 representing 17:10 65:8 request 38:11 42:4 69:1 74:19 76:8 81:1 88:8 89:18 91:2,9	92:8 95:6 100:2 requested 69:18 76:16 requesting 81:7 84:15 85:11 86:8 87:6 89:5 required 80:11 81:13 89:10 requirements 68:2,3 76:18 requires 79:8 reread 94:20 95:1 reserves 103:9 resident 94:1 resilience 35:19 resodding 47:7 resolution 63:13,14,15,15 63:16 64:15 65:13,14 66:20 67:1 resolutions 64:10 resources 35:9 respect 20:21 35:11 responsibility 80:6 responsible 79:20	results 8:12 9:17 resurfacing 79:3 retain 10:18 35:3 revenues 56:15 review 81:11 94:5 95:7,15 96:16 97:2 reviewed 64:13 77:12 rewrite 66:16 riggin 104:6,9 104:12,13 106:2,19 right 4:1 6:11 11:21 12:15 22:5 23:7 24:2 37:10,21 38:8 40:7 54:5,7 55:19 62:16 65:3,20 67:17 68:16 72:11,12 82:11 92:11 93:15 94:21 95:2,9,18 96:1 96:7,10 97:9,9 104:3 107:19 108:19 110:19 111:2 rights 107:18 righty 37:8
--	---	--	--

[river - send]

Page 26

river 8:14 rmc 21:5 road 48:11 53:21 54:2,6 54:15 55:10 roads 55:8 roberts 83:16 role 31:2 roof 49:17 room 13:20 27:6 102:20 105:20 rooms 13:21 rough 39:4 round 73:7,15 route 16:3,10 16:15 54:14 royal 63:20 run 20:13 21:1 22:13 91:18 rural 100:1	saturday 102:8 saved 39:19 savings 38:20 39:2,5,7,13 40:4 saying 31:18 106:10 says 27:7 schedule 18:13 school 37:14 39:8,11 40:2 49:18 56:6 79:6 108:11,11 110:3,4,6,11 score 6:18,19 scores 5:21 7:18 8:19 9:8 seal 15:8 114:13 second 3:1,3 10:8 17:3 42:2 42:4 51:21 72:3,5,6 75:10 75:12 76:12 82:16 83:20 84:1,18,19 85:14,16 86:12 86:14 87:10,12 89:19,21 92:14 92:15 109:3 112:18,20 seconded 83:2 94:3	secretary 3:3,5 3:7,9,11,13 34:8,10 37:2 38:6,9 42:4,6,8 42:10,12,14 43:3 44:8,10 44:14 45:6,10 45:13 46:6,20 47:12 48:5,20 49:14 50:5,15 51:8 52:7,10 53:3,18 55:5 55:21 57:8 58:2,18 59:11 60:3,16 61:15 61:18,19 62:12 63:11,14 65:19 66:1 67:6,7,9 67:11,13,15,18 67:19 71:21 72:6,14,16,17 75:12,14,16,18 75:20 76:1 84:1,3,5,7,9,11 84:20,21 85:2 85:4,6,8,16,18 85:20 86:1,3,5 86:14,16,18,20 87:1,3,12,14 87:16,18,20 88:1 89:21 90:2,4,6,8,10 92:16,17,19,21 93:2,4 112:20	113:1,3,5,7,9 section 66:17 68:3 77:16 81:14 sections 66:13 66:14 sector 35:3 security 45:15 45:20 see 5:8 12:18 15:4,12 16:17 16:19 17:18 19:1 22:6 23:7 23:15 25:12,19 29:5 32:12 41:12 61:10 69:11 73:14 83:10 95:9 101:9 102:20 110:10 seed 29:16 seeing 12:20 15:16 25:21 31:6 108:3 111:14,18 seeking 40:16 41:4 seem 70:11 seems 106:9 seen 12:13 sell 10:12 send 55:17 98:8
s			
safe 60:20 safely 13:20 safety 5:18 7:7 sale 6:1 10:8,12 10:15 11:16 12:1 sanitary 56:8,9 56:13 58:8 sarah 37:13,15 101:3,5 104:4			

[senior - spending]

Page 27

senior 105:4,16 109:4,12 sense 8:18 sent 30:14 78:7 september 114:19 serve 12:14 27:4 29:9 83:17 served 33:17 33:17 serves 9:4 service 57:13 63:17,19 64:2 services 10:6 38:18 87:6 89:9 91:1 105:14 serving 57:13 86:9 89:14 session 64:16 64:18 112:12 112:13 set 19:13 20:4 24:9 68:3 73:21 114:4 sets 27:9 setting 24:20 settled 15:1 several 106:14 sewer 56:4,17 56:19 57:13 60:18 61:2 63:16,18 64:1	64:3 66:18 sha 16:9 shape 18:1 28:4 share 5:16 8:13 9:6 101:11 shari 93:19,21 sharing 106:12 shed 62:7 shore 5:21 8:12 9:6,17 10:4 11:15 18:9 short 94:4 shortest 7:21 shortly 16:11 show 9:7 13:3 22:8 45:7,8 showing 77:1 side 33:10,10 54:8 65:16 68:17 sign 27:5 68:2 102:21 103:6 signage 70:18 71:6 signature 114:15 signed 20:1 93:18 101:2 simple 27:9 simplify 6:16 simply 74:9 80:14	sincere 98:9 single 94:9 108:2 sir 5:7,9 65:1 66:5 97:13 site 12:21 14:17 22:8 79:6 81:2,4 sitting 83:9,9 111:6 six 14:20 size 69:5 slate 101:10,16 slight 38:13 39:13 slim 99:10 small 77:15 smith 69:14,15 94:4,8 snow 33:12 social 35:16 87:5 soil 100:10 sold 10:11 sorry 26:7 45:8 64:11 65:11,15 72:10 89:2 104:6 sort 32:16 106:20 sounds 3:21 6:10 44:7 63:8 65:4 68:15 71:14 103:21	sources 43:18 79:14 south 10:13 52:1,2 southeastern 34:16 southern 34:17 space 51:15 79:5 100:6,12 sparks 43:7,7 44:19 45:18 46:12 47:5,19 48:12 49:5,19 50:10 51:1,13 52:15 53:10 54:1 55:9 56:7 57:15 58:10 59:4,18 60:9 61:1 62:3 speak 68:18 71:11 77:6 101:2 speaker 37:10 108:13 special 25:12 32:9,10 102:3 111:6 specifications 80:13 specified 69:6 speed 12:3 22:19 spending 50:11 51:14
---	--	--	--

[spoke - successful]

Page 28

spoke 108:14	24:21,21	status 82:6,6	story 14:20
sponsored	100:18	staying 30:4	51:20,21
47:11	stars 6:19 8:15	stenographic	straight 31:18
spread 32:6	8:17,21 9:1	114:6	63:12
spring 74:6	start 3:17 4:1	stenographic...	strategic 31:4
square 68:13	6:11 15:3 28:8	114:6	36:7
st 53:21 54:7	28:9,10 43:5	step 61:11	street 10:9,14
58:7 60:6 71:5	44:9 63:12	98:14	52:2 98:4
101:12 102:11	65:6 98:4	stepp 1:18 3:7	strictly 70:13
102:14 103:16	107:12,13	3:8 4:7 20:12	structure 15:14
103:20 104:19	started 2:10	21:8 22:14	23:3
108:11 110:3	109:6	28:8,10 29:4,7	structured
staff 20:13,16	starting 15:5,5	37:7 41:9,20	15:19
20:21 21:1,6	17:21 102:1	42:8,9 67:9,10	students 79:6
54:11 74:21	starts 8:6	75:10,16,17	studies 61:10
111:21	107:21	82:2,16 83:19	study 109:11
stage 111:8	state 12:13	84:5,6 85:2,3	109:11
stamp 3:19	29:10,10,14	85:20,21 86:11	stuff 32:1 83:8
17:4 33:8	30:19 31:7	86:18,19 87:16	103:18 111:15
51:21 62:19	32:2,7 34:3	87:17 90:4,5	111:19 112:3
63:2 83:11	35:12 36:4	92:1,12,19,20	subcontractors
84:14 85:10	56:11 91:12,12	107:13 108:17	24:10
86:7 87:5 88:3	91:14 92:9	108:20 109:20	subdivision
88:6 89:1,4	106:15 114:1,2	110:17,20	67:20
90:13,20 91:6	statement	112:18 113:3,4	subject 44:2
93:9,11	112:13	stipulations	64:4 66:11
stand 2:5	states 7:1 34:16	114:8	68:4 70:19
standards 80:5	96:17,18 102:4	stop 102:14	subs 24:3
80:12 81:2,13	statewide	stops 102:10	substantive
81:15	33:18	storage 62:7	69:9
stands 41:13	station 62:5	stories 14:21	succeeded
star 5:16,20	63:20	21:15	29:21
6:12,14,17,18	stations 58:6	storm 33:12	successful
9:16 12:11	62:2		27:17

[sufficient - thank]

Page 29

sufficient 91:15	16:10,14 56:4	114:2,3	26:1,5 68:6
suggest 97:5	56:19 57:1,12	talbot250.org.	telling 25:2
sullivan 104:13	60:18 61:4	101:10	temperature
summer 11:3	62:1 63:20	talent 32:6	13:14
18:21 19:15	94:8	talents 17:11	temperatures
74:6	systems 49:8	talk 37:15	13:19
summit's 36:15	50:20 56:18	65:11 71:17	ten 30:9
sunday 103:19	t	102:19 105:1	tennessee 27:7
super 30:15,16	table 102:6	106:17	27:8
support 17:13	tahoe 91:10	talked 70:10	tenure 35:14
18:5 20:18	take 4:3,13	talking 61:7	term 56:12
25:7 27:2 28:1	15:4,18 16:18	target 24:12,16	82:3 94:4
71:9,11 88:9	17:3 18:1 22:9	targets 16:15	terms 70:1
89:5 93:8,13	26:17 33:8	24:10	106:12
100:19	40:12 55:18	tarleton 76:4	terrific 74:12
supported 36:2	63:3 100:15	77:9,10 78:10	test 16:10
supporting	taken 23:8	80:18 82:1,7	99:18
26:20 98:8,11	talbot 1:1	83:6	text 3:19 70:16
sure 6:10 30:11	12:16 26:13,18	tarleton's	76:8,16 78:3,8
32:8 33:13	27:4,11 29:7	70:10	82:13
43:7 44:10	29:13 30:4,8	task 105:5,16	thank 5:10
51:19 52:3	30:18 34:4,13	107:6 109:4	9:20 10:2 17:3
61:12 66:13	34:17 35:4,7	team 9:7 21:4	18:3 22:14
76:13 107:13	36:11,17 37:14	21:21 27:18	25:4,16 27:1
surety 79:10	43:8,12 45:17	28:4	27:13 28:5,6,6
surfacing	46:10 47:4,17	teams 24:15	29:2,3,17 30:5
78:21	49:3 50:8,21	tear 110:8	31:4,9 32:18
surplus 40:17	51:11 58:8	technology	34:5,7,7 37:10
surrounding	67:21 77:10	59:6,17 60:8	37:13,18 38:5
55:8 58:7	78:1 94:1,4	techs 20:18	38:5 41:15
susan 63:5	95:7 97:19	22:12	42:17,18 54:17
system 5:20	101:7 102:5	ted 84:16	62:18 64:7
6:17 7:15 8:12	105:11 108:1	tell 5:20 12:9	69:12,14 71:13
12:12 13:9,14		21:18 22:9	76:4 81:21

[thank - try]

Page 30

82:17 83:5,6,7 88:3 90:13,14 90:16 91:7 92:4 93:7,9,12 93:14 97:10,11 100:19,20 104:4 106:1 107:5,7,8 109:18 thanks 25:6 41:10 42:16 113:11 theoretically 81:15 thing 12:2 16:1 40:20 76:13 99:20 105:21 106:13 things 5:13 17:5 27:20,21 28:20 32:8 33:19 40:21 99:17 104:21 105:1 think 9:4 11:13 20:20 24:7 38:18 56:7 64:10,17 69:3 70:20 78:11 79:16 94:21 97:13 99:3 104:15 105:7 105:16 106:3,5 106:21	thinking 35:10 third 51:20 thirteen 31:13 31:14 thomas 63:5 64:19 67:2 68:5,8 69:9 70:15,17 72:3 76:15 82:17,19 83:3 96:5,8,14 96:17 97:3 102:17 thought 5:12 5:15 91:20 three 5:13 47:21 65:7 73:6 thursday 102:1 107:21 tilghman 59:15 61:21 time 5:13 8:2,9 8:10 11:8 13:3 17:11 25:5 29:15 65:18 67:3 71:18 81:10 101:13 103:6 110:7,9 110:16 111:3 114:4 timeline 16:2 16:15 timely 7:8,13 33:14 41:18	times 79:5 111:16 today 5:11 13:2 27:8 30:12 33:4 92:6 101:6 together 64:19 token 36:18 ton 103:14 tonight 2:4 4:21 25:2 111:21 totally 106:14 totals 7:14 tough 9:2 tour 16:19 21:17 22:9 23:1 102:9 touring 79:7 tourism 26:13 26:16 30:14,15 30:16 31:3,21 34:19,21 36:6 36:8,12,12,15 36:16 tourism's 35:15 towards 11:17 74:7 tower 14:20,21 town 22:18 55:8 101:19 102:11	toyota 70:4 track 32:1 trademark 68:10 tradition 69:19 transcribed 114:6 transcript 2:1 transcription 114:7 transfer 40:10 transfers 37:16 38:12 40:7,16 41:21 transformation 100:1 transparent 22:16 transportation 39:14 trappe 55:8 travel 34:15 36:15 treatment 59:2 59:16 60:7 61:21 trees 54:13 55:15 tried 27:11 29:20,20 true 114:7 trust 54:12 try 43:1 106:7
---	---	---	--

[trying - wait]

Page 31

trying 68:6 91:19 tuckahoe 48:10 tuesday 62:15 110:20 112:6 tuition 39:2,5 tunis 63:18 turn 16:11 turned 11:9 19:3,8 80:2 two 8:1 18:19 21:6 23:10 47:7,21 78:12 93:17 105:1 type 94:15 typically 73:14	uncommon 71:3 under 70:8,13 73:7 79:8 81:13 83:11,14 understand 66:12,15 understanding 78:13 79:19 understands 51:19 understood 52:3 undertake 43:16 unfrequently 99:13 unimproved 52:13 unionville 63:18 unique 35:7 united 7:1 102:4 university 5:2 27:6 unrelated 106:14 unwavering 18:5 25:6 update 5:12 6:5 17:1 73:3 upgrade 59:1,6	upgrades 49:7 60:11 62:5 use 16:11 19:6 39:20 used 6:20 7:3 82:3 users 56:16 using 79:15 82:5 usual 75:2 utilities 38:18 utility 14:10 utilize 38:21 39:14	ventured 10:11 verbiage 82:4 vernon 85:12 vertical 14:8 viable 36:2 viewing 103:11 village 60:21 violates 96:2 violation 95:17 vision 18:2 visit 17:15 36:13 visiting 79:6 visitors 35:5 vitamin 99:11 99:14,16 vote 3:4 42:5 65:19 66:1,4 67:5,6 69:8 72:1 75:13 82:21 84:2,20 85:17 86:15 87:13 90:1 92:16 94:12 95:16 107:19 112:21 voted 77:17 voting 107:21 108:1 110:15 110:21
u		v	
ultimate 81:19 ultimately 16:11 69:3 77:17 78:17 79:1,19 80:1 80:18 81:4,6 unanimous 4:10,20 unanimously 71:9 77:17 94:5 unbelievably 100:8 uncertainties 36:4		v 59:15 61:21 vacancies 39:16 vacuum 57:12 vague 66:11 valuable 35:9 vanhooser 2:19 25:16,19 26:3 26:7,9,11 29:3 30:5 31:9,13 32:14,18 33:3 34:7,11 vanhooser's 36:14 vehicle 91:3,19 vendor 91:13 vendors 91:13	
			w
			wait 12:17 22:3 29:4

[waited - yesterday]

Page 32

waited 106:19 waiting 83:9,10 waiver 76:18 77:2 81:1,6,7 81:12,19 waivers 76:10 walking 102:9 want 2:3 16:18 17:3 21:20 22:6 26:1 27:1 27:10 28:7,9 29:11 37:13 43:5 44:8 45:6 51:18 52:3 56:8 63:3,6 64:6 68:5,18 72:18,21 76:11 77:21 101:9,11 107:9,11,20 109:21 wanted 9:6,14 12:2 13:6 18:3 21:16 41:15 54:18 70:5 71:8 73:3 106:13 108:9 wants 68:21 warrant 12:20 warranted 78:19 81:12 washington 10:9,14 102:17 wastewater 57:1 59:2,16	60:7 61:21 water 53:21 60:20 61:4 66:17 way 3:20 19:17 26:19 40:19 79:2 98:15 100:9 105:15 106:10 114:11 ways 79:17 we've 4:12 10:11 11:11 16:6 19:4,9 27:16,17 38:14 39:5,12 41:2 42:20,21 61:7 61:9 64:17 91:17 107:17 107:17 weather 19:12 website 7:3 35:15 week 12:6,6,7 106:17 112:9 weekend 101:12,17,20 104:16,20 weeks 17:15 19:5,9 weighted 7:11 welcome 2:3 32:16 37:17 41:17 88:16 92:5 109:20	wells 14:7,9 went 66:9 75:1 109:8 west 14:21 widows 106:9 wilcoxon 93:19 93:21 94:1,14 94:16,21 95:4 95:6,13 96:1 96:11,15 97:1 97:7,9 window 8:2 45:1 wing 52:1 winter 19:12 wish 33:1,1 witness 114:13 woman 32:9 wondered 106:11 wonderful 92:1 100:14,15 109:5 wondering 104:18 wording 66:10 work 15:17 19:10 21:17 24:4 31:7 63:6 64:16,18 90:18 worked 27:12 33:10 35:12 101:12	workers 23:16 working 23:18 23:21 30:8,8 31:16 70:15 works 64:12 workshop 109:7 world 12:11 13:16 31:21 32:1 writer 34:15 wye 59:3
			y
			yeah 19:20 22:2 23:11 24:6 28:10 30:10 66:8 68:19 78:5 109:21 year 15:8,13 36:16 38:12 40:18 41:14 43:17 47:7,21 74:2,10 75:7 91:18 101:13 years 7:20 8:1 15:18 18:19 27:3 30:8,9 33:11 34:13 39:12 78:12 110:10 111:8 yesterday 111:10,12

[ymca - zoning]

Page 33

ymca 103:15
young 21:11
yup 9:19 23:19
29:17 31:14
37:20,20 38:1
41:19 55:17,17
61:12 63:8
64:5 65:14
72:20 90:16,19
93:10 97:13
100:20

z

zach 68:19
69:15
zero 94:6
zoning 67:20
71:3,6 73:2
77:11