

Talbot County Taxpayers Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 438
Easton, MD 21601-8907
410-745-0138

4 May 2009

Talbot County Council
Talbot County Courthouse
11 North Washington Street
Easton, MD 21601
410-770-8010

RE: Talbot County Proposed Budget for FY 2010

Dear Council Member:

The Directors of the Talbot County Taxpayers Association representing their membership commend the County Council and County Manager for several significant accomplishments during preparation of the proposed FY 2010 budget and during execution of the FY 2009 budget. Most notable is this budget's appropriate response to very difficult economic conditions; thank you for your efforts on behalf of all Talbot taxpayers.

We are concerned, however, that revenues projected for FY 2010 and beyond may well be considerably less than earlier projections, especially revenues derived from county income taxes, recordation taxes, transfer taxes, and development impact fees. This potential impact on both Operating and Capital expenditures will require skilled and careful fiscal management to weather the economic storm expected to intensify over the coming years; and, it's the "coming years" that are the most troublesome.

Our review of the proposed budget produced four (4) areas of major concern:

- Our major concern continues to be the capital expenditure of \$6,000,000 for a multi-sport facility to be built at the Talbot Community Center (TCCC). Our Association opposes this expenditure for the following reasons:
 1. As we noted last year, there has not been a Statement of Need or a requirements study made available to the public that our research produced. Thus, there is no known documented need upon which to base the significant expenditure of taxpayer dollars on a facility we believe is extraneous to Talbot County recreational requirements at this time, especially in light of the many other priorities competing for scarce resources. To wit: Public Safety,

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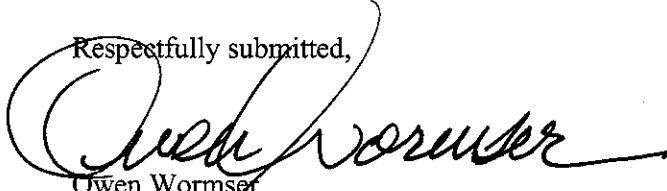
roads and grounds, classroom teacher's salaries, vocational training to name but a few.

2. Though Department of Parks & Recreation intends to provide scheduled transportation to and from this new facility, from after school until late evening, we do not concur with an expenditure of taxpayer dollars for such an enterprise when transportation insurance, fuel, maintenance, and personnel costs are all experiencing exponential cost increases.
 3. Though we are aware of some limited discussions between the Easton YMCA and our County staff about the planned expansion of indoor sport facilities at the "Y", there has not been an adequate exploration of alternatives for the multi-sport facility planned for the TCCC. Some argue the "Y" could change leadership and close the door on use of their facility. If this is a widely held view, the question should then arise as to what are the legitimate alternatives and to what extent have these been explored and reported to the public with the end result being selection of the TCCC site? We are not aware of any such efforts.
- We believe the 2010 "Budget Message" is woefully short on information normally presented in a Budget Message, to wit: what is the vision across how many years, what goals and metrics have been prepared to achieve the vision; and, what resources will be expected to meet these goals? Earlier Budget Messages suffer from this same lack of public information but, looking forward, the Council, County Manager, and Finance Officer have an opportunity to correct this shortcoming.
 - We do not understand the delay in rectifying Glebe Road's known public safety deficiencies. Though capital improvement funds have been appropriated for several years now, a continued delay points directly at our concern about how assigning countywide budget priorities are undertaken. It appears to us the process is undisciplined and unstructured. Glebe road is well-known as being dangerous; it deserves immediate attention and corrective action due to the increase in traffic flow attempting to circumvent Waterside Village and the Route 33, Route 322 Bypass, Bay Street intersection area. In addition, a recent spate of accidents, one resulting in death, call out for urgent corrective action.
 - Over the coming years, we will monitor closely the Bay Street County office building development. The fact that an additional \$4.3M is being projected in the 2010 CIP for this complex is of concern to the Association. To date, we have not seen nor been made aware of a Statement of Need nor any requirements study to justify first the purchase of the property and now its conceptual "mission creep".

There are a number of lesser issues we would be pleased to discuss with Council members if so desired. If desired, please contact our Secretary, Mr. Dennis Osterman, 410-745-0102, to schedule such a meeting.

In closing, the Association's Directors wish to thank Mr. John Lehner, County Finance Officer, for his time, effort, and responsiveness in helping us understand the complexity of the County's FY 2010 proposed budget.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Owen Wormser". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "O".

Owen Wormser
President
Talbot County Taxpayers Association
410-745-0138