

# **RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE HARFORD COUNTY COUNCIL**

## **I. MEETINGS – GENERAL**

### **A. SESSIONS OF THE COUNCIL**

1. Legislative Sessions. Legislative sessions shall be held on the first 3 Tuesdays of each month and each Tuesday in the month of May, except in November of a Council election year and on County holidays, and such additional days as the Council may determine. The Council President shall cancel any session scheduled for a date on which inclement weather causes the Harford County Government to close or otherwise causes unsafe conditions for the public. Should a scheduled session be canceled, any public hearings scheduled for that Legislative Session Day shall be held at the same scheduled time before the Call to Order of the next regularly scheduled Legislative Session Day. The Council may cancel any session on an affirmative vote of at least 4 members, provided that the vote is taken at least 7 calendar days before the canceled session. Any session may adjourn to a time not later than the next legislative session. The President of the County Council shall have authority to call special sessions of the Council, but in no event shall the Council sit for more than 45 legislative session days in any year.

2. Special Legislative Sessions. The President of the Council shall, if practicable, give a minimum of 7 calendar days' notice prior to the calling of any Special Session of the Council, unless, in the judgment of the President, an emergency session is required. At the time of the calling of any Special Session, the President shall indicate whether such Special Session shall be a legislative session or a non-legislative session. If it is a

1 legislative session, it shall be numbered consecutively with other legislative sessions.

2 If 4 or more members of the Council make a written request to the President for a  
3 special session, the President shall call a special session within 7 calendar days after  
4 receiving the request

5 **B. TIME AND PLACE OF MEETINGS**

6 1. All legislative sessions of the Council shall be scheduled to convene in the County  
7 Council Chambers at 7:30 P.M. unless a different time or place shall be authorized by  
8 the affirmative vote of at least 4 members of the Council, except sessions earlier than  
9 6:00 P.M. shall be authorized by the affirmative vote of at least 5 members of the  
10 Council.

11 2. No meeting shall continue past the hour of 11:00 P.M. unless these rules of procedure  
12 are suspended as provided in Section XII.A.

13 **C. QUORUM.** 4 members of the Council shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of  
14 business.

15 **D. VOTING.** All voting, except on procedural motions, shall be by roll call, and the ayes and  
16 nays shall be recorded in the Journal. When a roll is called, the members of the Council  
17 shall be called in order of the districts which they represent; the President of the Council  
18 shall be called first.

19 **E. PRESIDING OFFICER.** The President shall be the presiding officer, and shall decide  
20 questions of order, subject to an appeal in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

21 **F.** The Vice-President shall be the presiding officer in the absence of the President. In the  
22 absence of both the President and Vice-President, the presiding officer will be the next

1 preceding Vice-President present and should none be present, the members of the Council  
2 present shall select a member to preside at that meeting.

3 **G. RULES OF PROCEDURE.** The current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly  
4 Revised shall govern all parliamentary proceedings except where they conflict with these  
5 rules or other laws applicable in this County.

6 **H. NOTICE OF MEETINGS.** The Council Administrator shall give such notice as required  
7 by law of all Council meetings, hearings, and sessions and shall provide information to the  
8 news media and the general public as to the Council agenda, purpose, and matters pending  
9 before the Council.

10 **I. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

11 1. Reasonable seating facilities shall be provided for the general public at all public  
12 meetings, and the general public is encouraged and invited to attend. Any person  
13 speaking shall state name, home address, and organization if any. A notice as to these  
14 requirements shall be posted in a conspicuous place at or near the Council Chambers.  
15 During the legislative session, a reasonable amount of time will be provided for  
16 members of the public to address the Council on pertinent matters. Members of the  
17 Council will not be expected to immediately respond to any subject brought to their  
18 attention other than to inform the individual that someone will respond to their concern  
19 accordingly. However, no person shall be allowed to address the Council until the  
20 appropriate time and then after recognition by the presiding officer of the Council.

21 2. Members of the public who want to address the Council must register in advance. Any  
22 person who wishes to speak during a public hearing or during Agenda Item #15,  
23 Comments and Input from Attending Citizens, at a legislative session, can register by  
24 either calling the Council office or sending an email to the Council office until 4:00

1 P.M. on the day of the public hearing and/or legislative session. A person may also  
2 register to speak at the County Council Chamber foyer on the day of the public hearings  
3 or legislative session. Registration for public hearings shall be available in the Council  
4 Chamber foyer beginning 30 minutes prior to the start of the public hearings and  
5 registration shall end at the start of the first public hearing. A person who wishes to  
6 speak under Agenda Item # 15, Comments and Input from Attending Citizens, during  
7 a legislative session may register up until the start of the legislative session. In the event  
8 there is no public hearing scheduled on the day of a legislative session, registration  
9 shall be available beginning 30 minutes prior to the start of the session. Written  
10 testimony and/or comments may also be submitted for the record by mail, email, or by  
11 hand-delivering the documents to the Council office.

- 12 3. Any person desiring to speak during a public hearing on the matters or issues under  
13 consideration shall first address the presiding officer and shall not proceed until  
14 recognized by the presiding officer and shall limit their comments to the subject of the  
15 hearing. Upon initial recognition by the presiding officer, the person shall give the  
16 following information before speaking to the issue:

17 (a) Name

18 (b) Home Address

19 (c) Persons or organization represented, if any

20 (d) Whether speaking for or against the subject matter under consideration

21 any person desiring to question any other person appearing before the Council shall  
22 first address the presiding officer, and when recognized, request leave of the presiding  
23 officer to ask a question of the witness and shall not proceed until leave is granted.

- 1           4. Comments permitted to be made by citizens during Agenda Item #15, Comments and  
2           Input from Attending Citizens, are generally permissible except that matters which are  
3           the subject of a public hearing such as all bills and all applicable resolutions may not  
4           be addressed until the Legislative Session Day which follows final action on the matter  
5           and pending zoning cases may not be addressed until concluded and the expiration of  
6           all appeal rights has occurred.
- 7           5. Each person requesting to speak at either a public hearing or during agenda item #15,  
8           Comments and Input from Attending Citizens, shall be limited to a maximum of 3  
9           minutes. If speaking on behalf of an organization, only one person may speak on behalf  
10          of said organization. Speakers will not be allowed to cede time to other speakers.
- 11          6. Every member of the public shall address the Council either by title and last name or  
12          by position, such as Mr. President or Ms. Vice-President, or the representative from  
13          District A, or B, or C, or D, or E, or F. Insulting or inflammatory language shall, at all  
14          times, be avoided in addressing members of the Council or in referring to any officer  
15          or employee of County Government. The President, voluntarily or upon the motion of  
16          the Council, may censure any member of the public for a violation of this Rule. The  
17          President shall order the removal of any person who disrupts the business of the  
18          Council after warning.
- 19          7. A person attending a public meeting may not engage in any conduct, including visual  
20          demonstrations such as the waving of placards, signs or banners, that disrupts the  
21          session or hearing or that interferes with the right of members of the public to attend  
22          and observe the session or hearing. The President may order any person who persists  
23          in conduct of this nature or who violates any other rule or regulation concerning the

1 conduct of public meetings to be removed and may request police assistance to restore  
2 order.

3 8. Written testimony may be submitted at any time following the introduction of  
4 legislation by mail, email or by hand-delivering the documents to the Council office.  
5 A copy of written testimony shall be maintained on file for the official record. All  
6 written testimony received shall be disseminated to all members of the Council and  
7 copies thereof shall be available for review and inspection pursuant to the Public  
8 Information Act, Title 4, General Provisions Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, as  
9 amended.

10 9. Any member of the public may request copies of bills pursuant to the Public Information  
11 Act, Title 4, General Provisions Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, as amended.

12 10. No food or drinks, other than water, shall be permitted in the Council Chambers.

13 **J. CALENDAR OF SESSIONS.** The Council Administrator shall prepare and maintain a  
14 calendar which shall list all sessions, whether official legislative or non-legislative  
15 sessions, as well as work sessions of the Council wherein any business of the Council is to  
16 be discussed or transacted, and such calendar shall at all times be available for review and  
17 inspection by the public and the press, pursuant to the Public Information Act, Title 4,  
18 General Provisions Article, Annotated Code of Maryland, as amended, and all such  
19 sessions shall be open to the public.

20 **K. COMMITTEES.**

21 1. The Council shall have authority to designate one or more of its members as a  
22 committee for the purpose of investigating or collecting data necessary to conduct the  
23 business and affairs of the Council. The committee shall continue in existence until

1 terminated by a majority of the Council. All committees shall be required to report to  
2 the Council.

3 2. The Council shall have a standing Personnel Committee, which shall consist of the  
4 President and two other Council Members chosen annually by the Council. Unless all  
5 members of the Council are members of the same political party, not more than two  
6 members of the committee may be members of the same political party. The committee  
7 shall annually conduct a performance evaluation of each Council employee in the  
8 exempt service, each contractual employee of the Council, and the County Health  
9 Officer. Each evaluation shall be a confidential personnel record available for  
10 inspection only in accordance with the Public Information Act, General Provisions  
11 Article, §4-311 of the Annotated Code of Maryland, as amended.

12 3. The Personnel Committee shall notify, by memorandum, all members of the Council  
13 of the Committee's recommended candidates for a Council position. The members  
14 shall be given a sufficient amount of time to interview the recommended candidates  
15 prior to any Council action in regard to offering a candidate a position.

## 16 **II. SESSIONS - ORDER OF BUSINESS**

17 **A.** The order of business at all regular sessions shall be as follows:

- 18 1. Call to Order
- 19 2. Pledge of Allegiance
- 20 3. Opening Prayer
- 21 4. Presentation of Proclamations
- 22 5. Consideration of Petitions, Applications, Appointments and Nominations
- 23 6. Special Presentations
- 24 7. Approval of Minutes

1 8. Introduction and Consideration of Resolutions

2 9. Introduction of Bills

3 10. Introduction and Consideration of Amendments

4 11. Call for Final Reading of Bills

5 12. Enrollment of Bills

6 13. Unfinished Business

7 14. New Business

8 15. Comments and Input from Attending Citizens

9 16. Business from Council Members

10 17. Business from the President

11 18. Adjournment

12 **B.** The Presiding Officer may at any point of time provide for the public to address the  
13 Council.

14 **III. SESSIONS - MOTIONS**

15 **A. STATEMENT OF MOTIONS.** When a motion has been made and seconded, the  
16 President shall state it, but it may be withdrawn by the maker. Motions may be made orally  
17 or in writing, but a motion shall be reduced to writing only upon request of the President.  
18 Motions shall, whenever possible, be stated affirmatively.

19 **B. PROCEDURES IN DEBATE.**

20 1. Voting. Every member present shall vote on every question before the Council unless  
21 such member abstains. No member shall vote on any question in contravention of any  
22 law concerning ethics which is contained in either the Charter or the Code including  
23 one of immediate personal or financial interest or that of the member's client. The vote  
24 on any question or motion or other matter shall be taken by the ayes, nays, and



1 abstentions, except procedural motions which may be approved by general consent,  
2 and entered in the Journal.

- 3 2. Explanation of Vote. Any member shall have the right to explain his/her vote prior to  
4 time of voting. No explanation shall exceed 3 minutes except by permission of the  
5 President.

6 **C. COUNCIL DECORUM.**

7 Each member of the Council shall address other members either by title and last name  
8 or by position, such as Mr. President or Ms. Vice-President, or the representative from  
9 District A, or B, or C, or D, or E, or F. Insulting or inflammatory language shall at all  
10 times, be avoided in addressing other members of the Council or in referring to any  
11 officer or employee of County Government. The President, voluntarily or upon the  
12 motion of the Council, may censure any Council member for a violation of this Rule.

13 **IV. COUNCIL JOURNAL**

- 14 **A.** A brief, accurate, daily Journal of the proceedings and minutes of the Council shall be  
15 maintained by the Council Administrator. The Journal or a copy of the Journal shall be  
16 opened to public inspection during the normal working days of the County Government,  
17 pursuant to the Public Information Act, Title 4, General Provisions Article, Annotated  
18 Code of Maryland, as amended.

- 19 **B.** All votes by roll call shall be recorded in the Journal.

- 20 **C.** When a bill, resolution, or other legislative matter is journalized the first time, its title shall  
21 be entered in full. Thereafter, subsequent Journal entries or any legislative matter may be  
22 made by number and abbreviated title. All amendments shall be entered by identifying  
23 number in the Journal when proposed, and if they lie over, they shall again be printed by  
24 number in the Journal when considered. The name of every Council member introducing

1 a bill or resolution or moving to amend a resolution and/or other legislative matter shall be  
2 entered in the Journal.

3 **D.** Upon veto by the County Executive, the veto message shall be entered in the Journal.

4 **E.** Whenever the County Executive shall fail to return any bill within twenty-one (21) calendar  
5 days after the date of its presentation, the Council Administrator shall forthwith record the  
6 fact of such failure in the Journal.

7 **F.** The Council Administrator shall enter such other matters in the Journal as required by the  
8 Charter of Harford County, Maryland; or as directed by the President of the County  
9 Council.

## 10 **V. COUNCIL ADMINISTRATOR**

11 **A. GENERAL.** The Council Administrator shall be responsible for the overall coordination,  
12 direction, and supervision of the clerical/administrative employees of the Council in the  
13 classified service and the administrative and management functions of the office.

14 **B.** The Council Administrator shall have other duties as follows:

- 15 1. Keep the minutes of its meetings.
- 16 2. Maintain the Council's Journal.
- 17 3. Prepare an agenda of meetings of the County Council.
- 18 4. Give notice of meetings and hearings to the Council and others as required by the  
19 Charter or other laws applicable to the County.
- 20 5. Perform such other duties as the Council may direct.

## 21 **VI. LEGISLATIVE ENACTMENTS**

22 **A. GENERAL.** The Council shall enact no law except by bill. All bills shall be styled: "Be  
23 it enacted by the County Council of Harford County, Maryland." The Subject of every law  
24 shall be described in its title and the title shall be used when giving public notice of hearings

1 on proposed legislation. Every law, except the budget law and supplementary  
2 appropriation laws, shall embrace but one subject. No law or section of law shall be revived  
3 or amended by reference to its title only.

4 **B. NUMBERING OF SECTIONS.** Each section of a bill shall be numbered in Arabic  
5 numerals. Subsections as appropriate shall be given appropriate letters or Arabic numerals.

6 **C. NUMBERING OF LINES.** The lines of the text of a bill shall be consecutively numbered  
7 commencing at the top line of each page.

8 **D. AMENDMENTS OF EXISTING LAWS.** A bill for amendment of a section of an  
9 existing law may amend the section "To read as follows" repeating in full the sections as  
10 proposed to be amended; or may strike out, insert or strike out and insert without repeating  
11 in full the section proposed to be amended.

12 **E. FORM OF BILLS.** Each bill shall have printed on the first page thereof the form as  
13 provided in Appendix A. The Council Administrator shall provide a page to be inserted in  
14 a bill after its enactment as provided in Appendix B.

15 **F. FINAL ACTION.** The Council Administrator shall place on the back cover of each  
16 original bill an appropriate description of the final disposition using the format as provided  
17 in Appendix C.

18 **G. AMENDMENTS TO BILLS.** Amendments shall be appended to the bill introduced on  
19 a plain page in a printed form stating: The bill that is to be amended, the member of the  
20 Council introducing the amendment, the legislative session day number, the date and the  
21 amendment number, and at the bottom appropriate notations of adoption or rejection shall  
22 be typed thereon by the Council Administrator.

23 **VII. COUNCIL AGENDA**

1       **A. GENERAL.** The President of the Council shall ensure that an appropriate agenda is  
2       prepared for each Council Session by the Council Administrator, to include all matters  
3       requested by a member of the Council.

4       **B. PREPARATION.** All requests shall be submitted to the Council Administrator for the  
5       consideration of the Council President no later than 4:00 P.M on Wednesday preceding the  
6       Council session, and the Council Administrator shall prepare the agenda for distribution to  
7       the public and to the Council no later than 2:00 P.M. on the Friday preceding the session.  
8       The Agenda shall not be thereafter amended for further matters to be heard except upon  
9       the approval of the President of the Council, who, if necessary, shall cause the Council  
10      Administrator to prepare a supplementary agenda prior to the Council session.

## 11   **VIII. CONSIDERATION OF BILLS**

### 12   **A. GENERAL.**

13       1. Bills may be introduced by any member at any legislative session on the call for the  
14       introduction of bills. A bill as introduced shall be printed, in the form provided for  
15       above. No bill shall be received for introduction unless the Council Administrator has  
16       certified on the copy introduced that 7 copies are immediately available for distribution  
17       to the public and the press. On introduction, the Council Administrator shall make  
18       copies available for distribution to the public and the press upon request and shall post  
19       1 copy on the Council website within 24 hours of the bill's introduction and distribute  
20       1 copy to each member.

21       2. Any bill or other measure, including a motion or resolution to be introduced at the  
22       request of the County Executive, shall be introduced by the President of the Council.

1           3. A bill may be introduced by a Council Member on behalf of a constituent. On such  
2           occasion, the bill shall be designated as introduced by "Council Member\_\_\_\_\_ at  
3           the request of \_\_\_\_\_."

4           **B. REPRINTING OF BILLS.** If a bill is amended before enactment, the bill shall not be  
5           enacted until it is reprinted or reproduced as amended.

6           **C. READING OF BILLS.** There shall be a first reading and a final reading of each bill. On  
7           first reading a bill shall be read by number and title only. When introduced and on a final  
8           reading, upon request of any member, a bill shall be read once section by section for  
9           amendment before vote on final passage; and, if amended, upon request of any member,  
10          shall be read as amended before vote on final passage.

11          **D. CALL OF BILLS FOR FINAL READING.** Only bills eligible for passage under the  
12          applicable provisions of the Charter shall be called for final reading by a Council member.  
13          After vote on final passage, no bill whether enacted or failed shall be further considered  
14          during the same legislative session except by consent of a majority of the members present.

15          **E. ENROLLMENT OF BILLS.** After passage of a bill, the Council Administrator shall  
16          present to the President an enrolled copy in printed form that the President shall lay before  
17          the Council. Upon motion duly carried the enrolled copy shall be read for correction of  
18          errors. The President, in legislative session, shall certify the enrolled copy as being the text  
19          as finally passed. The copy so certified by the President shall be conclusive evidence of  
20          the bill enacted. After certification by the President, the enrolled bill shall be forwarded to  
21          the County Executive for further action. After an enrolled bill is returned to the Council  
22          by the County Executive, the bill shall be maintained by the Council Administrator in an  
23          official file of the County Council. Upon enrolling, the Council Administrator shall have

1 authority to correct errors in section references and numbers and references to existing law,  
2 capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar, headings, and similar matters.

3 **F. VETOES.** When a veto message of the County Executive is received by the Council  
4 Administrator, its date and time of receipt shall be noted on the front of the message and  
5 immediately enter the receipt and text of the veto message in the Journal. The Council  
6 Administrator shall ensure that the members of the Council are provided copies of the  
7 message and that the vetoed bill is specially set for reconsideration at the legislative session  
8 day next following the receipt of the veto message.

9 **IX. OTHER COUNCIL BUSINESS**

10 **A. RESOLUTIONS.** A member may prepare, prior to the meeting of the Council, a printed  
11 form of a resolution and may deliver it to the Council Administrator prior to the session  
12 with copies for distribution to the public, press, and the Council. With respect to all  
13 resolutions, the Council Administrator shall ascribe a number thereto which shall be  
14 sequential throughout the Council year.

15 **B. ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES FOR INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS.** In  
16 addition to resolutions introduced in accordance with paragraph A, resolutions may be  
17 introduced during the course of debate or discussion and may be acted upon by the Council  
18 promptly. Upon its introduction or action thereon, it may be laid over until a later date. If  
19 a resolution shall be acted upon at the time of its introduction, it shall be given a number  
20 by the Council Administrator and copies thereof shall be made available to the public, the  
21 press, and the Council at or prior to the time of the next session. If action on any such  
22 resolution shall be laid over to a further hearing, the resolution shall be printed,

1 photocopied or typewritten and distributed in the same manner as resolutions introduced  
2 in accordance with paragraph A of this article.

3 **C. PROCEDURES FOR BOND RESOLUTIONS.** The Council shall authorize the issuance  
4 of revenue bonds by passage of an appropriate bond resolution. Issuance of General  
5 Obligation Bonds in which the County pledges its full faith and credit shall not be  
6 authorized except by bill and shall not be governed by this section. The bond resolution  
7 shall:

- 8 1. Specify and describe the facility or facilities;
- 9 2. Generally describe the public purpose to be served and the financing  
10 transaction to be accomplished;
- 11 3. Specify the maximum principle amount of the bonds that may be issued;  
12 and
- 13 4. Impose any terms or conditions on the issuance and sale of bonds  
14 deemed appropriate.

15 In addition, the bond resolution may authorize the County Executive, by executive  
16 order or otherwise, to specify, prescribe, determine, provide for or approve such matters,  
17 details, forms, documents, or procedures the County Executive deems appropriate to the  
18 authorization, sale, security, issuance, delivery or payment of or for the bonds, including,  
19 without limitation, creation of security for the bonds and provision for the administration  
20 of bond issues such as trust or other agreements with banks or trust companies regarding  
21 any counter signature or delivery of bonds or security for bonds.

22 The procedure for adoption of a bond resolution shall be substantially as follows:

- 23 1. The bond resolution may be introduced by any member of the Council  
24 at any legislative session on the call for bond resolutions. On

1 introduction, the Council Administrator shall make copies available for  
2 distribution to the public, the press and members of the Council, and,  
3 within 24 hours after introduction, shall post a copy thereof, together  
4 with notice of the time and place of hearing on the bond resolution, on  
5 the Council website.

6 2. Within 24 hours following the introduction of a bond resolution, the  
7 Council shall schedule a public hearing on the bond resolution, which  
8 hearing shall not be less than 14 calendar days after publication of the  
9 hearing notice. Public notice of hearings on the bond resolution shall  
10 be published in at least 1 newspaper published in the county. The public  
11 hearing on a bond resolution may, but need not be, held on legislative  
12 session day and may be adjourned from time to time.

13 3. There shall be a first reading and a final reading of each bond resolution.  
14 On first reading, a bond resolution shall be read by number and title  
15 only. When introduced and on a final reading, a bond resolution shall,  
16 at the request of any member, be read once (and only once) section by  
17 section for amendment before vote on adoption, and, if amended, shall  
18 at the request of any member, be read as amended before vote on  
19 adoption. Only bond resolutions eligible for adoption under the  
20 applicable provisions of the Charter and these rules shall be called for  
21 final reading by a Council member.

22 4. After the public hearing, a bond resolution may be adopted on a  
23 legislative session day with or without amendment, except, that if a  
24 bond resolution is amended before adoption the bond resolution shall



not be adopted until it is reprinted or reproduced as amended. No bond resolution shall be adopted except by affirmative vote of at least 4 members of the Council.

5. The Council may reject any bond resolution on its introduction without a public hearing by an affirmative vote of at least 5 members of the Council. Any bond resolution not enacted within 45 business days after its introduction shall be considered to have failed.

No bond resolution may be introduced until the County shall have received, in form acceptable to Counsel to the County, a letter from the facility applicant unconditionally committing the facility applicant to indemnify and hold harmless the County from any claims or losses arising out of the County's participation in the bond transaction, and further committing the facility applicant to pay all expenses of the County in issuing the bonds, including the payment of printing and advertising costs and the fees of bond counsel, regardless of whether the proposed transaction is consummated or not.

The adoption of a bond resolution shall not be subject to referendum, and the bond resolution shall be effective immediately upon approval of the Council.

**D. MOTIONS.** In addition to the enactment of bills and resolutions as herein provided, the Council may act upon the motion of any member.

**E. CONSIDERATION OF EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS.** Whenever the County Executive shall nominate any person for appointment as the Director of Administration, the head of an agency or Deputy Director of an agency in the Executive Branch, such nomination may be laid over prior to action by the Council.

**F. CONFIRMATION OF EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS.** The Council may hold at least one public hearing with respect to an Executive nomination of the Director of

1 Administration, the head of an agency, or Deputy Director of an agency of the Executive  
2 Branch, and may invite the nominee to be present at the public hearing. The Council may  
3 request an opinion from the Council Attorney with respect to whether or not the nominee  
4 meets the requirements of the Charter. At the public hearing, if the nominee chooses to  
5 appear, only members of the Council shall interview the nominee. Failure of the nominee  
6 to appear at such a public hearing shall not disqualify a nominee with respect to  
7 confirmation of the Council, but the Council may consider such failure to appear as a factor  
8 in determining the qualifications of the nominee, but the weight to be given such factor  
9 shall depend upon all other qualifications of the nominee.

10 **G. PROCEDURE FOR ENTERING CONTRACTS.** Whenever the Council is to enter into  
11 a contract, the Council shall first vote to select a qualified party or expert witness to perform  
12 the services required under the contract. After selecting a qualified party or expert witness,  
13 the Council shall vote on the specific terms to be included in the contract. Once the terms  
14 of the contract are established, the President of the Council shall have the authority to sign  
15 the contract on behalf of the Council.

16 **H. PROCEDURE FOR NOTIFICATION OF COUNCIL ACTION.** Whenever the  
17 President of the Council is directed by the Council to communicate written notice of  
18 official Council action, the President shall have the approval of a majority of the Council  
19 as to the language contained in the communication. The approval of the language of the  
20 communication shall be obtained by the President prior to the release of the communication  
21 to any person other than a Council Member or a member of the Council Staff.

## 22 **X. INTRODUCTION OF PETITIONS**

23 **A. GENERAL.** Petitions may be presented to the Council by any citizen. When a petition is  
24 presented, it shall be certified by the Council Administrator and given a number and shall

1 be maintained on file. Copies of petitions shall be made available to the Council, the  
2 public, and the press upon payment of a reproduction fee. If the petition raises an issue  
3 requiring notice, the Council Administrator shall provide for the notice as required by law.

4 **B. CHARTER AMENDMENT AND REFERENDUM PETITIONS.**

- 5 1. Amendments to the Harford County Charter ("the Charter") may be proposed either (1)  
6 by resolution or legislative act of the County Council or (2) by petition signed by not  
7 less than 20 percent of the registered voters of the County, provided, in any case, that  
8 10,000 signatures shall be sufficient to complete the petition. (Md. Constitution,  
9 Article XI-A, Section 5; Charter, Section 905)
- 10 2. "Signature" means the signature of the registered voter. An affidavit attests to the fact  
11 that the signature is authentic and the person signing is a registered voter. One affidavit  
12 per page may attest to any number of signatures on a petition. The word "petition"  
13 means one or more sheets written or printed, or partly written and partly printed. (Md.  
14 Constitution, Article XI-A, Section 7)
- 15 3. The petition for charter amendment must be filed with the President of the County  
16 Council on or before the end of the business day on the second Monday in August in  
17 which a congressional or general election is held. (Md. Constitution, Article XI-A,  
18 Section 5; Charter Section 905). Upon receipt of the petition for charter amendment,  
19 after determining that the petition is in conformance with the requirements of law, the  
20 Council shall dispatch the petition to the local Board of Elections within 24 hours.
- 21 4. The President of the County Council shall have the proposed Charter amendment, as  
22 well as any proposed by the County Council, published once a week for five (5)  
23 successive weeks prior to the election in at least 1 local newspaper. (Charter, Section  
24 905, Md. Constitution, Article XI-A, Section 5). The County Council Attorney is

1 required to prepare and certify to the local Election Board the local question that will  
2 appear on the ballot along with all information required pursuant to Title 7 of the  
3 Election Law Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, as amended.

- 4 5. The proposed charter amendment is then submitted to the voters at the next  
5 congressional or general election. If approved by majority vote, the proposed charter  
6 amendment is adopted and becomes effective 30 days after the election. (Charter,  
7 Section 905)

### 8 **C. PETITION FOR REFERENDUM**

9 Local Government Article, Section 9-205 of the Annotated Code of Maryland authorizes  
10 charter counties to reserve to themselves the power of referendum over local legislation.  
11 Referendum is the method of submitting certain laws enacted by the County Council to a  
12 direct vote by all registered county voters to determine whether the laws will be repealed  
13 or approved. Section 9-205 also mandates that the County Charter or local laws shall  
14 provide adequate detail as to the time, notice and form for petitioning local laws to  
15 referendum.

- 16 1. Any law enacted by the County Council may be petitioned to referendum except (1) a  
17 law imposing a tax, (2) a law appropriating funds for current expenses of the County  
18 government, (3) a law establishing or re-establishing Councilmanic districts, and (4)  
19 decisions of the County Council in zoning cases involving special exceptions,  
20 variances, piecemeal rezoning and other zoning decisions. (Charter, Section 220)
- 21 2. A petition for referendum, in the form prescribed by law, must be signed by 5 percent  
22 of the qualified voters of the County computed as of the date of the previous general  
23 election. The petition must be filed with the Board of Elections ("the Election Board")  
24 within 60 calendar days from the date the bill becomes law. (Charter, Section 220)

1           3. Pursuant to Section 7-103 of the Election Law Article of the Annotated Code of  
2           Maryland, as amended, the County Council Attorney shall prepare and certify to the  
3           local Election Board the local question that will appear on the ballot along with all  
4           information required pursuant to Title 7 of the Election Law Article of the Annotated  
5           Code of Maryland, as amended.

6           4. The initial notice that a County law is to be the subject of a referendum vote shall be  
7           published once a week for five (5) successive weeks prior to the election in at least 1  
8           local newspaper. A majority of votes cast by the qualified voters of Harford County at  
9           the next congressional election is necessary to repeal a law petitioned to referendum.

#### 10       **XI. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

11       **A. GENERAL.** The rules in this section apply to public hearings of the Council.

12       **B. PRELIMINARY ACTION.** Upon convening the hearing, the presiding officer shall give  
13       a brief explanation of the purpose of the hearing and shall cause to be presented any  
14       information or data which is required prior to public discussion comments.

15       **C. QUESTIONS BY THE COUNCIL.** Any member of the Council, upon recognition by  
16       the presiding officer, may question any speaker or witness.

17       **D. QUESTIONS ADDRESSED TO COUNCIL MEMBERS.** A Council member may be  
18       questioned by a citizen only with the consent of that Council member and the Council  
19       President or presiding officer. A member of the Council may not initiate discussion or  
20       engage in debate without the consent of the President or presiding officer.

21       **E.** When amendments to a measure requiring a public hearing are under consideration and the  
22       hearing has already been held, the presiding officer may allow up to 5 minutes during the  
23       Legislative Session for public comment, using the procedure outlined above.

## **XII. SUSPENSION AND AMENDMENT OF RULES**

**A.** Except as otherwise provided, these rules may be suspended in whole or in part with the general consent of the Council members present at the meeting, subject to the requirements of the Charter or other law.

**B.** These rules may be amended by a majority vote of the Council in office at any regular session on notice of the amendment proposed at a session at least seven (7) calendar days prior.

**C.** These rules shall continue in effect from year to year without necessity for re-adoption.

## **XIII. PROCLAMATIONS**

### **A. DEFINITIONS FOR PROCLAMATION, CERTIFICATE, LEGISLATOR CITATION AND LETTER OF RECOGNITION:**

1. Proclamation – a formal public statement; formal act of proclaiming; giving public notice; an act that formally declares to the general public that the government has acted in a particular way; document published to the inhabitants of an area setting forth the basis of authority and scope of activities of a given area and which defines obligations, liabilities, duties and rights of the populations affected; used to express the public nomination made of anyone to a high office; declaration that something is about to be done.

2. Certificate – Document attesting to the truth of the facts stated; to provide official information; formal declaration that documents a fact of relevance; to give as an honor or reward; to grant authorization.

3. Legislator Citation – Recognizing individual/organization on honorary accomplishment at the discretion of a Council Member.

4. Letter of Recognition – Recognizing individual/organization on a personal honorary

1 accomplishment at the discretion of a Council Member.

2 **B. Recognition requests may originate from organizations, citizens, other government**  
3 **agencies, members of the County Council, and the County Executive.**

4 **C. Requester or council staff will prepare an intake form with the following information:**

5 Date of request

6 Presentation Date

7 Presentation Location

8 Presentation Time

9 Person/organization to receive recognition

10 Honoree's email, address and phone number

11 Must include three or four short descriptive sentences to be used in the text of the  
12 recognition.

13 Name of Person and/or group making request

14 Requester's email, address and phone number

15 Council District of Honoree's residence

16 **D. REQUEST FOR RECOGNITIONS** will be assigned based on the following guidelines:

17 1. The Council Administrator shall review all requests for recognitions to be presented at  
18 Council Meetings.

19 2. Recognitions will be assigned to the Council Member who represents the district or  
20 who is the official liaison to the individual, committee or organization being  
21 recognized, unless requester makes special request. In these cases, Council Staff must  
22 inform the council member who represents the individual, committee or organization,  
23 before honoring the specific request. Council President always has the first option of  
24 presenting the recognition or deferring to another council member.

1       **E.**     Council Staff will keep a log of all requests for recognitions for tracking status. This  
2             log will be available to staff and council members for review.

3       1. When a recognition is prepared with all council members signature, an email must be  
4             sent to:

5             A. Council President

6             B. Council Members

7             C. Legislative Aides

8             D. Council Administrator

9       2. Date of notification must be recorded on the tracking log.

10      **F.**     Council Staff will process the requests as follows:

11       1. Make sure intake form has complete information

12       2. Update the tracking log on the shared drive

13       3. Create folder on the shared drive for request and other documents

14       4. Draft recognition

15       5. Have council staff review draft recognition and sign off as reviewer on tracking log

16       6. Prepare the final recognition for presentation

17      **G.**     When a recognition is requested for presentation within less than three weeks, Council Staff  
18             has the authority to decline the request.



1 FORM:

2 **HARFORD COUNTY COUNCIL**

3 **RECOGNITION**

4 **INFORMATION INTAKE FORM**

5 **AFTER COMPLETION PLEASE EMAIL FORM TO: Council@harfordcountycouncil.com**

6 Date of request: \_\_\_\_\_ Presentation Date \_\_\_\_\_

7 Presentation Location: \_\_\_\_\_

8 Presentation time: \_\_\_\_\_

9 Person or group to receive **RECOGNITION** \_\_\_\_\_

10 **Address of Honoree** \_\_\_\_\_

11 **Person and or Group making request** \_\_\_\_\_

12 **EMAIL ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

13 **Address of Requester** \_\_\_\_\_

14 Phone number for requester \_\_\_\_\_

15 **3-4 short descriptive sentences to be included in the text of the recognition**

16 \_\_\_\_\_

17 \_\_\_\_\_

18 \_\_\_\_\_

19 \_\_\_\_\_

20 \_\_\_\_\_

21 \_\_\_\_\_

22 **Request taken by:** \_\_\_\_\_

1 \*\*\*\*\*

2 (For Council Staff)

3

4 Council District: \_\_\_\_\_ Other affiliations: \_\_\_\_\_

5

6 Assigned to: \_\_\_\_\_ Deferred to: \_\_\_\_\_

7 \_\_\_\_\_

#### **XIV. COUNCIL EXPENDITURES**

**A.** Basic office supplies are eligible expenses. Personalized or customized items that are decorative or aesthetic in nature only are not eligible expenses.

**B.** In addition to the eligible expenses set forth in Paragraph A, eligible, reimbursable expenses for members of the County Council or designated staff would also include expenses related to functions that are related directly to the business of an organization, such as a monthly luncheon meeting of the organization, annual banquet, or awards banquets, no matter how many members of the County Council attend the function.

**C.** Expenses that are not eligible for reimbursement for members of the County Council would include strictly social functions, golf tournaments, crab feasts, etc., and fundraising functions, such as charity events.

**D.** Council Members are included in the County's Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) and National Association of Counties (NACo) memberships. Registration, events, and meals included with the Maryland and National Association of Counties conferences are eligible for reimbursement, and any meals beyond those provided with the registration are not eligible. Lodging for the conferences is limited to the night prior to the start of the conference and only the dates necessary to attend the scheduled conference events. Any extracurricular activities, events, or receptions beyond those which are included with the normal registrations are not eligible for reimbursement. A MACo and NACo representative and alternate shall be voted on and appointed by the Council during the first meeting in December. All Council Members shall be reimbursed for all eligible expenses to attend the summer and winter MACo conferences. Only the eligible expenses of the Council appointed NACo representative to attend the NACo conference shall be reimbursed. In the event the Council appointed NACo representative cannot attend the

1 NACo conference, the eligible expenses of the Council appointed alternate to attend the  
2 conference shall be reimbursed. However, attendance at the NACo conference by either  
3 the Council appointed representative or alternate is subject to Council vote and approval.