

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 of the month of May, except November of a Council election year and 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 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
16 and nays shall be recorded in the Journal. When a roll is called, the members of the
17 Council shall be called in order of the districts which they represent; the President of the
18 Council shall be called first.

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

3 **F.** The Vice-President shall be the presiding officer in the absence of the President. In the
4 absence of both the President and Vice-President, the presiding officer will be the next
5 preceding Vice-President present and should none be present, the members of the
6 Council present shall select a member to preside at that meeting.

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

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

14 **I. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

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

1 until the appropriate time and then after recognition by the presiding officer of the
2 Council.

3 2. Members of the public who want to address the Council must sign up in advance. A
4 person can sign up until 5:00 P.M. on the day of the public hearing of the Council
5 either by calling or by sending an email to the Council office. A person may also
6 register to speak at the County Council Chamber foyer starting 30 minutes prior to the
7 start of a scheduled public hearing or session. A person who wants to speak at a
8 public hearing can register until the start of the first scheduled hearing. Persons who
9 want to speak during Agenda Item #17 Comments and Input from Attending Citizens
10 can register until the conclusion of Agenda Item #14 New Business. Testimony may
11 also be submitted for the record in writing.

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

1 in conduct of this nature or who violates any other regulation concerning the conduct
2 of public meetings to be removed and may request police assistance to restore order.

3 8. Written testimony may be submitted at any time following the introduction of
4 legislation. A copy of written testimony shall be maintained on file for the official
5 record. All written testimony received shall be disseminated to all members of the
6 Council and shall be made available for inspection by any member of the public
7 during normal business hours.

8 9. Any member of the public may obtain copies of bills and shall be charged an
9 appropriate reproduction charge.

10 10. No food or drinks shall be permitted in the Council Chambers.

11 **J. CALENDAR OF SESSIONS.** The Council Administrator shall prepare and maintain a
12 calendar which shall list all sessions, whether official legislative or non-legislative
13 sessions, as well as unofficial meetings of the Council wherein any business of the
14 Council is to be discussed or transacted, and such calendar shall at all times be available
15 for inspection by the public and the press, and all such sessions and meetings shall be
16 public.

17 **K. COMMITTEES.**

18 1. The Council shall have authority to designate one or more of its members as a
19 committee for the purpose of investigating or collecting data necessary to conduct the
20 business and affairs of the Council. The committee shall continue in existence until
21 terminated by a majority of the Council. All committees shall be required to report to
22 the Council.

23 2. The Council shall have a standing Personnel Committee, which shall consist of the
24 President and two other Council Members chosen annually by the Council. Unless all

1 members of the Council are members of the same political party, not more than two
2 members of the committee may be members of the same political party. The
3 committee shall annually conduct a performance evaluation of each Council
4 employee in the exempt service, each contractual employee of the Council, and the
5 County Health Officer. Each evaluation shall be in the form of a proposed evaluation
6 which the Council shall adopt or reject. Each evaluation, whether proposed, adopted,
7 or rejected, shall be a confidential personnel record available for inspection only in
8 accordance with the General Provisions Article, §4-311 of the Annotated Code of
9 Maryland.

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

14 **II. SESSIONS - ORDER OF BUSINESS**

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

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

1 10. Introduction and Consideration of Amendments

2 11. Call for Final Reading of Bills

3 12. Enrollment of Bills

4 13. Unfinished Business

5 14. New Business

6 15. Business from the President

7 16. Business from Council Members

8 17. Comments and Input from Attending Citizens

9 18. Adjournment

10 **B.** Messages from the Executive may be received at any time, as accepted by the Council.

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

13 **III. SESSIONS - MOTIONS**

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

18 **B. PROCEDURES IN DEBATE.**

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

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

- 3 **2.** Explanation of Vote. Any member shall have the right to explain his/her vote prior
4 to 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
9 from District A, or B, or C, or D, or E, or F. Insulting or inflammatory language shall
10 at all times, be avoided in addressing other members of the Council or in referring to
11 any officer or employee of County Government. The President, voluntarily or upon
12 the motion of the Council, may censure any Council member for a violation of this
13 Rule.

14 **IV. COUNCIL JOURNAL**

- 15 **A.** A brief accurate daily Journal of the proceedings and minutes of the Council shall be
16 maintained by the Council Administrator. The Journal or a copy of the Journal shall be
17 opened to public inspection during the normal working days of the County Government.

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

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

1 matter shall be entered in the Journal. Every question or motion presented to the Council
2 for decision, and the title of every resolution or other legislative matter considered shall
3 be entered in the Journal.

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

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

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

11 **V. COUNCIL ADMINISTRATOR**

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

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

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

1 **VI. LEGISLATIVE ENACTMENTS**

2 **A. GENERAL.** The Council shall enact no law except by bill. All bills shall be styled:
3 "Be it enacted by the County Council of Harford County, Maryland." The Subject of
4 every law shall be described in its title and the title shall be used when giving public
5 notice of hearings on proposed legislation. Every law, except the budget law and
6 supplementary appropriation laws, shall embrace but one subject. No law or section of
7 law shall be revived or amended by reference to its title only.

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

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

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

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

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

23 **G. AMENDMENTS TO BILLS.** Amendments shall be appended to the bill introduced on
24 a plain page in a printed form stating: The bill that is to be amended, the member of the

1 Council introducing the amendment, the legislative session day number, the date and the
2 amendment number, and at the bottom appropriate notations of adoption or rejection shall
3 be typed thereon by the Council Administrator.

4 **VII. COUNCIL AGENDA**

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

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

15 **VIII. CONSIDERATION OF BILLS**

16 **A. GENERAL.**

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

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

3 3. A bill may be introduced by a Council Member on behalf of a constituent. On such
4 occasion, the bill shall be designated as introduced by "Council Member_____ at
5 the request of _____."

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

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

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

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

1 is returned to the Council by the County Executive, the bill shall be maintained by the
2 Council Administrator in an official file of the County Council. Upon enrolling, the
3 Council Administrator shall have authority to correct errors in section references and
4 numbers and references to existing law, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar,
5 headings, and similar matters.

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

12 **IX. OTHER COUNCIL BUSINESS**

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

18 **B. ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES FOR INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS.** In
19 addition to resolutions introduced in accordance with paragraph A, resolutions may be
20 introduced during the course of debate or discussion and may be acted upon by the
21 Council promptly. Upon its introduction or action thereon, it may be laid over until a
22 later date. If a resolution shall be acted upon at the time of its introduction, it shall be
23 given a number by the Council Administrator and 12 copies thereof shall be made
24 available to the public, the press, and the Council at or prior to the time of the next

1 session. If action on any such resolution shall be laid over to a further hearing, the
2 resolution shall be printed, photocopied or typewritten and distributed in the same
3 manner as resolutions introduced in accordance with paragraph A of this article.

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

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

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

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

- 1 1. The bond resolution may be introduced by any member of the Council
2 at any legislative session on the call for bond resolutions. On
3 introduction, the Council Administrator shall make copies available
4 for distribution to the public, the press and members of the Council,
5 and, within 24 hours after introduction, shall post a copy thereof,
6 together with notice of the time and place of hearing on the bond
7 resolution, on the Council website.
- 8 2. Within 24 hours following the introduction of a bond resolution, the
9 Council shall schedule a public hearing on the bond resolution, which
10 hearing shall not be less than 14 calendar days after publication of the
11 hearing notice. Public notice of hearings on the bond resolution shall
12 be published in at least 1 newspaper published in the county. The
13 public hearing on a bond resolution may, but need not be, held on
14 legislative session day and may be adjourned from time to time.
- 15 3. There shall be a first reading and a final reading of each bond
16 resolution. On first reading, a bond resolution shall be read by number
17 and title only. When introduced and on a final reading, a bond
18 resolution shall, at the request of any member, be read once (and only
19 once) section by section for amendment before vote on adoption, and,
20 if amended, shall at the request of any member, be read as amended
21 before vote on adoption. Only bond resolutions eligible for adoption
22 under the applicable provisions of the Charter and these rules shall be
23 called for final reading by a Council member.

1 4. After the public hearing, a bond resolution may be adopted on a
2 legislative session day with or without amendment, except, that if a
3 bond resolution is amended before adoption the bond resolution shall
4 not be adopted until it is reprinted or reproduced as amended. No
5 bond resolution shall be adopted except by affirmative vote of at least
6 4 members of the Council.

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

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

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

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

22 **E. CONSIDERATION OF EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS.** Whenever the County
23 Executive shall nominate any person for appointment as the Director of Administration,
24 the head of an agency or Deputy Director of an agency in the Executive Branch, such

1 nomination shall lay over for at least 1 week prior to action by the Council unless
2 suspended in accordance with the provisions of Article XII.

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

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

20 **H. PROCEDURE FOR NOTIFICATION OF COUNCIL ACTION.** Whenever the
21 President of the Council is directed by the Council to communicate written notice of
22 official Council action, the President shall have the approval of a majority of the Council
23 as to the language contained in the communication. The approval of the language of the
24 communication shall be obtained by the President prior to the release of the

1 communication to any person other than a Council Member or a member of the Council
2 Staff.

3 **X. INTRODUCTION OF PETITIONS**

4 **A. GENERAL.** Petitions may be presented to the Council by any citizen. When a petition
5 is presented, it shall be certified by the Council Administrator and given a number and
6 shall be maintained on file. Copies of petitions shall be made available to the Council,
7 the public, and the press upon payment of a reproduction fee. If the petition raises an
8 issue requiring notice, the Council Administrator shall provide for the notice as required
9 by law.

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

11 1. Amendments to the Harford County Charter ("the Charter") may be proposed either
12 (1) by resolution or legislative act of the County Council or (2) by petition signed by
13 not less than 20 percent of the registered voters of the County, provided, in any case,
14 that 10,000 signatures shall be sufficient to complete the petition. (Md. Constitution,
15 Article XI-A, Section 5; Charter, Section 905)

16 2. "Signature" means the signature of the registered voter. An affidavit attests to the fact
17 that the signature is authentic and the person signing is a registered voter. One
18 affidavit per page may attest to any number of signatures on a petition. The word
19 "petition" means one or more sheets written or printed, or partly written and partly
20 printed. (Md. Constitution, Article XI-A, Section 7)

21 3. The petition for charter amendment must be filed with the President of the County
22 Council on or before the end of the business day on the second Monday in August in
23 which a congressional or general election is held. (Md. Constitution, Article XI-A,
24 Section 5; Charter Section 905). Upon receipt of the petition for charter amendment,

1 after determining that the petition is in conformance with the requirements of law, the
2 Council shall dispatch the petition to the local Board of Elections within 24 hours.

- 3 4. The President of the County Council shall have the proposed Charter amendment, as
4 well as any proposed by the County Council, published once a week for five (5)
5 successive weeks prior to the election in at least 1 local newspaper. (Charter, Section
6 905, Md. Constitution, Article XI-A, Section 5). The County Council Attorney is
7 required to prepare and certify to the local Election Board the form in which local
8 questions appear on the ballot.
- 9 5. The proposed charter amendment is then submitted to the voters at the next
10 congressional or general election. If approved by majority vote, the proposed charter
11 amendment is adopted and becomes effective 30 days after the election. (Charter,
12 Section 905)

13 **C. PETITION FOR REFERENDUM**

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

- 21 1. Any law enacted by the County Council may be petitioned to referendum except (1) a
22 law imposing a tax, (2) a law appropriating funds for current expenses of the County
23 government, (3) a law establishing or re-establishing Councilmanic districts, and (4)

1 decisions of the County Council in zoning cases involving special exceptions,
2 variances, piecemeal rezoning and other zoning decisions. (Charter, Section 220)

- 3 2. A petition for referendum, in the form prescribed by law, must be signed by 5 percent
4 of the qualified voters of the County computed as of the date of the previous general
5 election. The petition must be filed with the Board of Elections ("the Election
6 Board") within 60 calendar days from the date the bill becomes law. (Charter,
7 Section 220)
- 8 3. Pursuant to Election Law Article, Section 7-103 of the Annotated Code of Maryland,
9 the County Council must certify to the Election Board all questions of local concern,
10 including referenda, by the third Monday in August. Also, the County Council
11 Attorney shall prepare and certify to the Election Board the form, i.e., bill title or
12 summary, in which the local questions shall appear on the ballot
- 13 4. The initial notice that a County law is to be the subject of a referendum vote shall not
14 be less than 30 days before the election. A majority of votes cast by the qualified
15 voters of Harford County at the next congressional election is necessary to repeal a
16 law petitioned to referendum.

17 **XI. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

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

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

22 **C. OATH.** The following oath, where required, shall be administered to a witness: "Do
23 you solemnly swear or affirm under the penalties of perjury that the responses given and
24 statements made will be the whole truth and nothing but the truth?"

1 **D. QUESTIONS BY THE COUNCIL.** Any member of the Council, upon recognition by
2 the presiding officer, may question any speaker or witness.

3 **E. QUESTIONS ADDRESSED TO COUNCIL MEMBERS.** A Council member may be
4 questioned by a citizen only with the consent of the Council President or presiding
5 officer. A member of the Council may not initiate discussion or engage in debate without
6 the consent of the President or presiding officer.

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

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

11 **A.** Except as otherwise provided, these rules may be suspended in whole or in part by a vote
12 of two-thirds of the Council members present at the meeting, subject to the requirements
13 of the Charter or other law.

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

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

18 **XIII. PROCLAMATIONS**

19 **A. DEFINITIONS FOR PROCLAMATION, CERTIFICATE, LEGISLATOR** 20 **CITATION AND LETTER OF RECOGNITION:**

- 21 1. Proclamation – a formal public statement; formal act of proclaiming; giving public
22 notice; an act that formally declares to the general public that the government has
23 acted in a particular way; document published to the inhabitants of an area setting
24 forth the basis of authority and scope of activities of a given area and which defines

1 obligations, liabilities, duties and rights of the populations affected; used to express
2 the public nomination made of anyone to a high office; declaration that something is
3 about to be done.

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

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

9 4. Letter of Recognition – Recognizing individual/organization on a personal honorary
10 accomplishment at the discretion of a Council Member.

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

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

14 Date of request

15 Presentation Date

16 Presentation Location

17 Presentation Time

18 Person/organization to receive recognition

19 Honoree’s email, address and phone number

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

22 Name of Person and/or group making request

23 Requester’s email, address and phone number

24

1 Council District of Honoree's residence

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

- 3 1. The Council Administrator shall review all requests for recognitions to be presented
4 at Council Meetings.
- 5 2. Recognitions will be assigned to the Council Member who represents the district or
6 who is the official liaison to the individual, committee or organization being
7 recognized, unless requester makes special request. In these cases, Council Staff
8 must inform the council member who represents the individual, committee or
9 organization, before honoring the specific request. Council President always has the
10 first option of presenting the recognition or deferring to another council member.

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

- 13 1. When a recognition is prepared with all council members signature, an email must be
14 sent to:
- 15 A. Council President
 - 16 B. Council Members
 - 17 C. Legislative Aides
 - 18 D. Council Administrator
- 19 2. Date of notification must be recorded on the tracking log.

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

- 21 1. Make sure intake form has complete information
- 22 2. Update the tracking log on the shared drive
- 23 3. Create folder on the shared drive for request and other documents
- 24 4. Draft recognition

- 1 5. Have council staff review draft recognition and sign off as reviewer on tracking log
- 2 6. Prepare the final recognition for presentation
- 3 **G.** When a recognition is requested for presentation within less than three weeks, Council
- 4 Staff has the authority to decline the request.

1 FORM:

2 HARFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

3
4 RECOGNITION

5
6
7 INFORMATION INTAKE FORM

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

9 Date of request: _____ Presentation Date _____

10 Presentation Location: _____

11 Presentation time: _____

12 Person or group to receive RECOGNITION _____

13 Address of Honoree _____

14 Person and or Group making request _____

15 EMAIL ADDRESS _____

16 Address of Requester _____

17 Phone number for requester _____

18 3-4 short descriptive sentences to be included in the text of the recognition

19 _____

20 _____

21 _____

22 _____

23 _____

24 _____

25 Request taken by: _____

1
2
3
4
5
6
7

(For Council Staff)

Council District: _____ Other affiliations: _____

Assigned to: _____ Deferred to: _____

1 **XIV. COUNCIL EXPENDITURES**

2 **A.** In addition to expenses covered by Administrative Policy 1300-40, acceptable
3 reimbursable expenses for members of the County Council would include functions that
4 are related directly to the business of an organization, such as a monthly luncheon
5 meeting of the organization, annual banquet, or awards banquets, no matter how many
6 members attend the function.

7 **B.** Unacceptable reimbursable expenses for members of the County Council would include
8 strictly social functions, golf tournaments, crab feasts, etc., and fundraising functions,
9 such as charity events.

10 **C.** The expense of attending retirement or honorary banquets will be covered for only that
11 Council member who is currently serving on a committee with that individual. If there is
12 no committee involvement, then only the Council member who represents the district of
13 that individual may request that the expenditure of the event be covered, including
14 mileage.

15 **D.** If a proclamation is requested for a retiree/honoree, it will be assigned by either
16 committee involvement or district, as stated in C. If that Council member cannot make
17 the presentation, then the proclamation and expenditure reimbursement can be deferred to
18 another member.

19 **E.** Registration and events/meals included with the Maryland and National Association of
20 Counties conferences are acceptable, and any meals beyond those provided with the
21 registration are unacceptable. Lodging for the conferences is limited to only the dates
22 necessary to attend the scheduled conference events. The golf tournament is considered
23 an extracurricular activity beyond the normal registration and is not covered by County
24 expenditure. Any Council member(s) desiring to attend a National Association of

- 1 Counties conference should have the general consensus of the other members to serve as
- 2 representative(s) for the Harford County Council.