

**CITY COUNCIL**

CHRISTINE M. JOHNSON  
At-Large

JAMES KOLE  
First Ward

ADRIAN G. SIMMONS  
First Ward

KYLA M. CLARK  
Second Ward

JEFFREY W. MILLS  
Second Ward

Council meets second and fourth  
Mondays of each month.



KEITH R. SYDNOR  
Mayor

CHRISTIAN L. PULLEY, CPM  
City Administrator

TIM MILLER  
Acting Deputy City Administrator

STEPHANIE P. ANDERSON  
City Solicitor

SARA A. GREEN, CPM, MMC  
City Clerk

(301) 725-5300

[www.cityoflaurel.org](http://www.cityoflaurel.org)

**MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL**

8103 Sandy Spring Road  
Laurel, Maryland 20707-2502

**SPECIAL WORK SESSION  
MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL  
MONDAY, APRIL 28, 2025  
6:00 PM  
HYBRID MEETING  
MINUTES**

The special work session convened in the Council Chamber of the Joseph R. Robison Laurel Municipal Center at approximately 5:00 pm with Council President Kyla M. Clark presiding. Councilwoman Christine M. Johnson, Councilman James Kole, Councilman Jeffrey W. Mills, Councilman Adrian G. Simmons, and Mayor Keith R. Sydnor were present. There were two (2) members of the public in attendance.

The following staff members were also present: Christian L. Pulley, CPM, City Administrator, Tim Miller, Acting Deputy City Administrator, Sara A. Green, CPM, MMC, City Clerk, Monta L. Burrough, Director, Department of Economic and Community Development, Chrissy Cornwell, Director, Department of Emergency Management, Chief Russell E. Hamill, III, LPD, Tommy Helms, Acting Director, Department of Public Works, Marchelle LeBlanc, Director, Department of Human Services, S. Michele Saylor, Director, Department of Budget and Personnel Services, James Cornwell-Shiel, Director, Department of Information Technology, Natalie Williams, Director, Department of Communications, Deputy Chief Mark Plazinski, Tim VanDer Vossen, Assistant Director, Department of Parks and Recreation and Stephanie P. Anderson, City Solicitor. Present virtually via Zoom were Bruce L. Marcus, Esquire, and Sydney M. Patterson, Esquire, Counsel to the Board of Election Supervisors.

Agenda Item No. 2 was Ordinance No. 2038- An Ordinance of the Mayor and City Council of Laurel, Maryland to Amend Chapter 6 Article I, Section 6.1- Purpose, Section 6-2- Applicability, Section 6-3- Definitions, Article II, Section 6-4- The Board of Election Supervisors and Election Judges-Appointments, Section 6-5- Powers and Duties of the Board of Election Supervisors, Section 6-6- Compensation and Oaths of Board of Election Supervisors, Article Iii, Voters, Section 6-7- Voters Lists, Article Iv- Candidates for Public Office, Section 6-9- Nominations and Certificates of Candidacy, Section 6-10- Qualifications for Candidates for Public Office, Section 6-11, Acceptance of Nominations For Public Office, Section 6-12- Candidates to Comply with Laws and Regulations, Section 6-13- Election of Public Officials to be Non-Partisan, Article V- Conduct of Elections, Section 6-14- Establishment of Ward Election Districts, Section 6-15 Election Day, Section 6-16- Electioneering Activities, Section 6-



17 Conduct at Polling Places, Section 6-18- Challengers and Watchers, Section 6-19- Campaign Materials, Section 6-20- Canvass of Election, Section 6-21- Returns, Section 6-22- Certification of Results, Section 6-23- Recounts, Article Vi- Fair Campaign Finance Act, Section 6-24- Distribution of Summary of Election Laws, Section 6-25- Appointment of Campaign Treasurer; Candidate Joining Ticket or Slate, Section 6-26- Contributions and Expenditures of Pass Through Treasurer, Section 6-27- Books, Records, and Receipts of Treasurer, Section 6-28- Contributions of Candidate, Section 6-29- Limits of Contributions; Section 6-30- Expenditures by Treasurer, Section 6-31- Election Reports to be Filed by Treasurer, Section 6-32- Requirements for Filing of Reports by Successful Candidate, Section 6-33- Maintenance of Reports, Article V- Violations of Election Laws and Applicable Penalties, Section 6-34- Prohibited Conduct, Section 6-35- Penalties for Certain Prohibited Conduct; and Providing an Effective Date.

Ms. Sara A. Green, CPM, MMC, City Clerk presented the proposed ordinance indicating that the amendments were being proposed to correct and clarify issues related to the City's election laws that were found during the 2023 election. Ms. Green explained that the amendments were being put forward in hopes of preventing issues in future elections. Ms. Green also noted that due to the comments received from some of the Councilmembers following the February 2025 Work Session where the original draft of Ordinance No. 2038 was presented and that included the recommendations of the Board of Election Supervisors, Ms. Green created two documents: Ordinance No. 2038- Option A and Ordinance No. 2038- Option B as outlined in the Board of Election Supervisors memorandum dated April 15, 2025 (Attachment A) and Ms. Green's memorandum to the Mayor and City Council dated April 15, 2025 (Attachment B). Option A included all of the recommendations from the Board of Election Supervisors and also incorporated the grammatical, syntax, and a few technical changes received from the Councilmembers and Mayor Sydnor. Option B included the same but left the current language regarding the Board of Appeals being permitted to hear appeals of decision of the Board of Election Supervisors, and the language regarding campaign treasurers as they existed in the City Code.

Next, Bruce L. Marcus, Esquire summarized the substantive amendments. A lengthy discussion ensued mostly on Councilman Mills' part, but including responses from Mr. Marcus, Ms. Green, and Mr. William Wellford, Chairman, Board of Election Supervisors mainly surrounding the Board of Appeals issue. Councilman Kole, Councilman Simmons, and Councilwoman Johnson agreed to move the item forward to the regular meeting agenda for that evening scheduled for 6:00 pm. Councilman Mills did not want to move the item forward. Mayor Sydnor said that he did not think the draft should be moved forward until additional amendments could be made to the draft. Therefore, Council President Clark stated that the Ordinance would not move forward for Introduction and First Public Hearing later that evening.

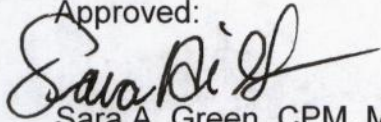
Next, Charter Resolution No. 181- A Charter Resolution of the Mayor and City Council of Laurel, Maryland Amending, Rearranging and Renumbering Article 600 "Registrations and Elections", Section 601- "Voters and Registration"; Section 602- "Election of Mayor and Councilmembers"; Section 603 "Ward Boundaries"; Section 604- "Polling Places"; Section 605- "Voting Procedures"; Section 606- "Same Day Registration"; Section 607 "Vote-By-Mail-Ballots"; Section 608- "Electioneering"; Section 609 "Election Equipment and Sample Ballots"; Section 610- Compliance With Eligibility Requirements, Attendance, Recall, Disqualification and Suspension of Elected Officials"; Section 611- "Recall of Elected Official"; Section 612- "Grounds for Recall of Elected Official"; Section 613- "Suspension of Elected Officials"; Section 614- "Referenda"; Section 615- "Advisory Referenda"; Section 616- Adoption and Incorporation of State Law Provisions"; Section 617- Extraordinary Powers- Civil Emergency." was presented to the Mayor and City Council by Ms. Green.



The Council agreed to move the item forward to the regular meeting scheduled for Monday, April 28, 2025 at 6:00 pm.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:24 pm.

Approved:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sara A. Green".

Sara A. Green, CPM, MMC  
City Clerk

Date: *may 28, 2025*

William Wellford, Chair  
Naomi McMillen, Chief Judge, Ward 1  
Jacki M. Ricks, Chief Judge, Ward 1  
Ralphenia Tia Clark, Chief Judge, Ward 2  
Rhonda Whitley, Esquire, Chief Judge, Ward 2



8103 Sandy Spring Road  
Laurel, Maryland 20707  
301-725-5300, Ext. 2121  
Email: [elections@laurel.md.us](mailto:elections@laurel.md.us)

**CITY OF LAUREL**  
**BOARD OF ELECTION SUPERVISORS**

(Attachment A)  
April 28, 2025  
Special work  
Session minutes

April 15, 2025

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Mayor Keith R. Sydnor  
Laurel City Councilmembers  
**From:** City of Laurel Board of Election Supervisors *BW/SL*  
**Subject:** Revised Recommendations for Amendments to the City Charter and  
Laurel City Code Regarding Elections

The Board of Election Supervisors (the Board), with the assistance of Sara A. Green, CPM, MMC, City Clerk, Bruce L. Marcus, Esquire, and Sydney M. Patterson, Counsel to the Board of Election Supervisors, have reviewed the Mayor and City Council's comments and edits to Charter Amendment No. 181 and Ordinance No. 2038 originally recommended by the Board in January 2025. The Board appreciates the input of the Mayor and City Council regarding the very important matter of election laws.

The syntax, grammatical and spelling edits provided by the Mayor and City Council have been incorporated into the revised drafts. Most of the City Council's more substantive edits have been incorporated in the revised drafts and highlighted in **yellow**. New amendments added by staff and legal Counsel after the first drafts are highlighted in **green**.

The Board was informed of the City Council's two main concerns in the original drafts: 1. The proposed removal of the Board of Appeals from the appeal process related to decisions of the Board of Election Supervisors and instead having the appeal be made directly to the Circuit Court for Prince George's County and 2. The proposed addition of language clarifying that a candidate shall not act as their own treasurer.

The Board met on Friday, April 4, 2025 and voted to recommend the following to the Mayor and City Council regarding Charter Amendment No. 181 and Ordinance No. 2038:

**Regarding concern number 1:**

The Board of Election Supervisors **strongly recommends** that the original recommendation remain in the amendments. The reason being that the Board of Election Supervisors are the subject matter experts regarding City of Laurel elections. Additionally,



the legal Counsel of the Board of Election Supervisors has extensive election law knowledge and provides advice accordingly.

While the Board of Appeals is an important body of the City, it is a function of and derives its authority from the City's Unified Land Development Code (ULDC), not the City Charter or City Code. The Board of Appeals' authority and duties are contained within the Unified Land Development Code Section 20-Article 1- Zoning, Division 4- Board of Appeals and read as follows:

"Sec. 20-5.2. - Powers and duties.

(a)The Board is hereby empowered to adopt and, from time to time, amend or supplement rules or procedures not inconsistent with the provisions of this article.(b)The Board shall keep minutes of its proceedings, meetings, and hearings.(c)The Board is hereby authorized to compel the attendance of witnesses at hearings or meetings, and the Chairman or Secretary to the Board may administer oaths.

(d)Grant variances from the strict application of this article only upon proof by a preponderance of the evidence that:

(1)By reason of exceptional narrowness, shallowness, or shape of specific parcels of property at the time of the original enactment of this article or amendments thereto or by reason of exceptional topographical conditions or other extraordinary situations or conditions of specific parcels of property, the strict application of these regulations would result in peculiar or unusual practical difficulties to, or exceptional or undue hardship upon, the owner of such property.

(2)Such variance is the minimum reasonable necessary to overcome the aforesaid exceptional conditions.

(3)Such variance can be granted without substantial impairment to the intent, purpose and integrity of the General Plan or any duly adopted and approved area Master Plan affecting the subject property.

(4)Such variance will not be detrimental to the use and enjoyment of adjoining or neighboring properties. These provisions, however, shall not permit the Board to grant any variance to any setback or yard requirements for property zoned for commercial or industrial purposes when such property abuts or immediately adjoins any property zoned for residential purposes unless such residential property is proposed for commercial or industrial use on an adopted Master Plan. These provisions shall not be construed to permit the Board, under the guise of a variance, to authorize a use of land not otherwise permitted.

(e)Hear and decide appeals where it is alleged by appellants that there is error in any refusal or denial of a building permit, use and occupancy permit or in any other order, requirement, decision, or determination made by the Director of the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Fire Marshal, the Historic District Commission, or the Planning Commission, when passing upon an application for a building or other permit, a certificate of approval or other approval, or by any officer or body in the administration of this article. Appeals alleging error by the Planning Commission shall be by oral argument or written statement based solely on the evidence submitted and received in the Planning Commission proceedings. All such appeals shall be taken within thirty (30) days of the date of the decision being appealed.

(f)Hear and decide petitions for special exceptions.

(g)Hear and decide appeals in regard to property affected by master highway plans.



(h)Hear and decide petitions concerning public nuisances as specified in Subsection 20-1.12(a)(4), construction and interpretation of article; general provisions, of this article.

(i)The Board may, in conformity with this chapter, reverse, affirm, or modify, wholly or in part, any decision upon which an appeal is made.

(j)In exercising all its powers and duties under this article, not less than four (4) members of the Board shall constitute a quorum....."

As such, the Charter and Code sections pertaining to election laws are separate from the Unified Land Development Code. Further, legal Counsel for the Board of Election Supervisors reviewed the section about the powers and duties of the Board of Appeals within the Unified Land Development Code and are of the opinion that the Mayor and City Council would need to amend ULDC Section 20-5.2 if it desires to enable the Board of Appeals to decide election matters. Without that, any decision could be challenged on the grounds that the Board of Appeals has no jurisdiction or authority over election matters.

The Board of Election Supervisors also recommends that the Mayor and City Council consider seeking the Board of Appeals' opinion on hearing election appeals cases given that their regular purview is related to zoning and development applications, decisions of the Planning Commission and the Department of the Fire Marshal and Permit Services. Additionally, many of the Members of the Board of Appeals would not have expertise in election laws or procedures.

#### **Regarding concern number 2:**

The Board of Election Supervisors **strongly encourages** the Mayor and City Council to retain the language in the original draft that clarifies that a candidate shall not act as their own treasurer. The residents of the City and the contributors to candidate campaigns deserve the utmost transparency related to campaign contributions and expenses. Allowing a candidate to act as their own treasurer flies in the face of Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP) especially related to separation of duties to prevent fraud or mishandling of funds.

Therefore, the Board of Election Supervisors respectfully requests that the Mayor and City Council consider retaining the recommendations of the Board of Election Supervisors regarding those two main points.

The Board of Election Supervisors hereby recommends that the Mayor and City Council approve the two attached documents:

1. Charter Amendment No. 181- Revised as of 04/04/2025
2. Ordinance No. 2038 "Option A" Revised as of 04/04/2025

Please let Ms. Green know if the Mayor and City Council would like to discuss these matters further or would like additional information from the Board.

We look forward to your favorable vote on the proposed amendments.



Attachments (2)

cc: Christian L. Pulley, CPM, City Administrator  
Tim Miller, Acting Deputy City Administrator  
Sara A. Green, CPM, MMC, City Clerk





**MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL, MARYLAND  
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK**

8103 Sandy Spring Road Laurel, Maryland 20707 P: 301-725-5300 Ext. 2121  
Website: [www.cityoflaurel.org](http://www.cityoflaurel.org) Email: [clerk@laurel.md.us](mailto:clerk@laurel.md.us)

April 15, 2025

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Keith R. Sydnor, Mayor  
Kyla M. Clark, Council President  
Laurel City Councilmembers  
**FROM:** Sara A. Green, CPM, MMC, City Clerk *SA Green*  
**SUBJECT:** Additional (Option B) Ordinance No. 2038- Election Law Amendments

In addition to the revised recommendations and draft Ordinance No. 2038 (Option A) and Charter Amendment No. 181 from the Board of Election Supervisors, I have prepared a third draft labeled "Ordinance No. 2038 (Option B)", attached hereto.

The syntax, grammatical, spelling, and more substantive edits in Ordinance No. 2038 (Option A) provided by the Mayor and City Council have also been incorporated into Option B. Further, the new amendments added by staff and legal Counsel after the first drafts are highlighted in **green** and are the same as included in Option A.

The difference in Ordinance No. 2038 Option A and Option B is that Option B retains the language regarding appointment of treasurer (does **not** contain the amendment that a candidate cannot serve as their own treasurer) and also maintains that appeals from decisions of the Board of Election Supervisors may be made to the Board of Appeals. Option B was drafted in order to be considered by the Mayor and City Council in the event that Option A as recommended by the Board of Election Supervisors and legal Counsel of the Board, are not acceptable to the Mayor and City Council.

If the Mayor and City Council choose not to accept Option A, I would also urge the same advice as that of legal Counsel for the Board of Election Supervisors in that, the Mayor and City Council would need to amend ULDC Section 20-5.2 if it desires to enable the Board of Appeals to decide election matters. Without that, any decision could be challenged on the grounds that the Board of Appeals has no jurisdiction or authority over election matters.

The Board of Election Supervisors and the Office of the City Clerk are in the pre-planning stages of the 2025 General City of Laurel Election and look forward to the Mayor and City Council's timely review and approval of the proposed amendments so that the changes can be adopted prior to the upcoming election.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

cc: Christian L. Pulley, CPM, City Administrator  
Tim Miller, Acting Deputy City Administrator

(Attachment B)  
April 28, 2025  
Special work session  
minutes



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**Mayor and City Council  
Special Work Session  
Monday, April 28, 2025**

**5:00 PM *\*\*Note earlier time\*\****

**Agenda  
In-Person**

Watch the meeting on Laurel TV streaming live in your web browser at <https://laurelty.org/watch-live> or locally Laurel TV can be found on Comcast Channel 996 (HD), 71 (SD) or Verizon FiOS Channel 12.

1. Call to Order – Kyla M. Clark, President
2. Ordinance No. 2038- An Ordinance of the Mayor and City Council of Laurel, Maryland to Amend Chapter 6 Article I, Section 6.1- Purpose, Section 6-2- Applicability, Section 6-3- Definitions, Article II, Section 6-4- The Board of Election Supervisors and Election Judges- Appointments, Section 6-5- Powers and Duties of the Board of Election Supervisors, Section 6-6- Compensation and Oaths of Board of Election Supervisors, Article Iii, Voters, Section 6-7- Voters Lists, Article Iv- Candidates for Public Office, Section 6-9- Nominations and Certificates of Candidacy, Section 6-10- Qualifications for Candidates for Public Office, Section 6-11, Acceptance of Nominations For Public Office, Section 6-12- Candidates to Comply with Laws and Regulations, Section 6-13- Election of Public Officials to be Non-Partisan, Article V- Conduct of Elections, Section 6-14- Establishment of Ward Election Districts, Section 6-15 Election Day, Section 6-16- Electioneering Activities, Section 6-17 Conduct at Polling Places, Section 6-18- Challengers and Watchers, Section 6-19- Campaign Materials, Section 6-20- Canvass of Election, Section 6-21- Returns, Section 6-22- Certification of Results, Section 6-23- Recounts, Article Vi- Fair Campaign Finance Act, Section 6-24- Distribution of Summary of Election Laws, Section 6-25- Appointment of Campaign Treasurer; Candidate Joining Ticket or Slate, Section 6-26- Contributions and Expenditures of Pass Through Treasurer, Section 6-27- Books, Records, and Receipts of Treasurer, Section 6-28- Contributions of Candidate, Section 6-29- Limits of Contributions; Section 6-30- Expenditures by Treasurer, Section 6-31- Election Reports to be Filed by Treasurer, Section 6-32- Requirements for Filing of Reports by Successful Candidate, Section 6-33- Maintenance of Reports, Article V- Violations of Election Laws and



Applicable Penalties, Section 6-34- Prohibited Conduct, Section 6-35- Penalties for Certain Prohibited Conduct; and Providing an Effective Date.

3. Charter Resolution No. 181- A Charter Resolution of the Mayor and City Council of Laurel, Maryland Amending, Rearranging and Renumbering Article 600 "Registrations and Elections", Section 601- "Voters and Registration"; Section 602- "Election of Mayor and Councilmembers"; Section 603 "Ward Boundaries"; Section 604- "Polling Places"; Section 605- "Voting Procedures"; Section 606- "Same Day Registration"; Section 607 "Vote-By-Mail-Ballots"; Section 608- "Electioneering"; Section 609 "Election Equipment and Sample Ballots"; Section 610- Compliance With Eligibility Requirements, Attendance, Recall, Disqualification and Suspension of Elected Officials"; Section 611- "Recall of Elected Official"; Section 612- "Grounds for Recall of Elected Official"; Section 613- "Suspension of Elected Officials"; Section 614- "Referenda"; Section 615- "Advisory Referenda"; Section 616- Adoption and Incorporation of State Law Provisions"; Section 617- Extraordinary Powers- Civil Emergency".

4. Adjournment



# Mayor and City Council Attendance Record

## Special Work Session

April 28, 2025 5:00 pm

### In-Person

Call to Order: 5:02pm Meeting Ended: 6:24pm Members of the Public: 2

☒ Christian L Pulley ~~absent~~ Bill Bailey ☒ Monta Burrough ☒ Chrissy Cornwell ☒ Chief Russell Hamill

☒ James Cornwell-Shiel ☒ Marchelle LeBlanc ☒ Tim Miller ☒ S. Michele Saylor ☒ Danny Selby

☒ Natalie Williams ☒ Stephanie Anderson ☒ Mark Plazinski

Bruce L. Marcus, Counsel to Board of Elections + Sydney M. Patterson, Counsel to Board of Elections  
Tim Vanderwossen, Assistant Director Dept. of Parks and Recreation  
of elections

### Mayor and Councilmembers Attendance

☒ Councilman Simmons ☒ Councilwoman Johnson ☒ Councilman Mills

☒ Councilman Kole ☒ President Clark ☒ Mayor Sydnor





## CITY OF LAUREL, MARYLAND

**\*\*Note: Blue highlights =Edits of 04/28/2025\*\***

**\*\*Note: Yellow highlights indicate amendments made at Council requests\*\***

**\*\*Note: Green highlights indicate amendments made by staff and legal counsel since original draft was edited\*\***

### ORDINANCE NO. 2038 "OPTION A"

AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL, MARYLAND TO AMEND CHAPTER 6 ARTICLE I, SECTION 6.1- PURPOSE, SECTION 6-2- APPLICABILITY, SECTION 6-3- DEFINITIONS, ARTICLE II, SECTION 6-4- THE BOARD OF ELECTION SUPERVISORS AND ELECTION JUDGES- APPOINTMENTS, SECTION 6-5- POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE BOARD OF ELECTION SUPERVISORS, SECTION 6-6- COMPENSATION AND OATHS OF BOARD OF ELECTION SUPERVISORS, ARTICLE III, VOTERS, SECTION 6-7- VOTERS LISTS, ARTICLE IV- CANDIDATES FOR PUBLIC OFFICE, SECTION 6-9- NOMINATIONS AND CERTIFICATES OF CANDIDACY, SECTION 6-10- QUALIFICATIONS FOR CANDIDATES FOR PUBLIC OFFICE, SECTION 6-11, ACCEPTANCE OF NOMINATIONS FOR PUBLIC OFFICE, SECTION 6-12- CANDIDATES TO COMPLY WITH LAWS AND REGULATIONS, SECTION 6-13- ELECTION OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS TO BE NON-PARTISAN, ARTICLE V- CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS, SECTION 6-14- ESTABLISHMENT OF WARD ELECTION DISTRICTS, SECTION 6-15 ELECTION DAY, SECTION 6-16- ELECTIONEERING ACTIVITIES, SECTION 6-17 CONDUCT AT POLLING PLACES, SECTION 6-18- CHALLENGERS AND WATCHERS, SECTION 6-19- CAMPAIGN MATERIALS, SECTION 6-20- CANVASS OF ELECTION, SECTION 6-21- RETURNS, SECTION 6-22- CERTIFICATION OF RESULTS, SECTION 6-23- RECOUNTS, ARTICLE VI- FAIR CAMPAIGN FINANCE ACT, SECTION 6-24- DISTRIBUTION OF SUMMARY OF ELECTION LAWS, SECTION 6-25- APPOINTMENT OF CAMPAIGN TREASURER; CANDIDATE JOINING TICKET OR SLATE, SECTION 6-26- CONTRIBUTIONS AND EXPENDITURES OF PASS THROUGH TREASURER, SECTION 6-27- BOOKS, RECORDS, AND RECEIPTS OF TREASURER, SECTION 6-28- CONTRIBUTIONS OF CANDIDATE, SECTION 6-29- LIMITS OF CONTRIBUTIONS; SECTION 6-30- EXPENDITURES BY TREASURER, SECTION 6-31- ELECTION REPORTS TO BE FILED BY TREASURER, SECTION 6-32- REQUIREMENTS FOR FILING OF REPORTS BY SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE, SECTION 6-33- MAINTENANCE OF REPORTS, ARTICLE VII- VIOLATIONS OF ELECTION LAWS AND APPLICABLE PENALTIES, SECTION 6-34- PROHIBITED



**CONDUCT, SECTION 6-35- PENALTIES FOR CERTAIN PROHIBITED CONDUCT;  
AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

*Sponsored by the President at the request of the Administration.*

**WHEREAS**, on January 11, 2021, the Mayor and City Council of Laurel, Maryland approved Ordinance No. 1964, repealing and replacing Chapter 6- Elections in its entirety; and

**WHEREAS**, following the 2023 City of Laurel General Election, the Board of Election Supervisors conducted a complete review of the City Code regarding Elections and recommended the amendments to update the election laws of the City of Laurel; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and City Council of Laurel, Maryland agree with the recommendations of the City of Laurel Board of Election Supervisors on the changes as set forth herein; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED AND ORDAINED**, by the Mayor and City Council of Laurel, Maryland that Chapter 6 of the Laurel City Code be and hereby is amended as follows:

## **Chapter 6 - ELECTIONS**

### **ARTICLE I. - GENERAL PROVISIONS**

#### **Sec. 6-1. - Purpose.**

The purpose of this ~~Chapter~~ Chapter 6 and the election procedures contained herein govern the qualifications of voters and candidates for elective office, and the manner and procedures for the conduct of elections and elections processes in the City of Laurel, Maryland.

#### **Sec. 6-2. - Applicability.**

The provisions of this chapter shall apply to all elections, including all general, special, runoff, or referenda held subsequent to ~~November 2019~~ November 2024.

#### **Sec. 6-3.- Definitions.**

As used in this chapter and article 600 of the Charter, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated unless a contrary meaning is clearly intended from the context in which the term appears:



*Ballot* means any approved ballot, whether as a paper ballot, write-in ballot, absentee **Vote by Mail** ballot, provisional ballot, or any ballot cast in any approved voting machine or device.

*Board* means the Board of Election Supervisors for the City of Laurel and the members thereof.

*Board of **A**ppeals* means the City of Laurel Board of Appeals.

*Business entity* means any corporation, limited liability company, general or limited partnership, or sole proprietorship (including a private consulting operation, joint venture, unincorporated association or firm, institution, trust, foundation, or other organization), whether organized for profit or not. As used in this chapter, the term "business entity" shall not include a political committee registered with the city.

**Campaign Committee means a political committee established under this article.**

~~*Campaign committee* means any combination of two (2) or more persons appointed by one (1) or more candidates or other persons, or formed in any other manner which has as a principal purpose the promotion of the success or defeat of a ballot question or candidate for elected office.~~

*Campaign finance entity* means a political committee established under this article.

*Campaign funds* means any funds contributed or loaned to a candidate, campaign finance entity, or campaign committee.

~~*Campaign materials*~~ means tangible material in any digital, electronic, printed, or other format principally intended to promote the success or defeat of any candidate(s), principle(s), or propositions(s), which has been, will be, or is sought to be submitted to a vote in any city election, including, but not limited to, any pamphlet, circular card, sample ballot, dodger, poster, advertisement, matchbook, nail file, balloon, or any other printed, multi-graph, photographed, typewritten, written manner or statement, or any matter of statement which may be copied by any device or method, or which may hereafter be used for making copies of printed or written matter in any form whatever for publication, display, or distribution, relating to or concerning any candidate or prospective candidate for public office or the acceptance or defeat of any proposition.

*Candidate* means a candidate for public office.

**Canvass means the entire process of vote tallying, vote tabulation, and vote verification, culminating in the production and certification of the election results.**

*Charter* means the Charter of the City of Laurel then and there in force and effect.

*City* means the City of Laurel, Maryland.



*City council* means the duly elected City Council of Laurel, Maryland.

**City Solicitor means the duly appointed City Solicitor of Laurel, Maryland.**

*Code* means the City of Laurel Code then and there in force and effect.

*Contribution* means the gift or transfer, or promise of gift or transfer, of money or other thing or value to a candidate or campaign finance entity to promote or assist in the promotion of the success or defeat of a candidate, ballot question, or prospective ballot question.

*Contributor* means any person or entity who makes a contribution, as the same is defined in this section.

*Councilmember* means an elected or appointed member of the Laurel City Council.

*County board* means the Prince George's County Board of Elections.

*Early voting day* means any day(s) close to, but in advance of, ~~an~~ election day as designated and authorized by the ~~e~~City ~~e~~Council for polls to be open to ~~qualified~~ voters for the purpose of casting ballots in an election.

*Election* means the process by which voters cast votes on one (1) or more contests under the law.

*Election day* means the official date for any general, **referenda, runoff**, or special election.

*Ethics commission* means the Ethics Commission for the City of Laurel.

*Expenditure* means a gift, transfer, disbursement, or promise of money or a thing of value by or on behalf of a campaign finance entity to promote, or assist in the promotion of the success or defeat of a candidate, political party, ballot question, or prospective ballot question in any election.

*Financial institution* means any bank that is licensed to receive deposits and make loans and is insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation; or, a credit union insured by the National Credit Union Insurance Fund.

*In-kind contribution* means the conferral of any benefit or value, other than money, contributed directly or indirectly to any candidate(s), campaign finance entity(ies), or political committee(s), including, but not limited to: goods; services for which the contributor would normally charge; or any payments made to a third-party on behalf of a candidate, political committee, or campaign finance entity. The assigned value of any in-kind contributions made by a contributor shall be defined as the fair market value of the in-kind contribution. In-kind contributions shall not include the contribution of a contributor's own time or use of a personal vehicle.



*Independent expenditures* means an expenditure by a person or a political committee for the publication or distribution of political matter advocating the election or defeat of an identified candidate which was not made in coordination or cooperation with, or with the consent of, or in consultation with, a candidate or the candidate's committee or campaign finance entity; or for the purpose of promoting the success or defeat of any matter or issue which has been submitted to a vote at an election, or is in the process of being petitioned to referendum.

*Mail-in-~~b~~Ballot or ~~V~~vote-by-~~M~~mail* means the process whereby voters make application for and submit completed ballots by either mail or in-person drop-off at a location authorized by the board of election supervisors.

**Political committee means any combination of two (2) or more persons appointed by one (1) or more candidates or other persons, or formed in any other manner which has as its principal purpose the promotion of the success or defeat of a ballot question or candidate for elected office.**

*Provisional ballot* means a ballot that is cast by an individual but not counted until the individual's qualifications to vote have been confirmed by the ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Election ~~s~~Supervisors.

*Public office* means either the ~~m~~Mayor or a member of the ~~e~~City ~~e~~Council.

*Registration* means the act by which a person becomes qualified to vote in any election.

*Report* means a campaign finance report filed with the ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Election ~~S~~Supervisors under this chapter.

**Slate means a political committee of two or more candidates who join together to conduct and pay for joint campaign activities.**

*Special election* means any election to resolve tie votes in any election, or to fill vacancies that arise at any time more than eighteen (18) months prior to any scheduled general election.

*State Board* means the State of Maryland Board of Elections.

*Surplus campaign funds* means any amount of money which remains in a candidate's campaign account after payment of all expenses, loans, and obligations after the certification of an election, at a time when the candidate or committee has elected not to pursue further elective office.

*Treasurer* means any person appointed by a candidate or campaign committee to receive or disburse money or other things of value to promote the success or defeat of any candidate or principle or proposition submitted to a vote at any election.

*Voter* means a person who is registered and qualified to vote in any election in the ~~e~~City.



## ARTICLE II - ELECTION OFFICIALS

### Sec. 6-4. - The ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Election ~~s~~Supervisors and ~~e~~Election ~~j~~Judges— Appointment.

(a) There shall be a ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Election ~~s~~Supervisors. The ~~b~~Board shall be responsible for managing and supervising all elections in the ~~e~~City. The ~~b~~Board shall be comprised of five (5) qualified duly registered voters of the City. The Board shall include a chairperson and four (4) chief judges comprised of two (2) from ~~of~~ each of the two (2) wards.

(b) On or before the second Monday of March 2019, and on the same day every four (4) years thereafter, the ~~m~~Mayor shall, with the advice and consent of the ~~e~~City ~~e~~Council, appoint a voter to serve as chairperson of the ~~b~~Board. The ~~m~~Mayor, with the approval of the ~~e~~City ~~e~~Council, shall appoint two (2) chief judges, ~~one~~ two (4~~2~~) from each of the two (2) wards. The appointment of the two (2) chief judges shall be for a term of four (4) years and they shall serve until their successors ~~shall~~ have been nominated and duly qualified.

(c) In the event of a vacancy of the chairperson of the ~~b~~Board, or either or both of the chief judges, whether by sickness, death, or other inability to serve and discharge their respective duties and responsibilities, the ~~m~~Mayor, with the approval of the ~~e~~City ~~e~~Council, may appoint a substitute chairperson or chief judge(s) in accordance with this section.

(d) The ~~m~~Mayor shall have the power to remove any member of the ~~b~~Board or any election judge, for cause, with the approval of the ~~e~~City ~~e~~Council.

(e) Restrictions on members of the board, judges and employees. During their term(s) or tenure, members of the ~~b~~Board, election judges, and permanent, part-time, or temporary employee(s) of the ~~b~~Board shall not: hold any other office within the ~~e~~City; be a candidate for public office; hold any position with any campaign finance entity or campaign committee; or, serve or assist any combination of candidates, campaign finance entity(ies), or campaign committee(s) in campaign activities. Members of the ~~b~~Board, election judges, and permanent, part-time, or temporary employee(s) of the ~~b~~Board may not actively participate in, support, or otherwise promote the success or defeat of any candidate or ballot question while holding office or being employed by the ~~b~~Board. Members of the ~~b~~Board, election judges, and permanent, part-time, or temporary employee(s) of the ~~b~~Board shall not directly or indirectly enter into any contract or contracts with the ~~e~~City.

### Sec. 6-5. - Powers and ~~d~~Duties of the ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Election ~~s~~Supervisors.

(a) *Powers and duties.* The ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Election ~~s~~Supervisors shall manage, oversee, and supervise the conduct of all elections for public office in the city.



(b) *Actions of the **B**board.* As deemed necessary from time to time, the board, with the approval of the city administrator, may obtain assistance and support from the eCity staff to assist the **b**Board in the discharge of its official duties.

(c) *Administrative duties and record keeping.* In addition to any power, duty, or responsibility provided in the eCity Charter, the **b**Board shall have the authority to direct the eCity eClerk in:

(1) Issuing and maintaining all election records in a separate filing system provided by the eCity, and

~~(2) Keeping, maintaining, administering, and updating the supplemental voter registry and accepting, examining and, as appropriate, approving registration applications for the supplemental voter registry.~~

(d) *Campaign finance.* The **b**Board shall have authority to provide, receive, and review campaign **finance** reports **and all supportive information and correspondence submitted therewith** and **thereafter** certify that campaign reports are timely and complete as outlined in this chapter, and the **b**Board may delegate some or all of these responsibilities.

(e) *Election duties.* In addition to any power, duty, or responsibility provided for in the Charter and elsewhere in this chapter, the **b**Board shall:

(1) Provide for the **processes to certify candidates** ~~nominations~~ for elected public office;

(2) Verify the eligibility of candidates for public office and thereafter to certify ~~nominations~~ of eligible candidates;

(3) Select and train election judges to assist in the operation of polling places for elections in the eCity;

(4) Issue the official election ballot;

(5) Provide a form for the certification of challengers and watchers;

(6) Provide for absentee **vote by mail** and provisional ballots;

(7) Prescribe, print, or obtain all necessary forms and related materials in such mediums as the **b**Board may approve, and, if printed, in such quantities as may be reasonably be deemed necessary for the conduct of an election;

(8) Oversee operations of all polling places;

(9) Validate the authenticity **and compliance with applicable laws governing the** ~~of all returned absentee~~ **of Vote by Mail** ballots and any provisional ballots completed and submitted in early voting or on election day;

Underlining indicates new language added.

~~Strikethroughs indicate language deleted.~~

\* \* \* Asterisks indicate intervening language and section unchanged.



(10) Oversee the count, canvass, and certification of all election results;

(11) Provide for the recount of ballots; and

(12) Provide guidelines for the use of ~~mail-in ballots~~/vote-by-mail ballots.

(f) *Enforcement and review.* In addition to any power, duty, or responsibility provided for in the Charter or in this Code, the ~~b~~Board shall:

(1) Administer and enforce all election laws;

(2) Supervise and exercise control over all activities taking place in and around polling locations on any election or early voting days, including to regulate the conduct of candidates, campaign orders, challengers, and watchers; and

(3) Conduct administrative reviews of complaints made and directed to the ~~b~~Board in matters involving all aspects relating to the conduct of election matters.

(g) *Rulemaking.* The ~~b~~Board shall have the authority to enact such rules and administrative procedures and regulations as may be necessary to implement the provisions of this chapter and article 600 of the Charter.

## **Sec. 6-6. - Compensation and ~~e~~Oaths of ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Election ~~s~~Supervisors.**

(a) The ~~b~~Board and election judges shall receive compensation for their services as may be from time to time determined by the ~~m~~Mayor, with the approval of the ~~e~~City ~~e~~Council, using funds derived from the operating budget of the ~~e~~City.

**(b) Each Election Judge shall take an oath administered by the Mayor to read as follows:**

**Do you solemnly swear that you will obey and support the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution and laws of the State of Maryland, the Charter and Code of the City of Laurel, and that you will fairly, honestly and impartially execute the office of Election Judge, according to the Constitution and laws of this State?**

**(c) Immediately following the oath, each Election Judge shall sign a printed copy of the oath. The signed oath shall be retained by the City Clerk and filed with the election documents.**

## **ARTICLE III. - VOTERS**

### **Sec. 6-7. - Voter lists.**



List of registered voters. All eligible persons registered to vote with the ~~e~~County ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Elections, who reside in the ~~e~~City, and whose names appear on a list of registered voters, supplied by the ~~e~~County ~~b~~Board, shall be considered registered voters of the ~~e~~City and shall have their names placed upon the voter register.

## Sec. 6-8. - Reserved.

## ARTICLE IV. - CANDIDATES FOR PUBLIC OFFICE

### Sec. 6-9. - Nominations and Certificates of eCandidacy.

(a) All individuals wishing to have their name included on a ballot as a candidate for public office shall:

(1) Be duly registered ~~and qualified~~ voters in the ~~e~~City;

(2) File a completed candidate packet which including includes, but is not limited to, a certificate of candidacy and affidavit, appointment of treasurer, financial disclosure form, and all additional documents as may be required of all candidates by the Board, on the forms prescribed and provided by the ~~b~~Board on or before 12:00 noon on date set by the Board but no later than the first Friday in the month of August the last Friday in the month of September of the year that the election is to be held and tender the filing fee in an amount to be established by the ~~b~~Board; and

(3) Comply with all other qualifications and provisions of this Code, the Charter, and laws of the ~~s~~State.

(b) The ~~b~~Board shall timely review all ~~certificates of candidacy~~ submissions provided in the candidate packets and shall conduct any necessary investigations to determine eligibility of each applicant for candidacy, including verification that the applicant prospective candidate satisfies the residency requirements. ~~is a bona fide resident of the eCity.~~

(c) The ~~b~~Board shall meet on a date set by the Board but no later than the ~~on the first third~~ Monday in ~~October~~ August of any election year to accept and review the required documentation of each applicant for nomination candidacy ~~to run~~ for public office.

### Sec. 6-10. - Qualifications for cCandidates for pPublic eOffice.

(a) All candidates for public office shall be qualified duly registered voters as defined in this chapter; and

(b) No person shall be deemed qualified to be a candidate for public office if:



(1) Such person is in arrears in the payment of any eCity tax, assessment, fine, penalty, or other financial obligation, **without limitation**, unless such tax, assessment, penalty, **or other financial obligation** etc., ~~without limitation~~, is the subject of an active and timely appeal to the appropriate tribunal or authority having jurisdiction over the appeal;

(2) Such person is in violation of any ordinance, regulation, statute, **or** provision etc., arising under the Charter or the Code, unless the violation is subject to a timely appeal to the appropriate tribunal or authority having jurisdiction over the appeal; and

(3) Such person is in violation of any of the provisions of the Code or Charter governing elections and election laws of the eCity, including, but not limited to, any reporting requirements arising under the Code or the Charter, unless the violation is subject to a timely filed, pending and proper appeal; **or**

(4) Such person fails to file an affidavit attesting and averring under oath or affirmation that the person is not in violation of any of the provisions in this section or any other requirement set forth in this chapter.

Candidate Financial Discloser—ref to ethics law, 2.56.

(c) Decisions on a person's qualifications, including satisfaction and compliance with all other provisions governing qualifications for candidacy for public office shall be determined by the bBoard. ~~In the event that A~~any person is aggrieved by a decision of the bBoard ~~on candidacy and contests any ruling which determines the qualifications or sufficiency of a nomination of a person candidate for public office, that person shall have the right to appeal the decision within three (3) business days thereof to the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, pursuant to Title 7 of the Maryland Rules of Procedure.~~ board of appeals. Appeals from decisions of the board shall be filed within three (3) calendar days of the date of the Board's decision. The Board of Appeals shall schedule and hear any appeals referred to it within ten (10) calendar days of the date of the appeal. ~~In the event that a person is aggrieved by any action of the board of appeals rendered under this section, the person shall have the right to appeal the matter to the Circuit Court for Prince George's County. Decisions of the circuit court shall be final with no further right of appeal.~~

## **Sec. 6-11. - Acceptance of nominations Filing for Candidacy for pPublic oOffice; wWithdrawal of eCandidacy.**

(a) Any person accepting **filing for candidacy** a nomination for public office shall file along with the nominating petition, file **a written affirmation under oath stating the person's** an affidavit containing a sworn statement providing at a minimum the candidate's name, date of birth, residence address, and Social Security number, **and such other information as the Board of Election Supervisors may require of all candidates.** The statement shall be made on forms provided and approved by the bBoard of eElection sSupervisors. Any candidate who fails to comply with the filing requirements set forth herein, or who files a false statement shall



be deemed unqualified and the ~~b~~Board shall remove that candidate's name from the ballot prior to the election.

(b) Candidates may withdraw their candidacy at any time on or before the Monday following the filing deadline for applications for candidacy. Candidates withdrawing candidacy shall file a final report under ~~s~~Section 6-312.

#### **Sec. 6-12. - Candidates to ~~e~~Comply with ~~l~~Laws and ~~r~~Regulations.**

Every candidate shall be responsible for compliance with all laws, statutes, and regulations, including compliance by any challenger or watcher identified and appointed by the candidate or the campaign committee at or around a polling place on any election or early voting day. In addition, every candidate shall be responsible for the lawful placement of signs, placards, campaign advertisements, or other campaign related materials in any public right(s)-of-way, or on any ~~e~~City property.

#### **Sec. 6-13. - Election of ~~p~~Public ~~e~~Officials to be ~~n~~Non-~~p~~Partisan.**

Candidates for public office shall not run for office as a candidate, representative, or nominee of any political party.

### **ARTICLE V. - CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS**

#### **Sec. 6-14. - Establishment of ~~w~~Ward ~~e~~Election ~~d~~Districts.**

For election purposes, the ~~e~~City shall be divided into two (2) wards as the same are described in the Charter.

#### **Sec. 6-15. - Election ~~d~~Day.**

Elections, other than special elections, shall be held on the first Tuesday of November of each year an election for public officials is to be held. Polls shall be open to qualified registered voters. Voting shall commence at 7:00 a.m. and continue until 8:00 p.m.

#### **Sec. 6-16. - Electioneering ~~a~~Activities.**

(a) *General conduct of persons prior to election days, on or before early voting days and on election day.* The ~~b~~Board shall be responsible for and have authority to control all activities conducted in connection with elections, including the concurrent exercise of authority and jurisdiction over placement of campaign materials, signage, displays, placards, stickers, and other advertisements related to any political campaign. The ~~b~~Board, along with the City of



Laurel Department of Fire Marshal and Permit Services, shall enforce all sign ordinances and other regulations governing for placement of campaign materials, campaign signage, displays, placards, stickers, and other advertisements related to any political campaigns which shall not be displayed or erected more than forty-five (45) days prior to election day and shall be removed within seven (7) days following the election. In addition, on all days other than election day or any early voting days, the ~~b~~Board, along with the City of Laurel Department of Fire Marshal and Permit Services, shall remove and may thereafter destroy or dispose of any signs, displays, placards, stickers, and other advertisements related to any political campaign placed in any public right-of-way, on any property owned or controlled by the ~~C~~city, or on other public property located in the ~~e~~City.

(b) *Authority of election judges.* At each polling place, each of the duly appointed election judges shall be vested with authority to keep and maintain the peace. In addition, the chief judge shall have the authority to contact any duly qualified law enforcement agency having jurisdiction in the City law enforcement for: any breach of the peace; any breach of election laws of the ~~e~~City; any interference with the progress or conduct of an election, the canvass of the ballots, or the ascertainment and transcription of the votes recorded on voting machines or ballots cast. Election judges in the City shall have the same duties, responsibilities, and powers as the same are delegated to election judges under Title 10 of the Election Article of the Maryland Annotated Code, and as more particularly set forth in Section 10-393 of the Election Article of the Maryland Annotated Code.

(c) *Electioneering at polling places.* No person shall canvass, electioneer, post, or distribute any campaign material or other handouts of any kind in any polling place or within a one-hundred-foot radius from the ~~front~~ main entrance to of any polling location. Polling places and voting stations shall be frequently cleaned to ensure the removal of any candidate paraphernalia and any other campaign or election related materials.

(d) *Traffic control.* The ~~b~~Board shall have the authority to: control ingress and egress to polling places; to ensure the safe and unimpeded passage for all voters and members of the public to polling places; ~~and to prevent any obstruction or impediment to voters and the public in accessing or leaving any polling locations;~~ and to identify parking areas for voters and all others seeking access to a polling place under the restrictions created in this Code, the Charter, and the laws of the State. The chief judge shall have the authority to direct law enforcement officers to maintain unfettered and unimpeded access to polling places.

(e) *Signage at polling places on election or early voting days.* The ~~b~~Board shall have the authority to control the placement of signs, displays, billboards, vehicles, advertisements, and other election related promotional materials at or near polling places to ensure that no sign, display, billboard, vehicle, advertisement, or other campaign related materials obstruct, impede, or otherwise interfere with safe passage and travel in and out of polling locations. This provision is not intended to prohibit vehicles bearing bumper stickers or other campaign signage from using public thoroughfares for purpose of accessing polling places.



(f) *Law enforcement.* It shall be the duty of all sworn law enforcement officers (on or off duty) present at polling places to obey the lawful order of any election judge to enforce the provisions of this chapter.

## **Sec. 6-17. - Conduct at ~~p~~olling ~~p~~laces.**

(a) Each of the chief judges s has the authority to keep the peace and to cause any person to be arrested for any breach of the peace, or for any breach of the election laws of the ~~e~~City, or any interference with the progress or conduct of an election, the canvass of ballots, or the ascertainment and transcription of the votes recorded on the voting machines. It shall furthermore be unlawful for any person to canvass, electioneer or post any campaign material in a polling place or on public property within a certain radius from the entrance and exit of the building closed to that part of the building in which voting occurs. ~~This radius shall be that established pursuant to Ann. Code of Md, Art. 33, Sec. 24-23, as amended from time to time.~~

(b) The chapter ~~is~~n not intended to prevent vehicles bearing campaign stickers or signs from using public thoroughfares that may be within the established radius for ingress and egress. Nor is this chapter intended to prevent canvassing, electioneering, and posting of any campaign material outside of the prescribed limit.

(c) It shall be the duty of all officers of the law present to obey the order of any election judge, and an officer making an arrest shall be protected in so doing ~~fulling~~ as if a warrant had been issued to him to make such arrest.

## **Sec. 6-18. - Challengers and ~~w~~atchers.**

(a) *Authorized.* Each candidate or political committee shall have the right to designate a registered voter as a challenger and watcher at each place of registration and election. Such persons shall be assigned to such designated positions s near the judges inside the registration or polling room, so as to enable them to see each person as ~~he~~ they enter a polling place ~~offers to register to vote.~~ The challengers and watchers shall be protected in the discharge of their duty by the judges.

(b) *Certificate as evidence of right to be present.* A certificate signed by any candidate or chairman of a ~~campaign~~ political committee shall be sufficient evidence of the right of such challenger and watcher to be present in the registration or polling room. ~~A~~a certificate shall meet the requirements established by of the Bboard.

(c) *Rights; unlawful acts.* Each challenger ~~or~~ and watcher shall have the right to remain in the polling place from the time the polls are opened until the returns are completed. It shall be unlawful for any such challenger and watcher to inquire or ascertain for what candidate any voter may intend to vote, or has voted, or to converse in the polling place or within one hundred (100) feet thereof with any voter or to assist them in the preparation of the voter's ballot or in the operation of the voting machine. Any challenger and watcher offering or attempting to do



so shall lawfully be ejected by the judges and shall also be subject to the punishment provided in this chapter.

(d) *Removal.* A challenger and watcher may be removed at any time by the same person who appointed the challenger ~~or~~ **and** watcher.

(e) *Other persons allowed in polling places.* Persons other than accredited challengers and watchers who desire to challenge the vote of any person shall be permitted to enter the polling place for that purpose, but a majority of the judges may limit the number of persons to be allowed in the polling places at any one **time** for such purpose; and all such persons shall leave the polling place as soon as the right to vote of the person challenged by them has been decided.

(f) *Form of certificate.* The form for the certificate of a challenger and watcher shall be in the following form:

\_\_\_\_\_

#### CHALLENGERS AND WATCHERS CERTIFICATE

City of Laurel, Maryland

\_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_

To the Judges of Election:

This is to certify, ~~that~~ \_\_\_\_\_, a registered voter, has been designated by me to act as Challenger and Watcher, for \_\_\_\_\_ Election District, during the Election to be held on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

Respectfully submitted,

(Name of Candidate or Chairman of Campaign Committee)

(Office)

Duties ~~and~~ **of** Challengers **and** of Watchers

**"Provided that a challenger and watcher complies with all regulations and provisions of the Charter, the Code, and any direction given by an election judge, e**Each challenger and watcher shall have the right to remain in the polling room in the designated area from the time the polls are opened until they are closed, and after that time ~~he~~**they** shall be permitted to remain until the returns are completed."



A challenger and watcher shall not converse with voters, assist a voter in voting, or operate a voting machine.

## **Sec. 6-19. - Campaign ~~m~~Materials.**

(a) All campaign materials published, disseminated, distributed or otherwise made available to the public in any format shall contain the authority line of a candidate, campaign finance unit or campaign committee, or statement of disclaimer by the person, committee, or entity responsible for issuance, publication or dissemination of the material.

(b) *Authority line.* Except as otherwise provided in this section, any item of campaign material authorized by a candidate, campaign finance entity or political committee shall contain, set apart from any other message, a legible authority line that clearly states as follows:

(1) **As to campaign material published, distributed, or disseminated by** ~~If to a candidate or campaign finance entity: the name and address of the treasurer of the each campaign finance entity responsible for production, distribution, publication and/or dissemination of the campaign material; and as to each treasurer named, the name and address of the candidate and campaign finance entity for which the treasurer is acting responsible for the campaign material;~~ and

(2) **As to campaign material published, distributed, or disseminated by any other person or entity,** ~~If from any committee, individual, or other entity responsible for production, distribution, publication and/or dissemination of the campaign material, the name and address of the person or entity responsible for the campaign material.~~

(c) Notwithstanding anything contained herein to the contrary, if the campaign material is too small to include the information required under this subsection **(b)(1) in a legible manner,** the authority line need only contain the name and title of the treasurer ~~or person or~~ **of one campaign finance entity responsible for the campaign material and the name of the campaign finance entity for which the treasurer is acting. If the campaign material is too small to include the information required under subsection (b)(2) in a legible manner, the authority line need only contain the name of the** ~~or person or entity responsible for the campaign material.~~

(d) **Campaign materials not authorized by candidate.** ~~For Campaign materials that are not authorized are~~ **is published or distributed in support of or in opposition to a candidate, but is** ~~not authorized by a candidate or the campaign finance entity, the campaign materials shall include the following message:~~

"This information has been authorized and paid for by (NAME OF THE PAYOR, PERSON OR ORGANIZATION), (NAME OF TREASURER, IF ANY), Treasurer. This message has not been authorized or approved by any candidate."



## Sec. 6-20. - Canvass of eElection.

(a) *Tallying voting machines.* The ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Election ~~s~~Supervisors shall tally the machine votes once the polls have been closed. Once the voting machine tallies have been completed those results will be publicly announced as the unofficial results.

(b) *Tallying paper ballots.* The ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Election ~~s~~Supervisors shall meet no later than 5:00 p.m. on the day after the election to tally the paper ballots.

(c) *[Illegible or mismarked ballots.]* Illegible or mismarked ballots shall be counted so long as a majority of the ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Election ~~s~~Supervisors agrees that the intent of the voter can be ascertained. Partial ballots that vote for less than the number of candidates running for an office or leave some offices blank shall be counted for any candidate clearly voted for.

## Sec. 6-21. - Returns.

(a) *Preparation.* The chief judges shall make duplicate statements or returns of the result of the canvass of said votes, each of which shall, if possible, be upon a single sheet of paper, and shall contain a caption containing the day on which said election was held and the hours thereof, and showing the whole number of votes given for each candidate, designating the office for which they were given. Such statements or returns shall be printed, or partly printed or written. In case a proposition of any kind has been submitted to the voters at any election, it shall also show in like manner the number of votes for and against such proposition. At the end of each such statement or return shall be printed or written a certificate that the same is correct in all respects; which certificate and each sheet of paper forming a part of the statement shall be signed by the judges of such election.

(b) *Where sent.* ~~If any judge shall decline to sign such return, he or she shall state his or her reasons thereof in writing, and a copy thereof, signed by himself or herself shall be enclosed with each return; If any judge shall decline to sign such return, the judge shall set forth their reason for declining in a signed writing and a copy shall be enclosed with each return, and~~ Each return or statement shall be enclosed in an envelope which shall then be securely sealed and each of the judges shall then write his or her their name across the sealed fold of the envelope. All envelopes shall be delivered to the chief of judge to be delivered to the ~~b~~Board of elections.

(c) *Challenges.* All challenges to elections or votes ~~much~~ shall be in writing fully stating the grounds for such challenge and delivered to the chairperson of the ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Elections Supervisors by 5:00 ~~1204:00~~ p.m. on the Thursday following the Tuesday election.

(d) *Preservation of ballots.* All ballots or official voting tallies of any ~~e~~City election shall be preserved for at least six (6) months from the date of the election, after which time they may be destroyed. ~~Absentee~~ Vote by Mail ballot applications, certifications, ballot envelopes, and



ballots shall be kept separate from ballots cast in the regular voting places and retained for six (6) months after the election.

## **Sec. 6-22. - Certification of rResults.**

The eCity eCouncil shall meet on the Thursday after each election at the Joseph R. Robison Laurel Municipal Center or other location designated by the mMayor and eCity eCouncil to receive and certify the election returns as provided in section 6-21.

**Within 30 days after the results of a City election are certified, the City Clerk shall submit to the State Board an electronic copy of the election results for each office or question voted on at the election, including:**

**(1) vote totals for each office or question reported separately by each of the following voting methods, if applicable:**

**(i) in-person early voting;**

**(ii) Vvote by Mmail;**

**(iii) provisional voting; and**

**(iv) in-person election day voting.**

## **Sec. 6-23. - Recounts.**

(a) *Mandatory recount.* The bBoard shall conduct a recount of the votes cast in an election if the difference in the number of votes between the two (2) highest vote getting candidates for mMayor and/or eCouncilmember at-large is less than three (3.00) percent of the total number of votes cast for that office. In addition, the bBoard shall conduct a recount of the votes cast in an election if the difference in the number of votes between the two (2) highest vote getting candidates for eCouncilmember for each ward is less than three (3.00) percent of the total votes for eCouncilmember cast for eCouncilmember in that ward.

(b) *Permissive recount.* The bBoard may conduct a recount of votes cast in an election upon filing of a written petition for recount submitted by a candidate who voted ran in the election. The petition shall be filed with the bBoard within twenty-four (24) hours of the public announcement of the returns. The petition shall set forth the alleged basis supporting the request for recount. The petitioner shall bear the burden of proof to provide evidence of any irregularities in the election, including, **but not limited to:** proof of persons casting multiple votes in the election; irregularities in the casting, counting, or canvassing of any early voting, absentee, provisional, or machine ballots cast at any polling place; or irregularities resulting from any alleged fraud in the election process, the conduct of the election, or the canvass thereof. Any petitioner seeking a permissive recount shall submit a deposit of one thousand



dollars (\$1,000.00) with the petition for any request for recount of a mayoral and at-large council race. A deposit of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) shall be submitted with any petition for recount in connection with a request for recount of results in any councilmanic election for Ward 1 or Ward 2. **In the event the petition for recount is denied, the deposit shall be refunded to the petitioner.** The ~~b~~Board shall have the discretion to waive or reduce the amount of the required deposit. The ~~b~~Board shall have sole authority to determine, in its discretion, whether to grant a permissive recount upon a majority vote of members of the ~~b~~Board.

## ARTICLE VI. - FAIR CAMPAIGN FINANCE ACT

### Sec. 6-24. - Distribution of ~~s~~Summary of ~~e~~Election ~~l~~Laws.

The ~~e~~City ~~e~~Clerk shall summarize provisions of the election laws of the ~~e~~City relating to campaign contributions and expenditures and provide for the distribution of this summary to all candidates for election to public office at the time such candidates file for election and shall prepare and include in such distribution to each candidate specimen forms provided for in this Chapter. ~~subtitle.~~

### Sec. 6-25. - Appointment of ~~e~~Campaign ~~t~~Treasurer; Resignation of Treasurer; ~~e~~Candidate ~~j~~Joining ~~t~~Ticket or ~~s~~Slate.

(a) Each candidate for, or election to, public office, upon or before, and as a condition precedent to qualifying as such candidate, shall appoint one (1) campaign treasurer and shall file the name and address of the campaign treasurer with the ~~b~~Board as provided in subsection (c) of this section. A campaign treasurer shall be a resident of the Maryland and have resided in the state for six (6) months prior to the date of ~~his or her~~ **their** appointment. Every treasurer so appointed shall accept such appointment, in writing, prior to filing thereof. The ~~b~~Board shall not accept any certificate of candidacy unless the name of the treasurer has been filed with it as provided in this subsection. No candidate's family member shall be appointed or serve as a treasurer. **No candidate shall appoint themselves as nor serve as their own treasurer.**

(b) The ~~e~~City ~~e~~Clerk shall devise and maintain a form for appointment of a treasurer and the acceptance of such appointment by the treasurer. Each candidate shall obtain and use, without alteration, the ~~e~~City 's form for appointment of a treasurer.

(c) Any candidate, after filing the name of a treasurer as prescribed in subsection (a) of this section, may choose, at any time after such filing and the first filing to join a group, combination or organization of candidates, commonly known as a "ticket" or "slate," at which time the candidate must notify the ~~b~~Board of the fact that he has joined the ticket or slate **by submitting the Appointment of Treasurer Slate form.** The treasurer of the ticket or slate shall report in the same manner as the treasurer of any political committee as prescribed in this article.



(d) No person may solicit or collect funds to be used in furtherance of the election to municipal office of any person who has not filed a ~~certificate of candidacy~~ **complete candidate packet including** and the notice of appointment of treasurer required by subsection (b) of this section.

**(e) A treasurer who resigns shall do so in writing on a form prescribed by the Board of Election Supervisors filed with the City Clerk. The candidate immediately shall appoint and file a new treasurer in accordance with this section. The treasurer's resignation shall not be effective until a successor is registered with the City Clerk. A treasurer, when resigning, shall certify that the treasurer has served until all duties have been performed and a successor was duly chosen.**

## **Sec. 6-26. - Contributions and ~~e~~Expenditures of ~~p~~Pass ~~t~~Through ~~t~~Treasurer;** **Campaign Bank Accounts.**

**(a) A political committee must establish a checking account exclusively for campaign use. The checking account must be established at a financial institution that is located or operates branches in Maryland. The name of the political committee must be on the account. All income (including loans) must be deposited in the campaign bank account. Personal bank accounts of the responsible officer or the candidate may not be used.**

**(b)** All contributions, money or other valuable things collected, received or disbursed by any candidate, **slate** or committee for any purpose, shall be paid over to and made to pass through the hands of the treasurer and shall be disbursed by him or her **the treasurer**; and it shall be unlawful and a violation of this chapter for any candidate or any member of a committee, **slate** or for any member of a political committee, to make any expenditure, to disburse or expend money or any other valuable things, for any purposes until the money or other valuable things so disbursed or expended shall have passed through the hands of the treasurer; except, that it shall not be unlawful for a candidate, or a person designated by **the candidate**, to expend his **their** own personal funds; provided, that such expenditure is reported to the treasurer, a receipt is issued by the treasurer and the treasurer's report indicates whether those funds are reimbursed.

## **Sec. 6-27. - Books, ~~r~~Records and ~~r~~Receipts of ~~t~~Treasurer.**

(a) *Account books.* Every treasurer shall keep detailed, full and accurate accounts in proper books, to be called "account books," to be provided and preserved by **the treasurer** ~~him or her~~, of all contributions, money or valuable things received by or promised to, and all expenditures, disbursements and promises of payment or disbursements of money or valuable things made by any committee, or any of its officers or members, or by any person acting under its authority, or on its behalf or by such treasurer, and setting forth in such statement and accounts the sum or valuable thing so received, disbursed or promised, as the case may be,



and the date when, the name of the person and ~~his or her~~ their address from whom received or promised, or to whom paid or promised, as the case may be, and the object and purposes for which the sum, or other valuable thing, was received, disbursed or promised, as the case may be. Such books and records may be destroyed or discarded at any time after one (1) year from the date of filing the final report required under this chapter unless a court of competent jurisdiction shall order their retention for a longer period.

*(b) Campaign contribution receipts.*

(1) Upon receipt and before depositing a campaign contribution, a "campaign contribution receipt" shall be issued by the treasurer to each person or treasurer of a committee, slate or group or organization of persons making a contribution to the campaign or purchasing a ticket or tickets to any campaign-related event or purchasing any campaign-related item or items in the amount of fifty-one dollars (\$51.00) or more, or upon receipt for any lesser amount, to the candidate, slate or committee of which ~~he is~~ they are the treasurer, setting forth:

- a. The date of the contribution or purchase of a ticket or other item;
- b. The name and address of the person making the contribution or purchase of a ticket or other item;
- c. The amounts of the individual contributions and/or cost of the ticket(s) or other item(s) and the total for all contributions and/or purchases;
- d. The name of the candidate or organization.

(2) A check received by a treasurer shall itself serve as a receipt and no additional receipt shall be necessary. Such check shall be recorded by the treasurer in the account books and shall include the date of the check, the amount of the check, the bank upon which it is written and the name of the person signing the check.

(3) The treasurer shall retain all campaign contribution receipts with his their books and records as required by subsection (a) of this section and report the information therein in the statement of contributions and expenditures required under this chapter.

(4) The campaign contribution receipt issued to a contributor shall serve as evidence of a contribution by such contributor.

(c) *Anonymous contributions.* Any money or other thing of value received from any unknown person or source by any treasurer or other person slate or committee authorized to incur obligations or to pay or defray obligations or expenses under the provisions of this chapter, shall not be used for any political purpose whatsoever, but shall be paid by the treasurer, slate or other persons or committee so receiving the same to the city finance officer who shall donate the funds to a non-profit organization within the City limits.



## **Sec. 6-28. - Contributions of eCandidate.**

(a) *Contribution.* Any person who is a candidate for public office may make voluntary contributions or payment of money to any treasurer, subject to the provisions and restrictions of this chapter, and for any of the purposes permitted by this chapter, and for no other purposes.

(b) *Expenses.* Any person who is a candidate for public office may pay that candidate's ~~own~~ **bona fide campaign-related** personal expenses for filing fees, telegrams, telephoning, travel and board. The payment of such personal expenses shall not be subject to the limitations provided in ~~s~~Section 6-30.

## **Sec. 6-29. - Limits of eContributions.**

It shall be unlawful for any individual, either directly or indirectly, to contribute any money or thing of value greater **than** four thousand dollars (\$4,000.00) in any ~~e~~City election. The limit of contribution shall be considered for adjustment after each general election.

## **Sec. 6-30. - Expenditures by tTreasurer.**

(a) *Proper expenditures.* It shall be lawful for any treasurer in connection with any election and in making provisions therefore, to pay all lawful expenses including, but not limited to, the following expenses:

(1) Hiring of ~~halls~~ **venues** and music for public meetings and for advertising the same;

(2) Printing, ~~and~~ circulating, **and/or distributing** political articles, circulars, pamphlets and books or renting radio and television time and newspaper space for political speeches and advertising;

(3) Printing and distributing the sample or specimen ballots or instructions to voters, subject, however, to such prohibitions or restrictions as may be imposed by this chapter upon the publication and distribution of such sample or specimen ballots or instructions;

(4) Renting rooms and headquarters;

~~5) Compensating clerks, stenographers and typists employed in the committee rooms;~~

~~(5)~~**6**) Traveling and other legitimate expenses of political agents, committees, and public speakers; **and**

~~(6)~~**7**) Necessary postage, stationery, telegrams, telephoning, and printing expenses.



(b) *Time for presentation of statement of money due.* Any statement of money owing by a treasurer must be presented for payment to the treasurer within thirty (30) days following the election in connection with which such liability was incurred **and shall include receipts and documentation for all expenditures made in connection with a campaign.**

**Sec. 6-31. – Election Campaign Finance ~~r~~Reports to be ~~f~~Filed by ~~t~~Treasurer.**

(a) The treasurer designated by a candidate prior to an election shall file reports or statements of contributions and expenditures as prescribed by the ~~b~~**B**oard of ~~e~~**E**lection ~~s~~**S**upervisors.

(1) A successful candidate, shall file a final campaign financial report that is accepted and approved as sufficiently itemized and complete by the election ~~b~~**B**oard or its designee no later than noon on the day **that is three (3) calendar days** prior to the date on which the successful candidate takes office.

(2) Unsuccessful candidates shall file a final campaign **finance** report that is accepted and approved as sufficiently itemized and complete by the election ~~b~~**B**oard or its designee within thirty (30) days of the election.

(b) Before filing a final campaign **finance** report, the treasurer shall pay all outstanding obligations. It shall be the responsibility of each candidate to advise the candidate's creditors that invoices must be received by the candidate within fourteen (14) days of the election. Any unpaid debts reflected in the final campaign **finance** report shall be deemed a contribution and therefore subject to the limitations of contributions prescribed in ~~s~~**S**ection 6-~~29~~**30**.

(c) It is the responsibility of the treasurer to file the report and such report shall be in full and accurate detail. Each report shall contain all contributions received and expenditures made since filing of the initial report. Any campaign financial report which simply displays lump sum funds spent or obligated to campaign consultants, public relations firms or other entities without reasonable itemization of services provided shall be rejected and returned to the treasurer as failing to meet campaign **finance** reporting guidelines.

(d) **Disposition of Surplus Funds. After all campaign expenditures have been made and prior to filing a final campaign finance report under subsection (a) of this section, any remaining balance in the account of the campaign finance entity shall be returned pro rata to the contributors or paid to:**

**(1) the City; or**

(2) A charitable organization registered or exempt from registration under the Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act in Section 6-101 et seq of the Business Regulation Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland; ~~or~~



(3) In the case of a continuing campaign committee, surplus funds may be carried forward to be used in a subsequent election cycle provided such funds are reported as carry-forward receipts during the subsequent election cycle.

~~It shall be unlawful for a treasurer to accept money or any other thing of value for or intended to be used on behalf of the candidate more than twenty-one (21) days after an election.~~

(e) A violation of this section shall be punishable in accordance with ~~s~~Section 6-365.

## **Sec. 6-32. - Requirement for fFiling of Campaign Finance rReports by sSuccessful cCandidate.**

(a) No person shall enter upon the duties of any public office, or receive any salary, benefits or emoluments related thereto, unless and until the successful candidate shall have filed the campaign finance reports required under this chapter.

(b) The provisions of this section, with respect to the timing for the filing of campaign finance reports, shall be mandatory and not discretionary. A candidate who fails to fulfill said requirement shall be deemed to have withdrawn ~~his or her~~ their certificate of candidacy and forfeited the candidate's right to elective office.

## **Sec. 6-33. Payment for Political Endorsement Prohibited** ~~on early voting days and election day.~~

(a) Prohibited. No candidate, or campaign committee, or any person acting on behalf of any of the foregoing may at any time, directly or indirectly, pay or incur any obligation to pay, nor may any person receive, directly or indirectly, any sum of money or thing of value in return for a political endorsement.

## **Sec. 6-334. - Maintenance of rReports.**

The ~~b~~Board shall keep and maintain all filings and reports filed pursuant to the provisions in the Charter and Code for a period of eight (8) years following the date of the election for which the report was submitted. This may be in the form of scanned documents, and filed electronically. Submitted reports shall be posted on the ~~e~~City website for the general public to review.

# **ARTICLE VII. - VIOLATIONS OF ELECTION LAWS AND APPLICABLE PENALTIES**

## **Sec. 6-345. - Prohibited cConduct.**



(a) In addition to provisions of the Charter, no person shall violate any of the following, nor shall any person solicit, induce, procure, assist, direct, or otherwise cause another person to commit any of the following acts or omissions.

(1) A person may not directly or indirectly give, offer, or promise money, aid, a gift, an advantage, a preferment, an emolument, or any other valuable thing to another person for the purpose of inducing or procuring that person to vote or refrain from voting for or against:

a. An individual, question, or measure at an election; or

b. The election of a candidate for public office.

(2) A person may not directly or indirectly receive, accept, request, or solicit money, aid, a gift, an advantage, a preferment, an emolument, or any other valuable thing from another person for the purpose of inducing or procuring a third person to vote or refrain from voting for or against an individual, question, or measure in any election.

(3) A person may not vote or refrain from voting for or against an individual, question, or measure at an election, in consideration of money, aid, a gift, an advantage, a preferment, an emolument, or any other valuable thing paid, received, accepted, or promised to the advantage of that person or of another person.

(4) A person, to defray the costs of a campaign finance entity, may not directly or indirectly pay, give, or promise money or any other valuable thing to any person other than a campaign finance entity.

(5) Notwithstanding the provisions of subparagraph (4), the foregoing shall not apply to the following:

a. An individual volunteering the individual's time or personal vehicle; and

b. Advertising costs or other expenses incident to the expression of personal views, provided that the advertising costs and expenses are not coordinated between the campaign finance entity, the candidate or anyone acting on behalf of the candidate or campaign finance entity.

(6) A person may not directly or indirectly pay or promise to pay a campaign finance entity in a name other than the person's name.

(7) A responsible officer of a campaign finance entity may not knowingly receive a payment or promise of payment and enter it or cause it to be entered in an account book in a name that the responsible officer knows is not the name of the person that made the payment or the promise to pay.



(8) An employer who pays employees in envelopes may not mark on or enclose in the envelopes a political motto, device, or argument that contains express or implied threats intended to influence the political opinions or actions of those employees.

(9) During the ninety (90) days before an election, an employer may not exhibit, or make in the employer's workplace any threat, expressed or implied, intended to influence the political opinions or actions of the employer's employees.

(10) A person may not publish, disseminate, or distribute, or cause to be published, disseminated, or distributed, any campaign material that does not bear an authority line required under the Code or Charter.

(11) A candidate may not make a payment, contribution, or expenditure, or incur any liability to pay, contribute, or expend, from the candidate's personal funds any money or valuable thing that is not a proper loan or contribution by a candidate to the campaign finance entity.

(12) An individual may not sign the name of any other individual on any form or other document under this title, without the authority of the individual whose name is signed.

(13) An individual may not falsely state or misrepresent the name or identity of any contributor making contributions or use a false name or false identity in connection with any campaign contribution.

#### **Sec. 6-356. - Penalties for certain prohibited conduct.**

(a) A person who violates subsection 6-35(a) shall be: ~~guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction is:~~

(1) Subject to a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) ~~or imprisonment not exceeding sixty (60) days, or both; and~~

(2) Shall be ineligible to hold any public office for a period of four (4) years after the date of the offense.

(b) Any person, campaign finance entity, or committee who violates any of the other provisions of the Code or Charter shall be guilty of a municipal infraction(s). The ~~b~~Board shall have the power and authority to impose fines for said infractions not exceeding a fine of one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00). In addition to the ~~b~~Board's power to impose fines for violations of any provision of this chapter or the Charter, the ~~b~~Board shall have the authority and power to remove the candidate from the ballot. Any person aggrieved shall have the right to appeal the decision within five (5) business days thereof to the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, pursuant to Title 7 of the Maryland Rules of Procedure. ~~by any action of the bBoard under this section shall have all the rights of appeal set forth in section 6-10 for violations of this chapter.~~



(c) Assessment of late fees and penalties. The ~~b~~Board shall be authorized and empowered to assess late fees on any person, campaign committee, or campaign finance entity for failure to timely file any applications, reports, statements of contributions or expenditures, or any other material or, information required under the Code or Charter, or as may be requested by the ~~b~~Board based on any submission made by a person responsible for filing the report, statement, or applications. ~~shall be assessed against any candidate, treasurer of any campaign finance entry, or campaign committee responsible for submission of the materials required under this section.~~ The late fee amount is twenty dollars (\$20.00) per day for every day or part of a day that a submission due to the ~~b~~Board is overdue. The ~~e~~Clerk to the ~~b~~Board shall accept for any late filed report, statement of contributions or expenses, and any other material required to be submitted under the Code, Charter or at the request of the ~~b~~Board. Late fees shall not continue to accrue on any late filed report, statement of contributions or expenditures, or any other filing due under this section provided that the person required to make the submission fully and completely complies with the filing requirements. Notwithstanding the foregoing, incomplete submissions to the ~~b~~Board required under the Code, Charter or at the ~~b~~Board's request shall, in the ~~b~~Board's discretion, continue to accrue late fees until all information required shall be properly submitted to the ~~b~~Board. Person(s) responsible for filing any of the materials or information required under the Code or Charter shall not pay directly, or indirectly any late fees or fines assessed under this section using monies derived from contributions made to the candidate or campaign finance entity.

**AND, BE IT FURTHER ENACTED AND ORDAINED**, that this Ordinance shall take effect on the date of its passage.

**PASSED** this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**SARA A. GREEN, CPM, MMC**  
City Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
**KYLA M. CLARK**  
President of the City Council

**APPROVED** this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**KEITH R. SYDNOR**  
Mayor





## CITY OF LAUREL, MARYLAND

**\*\*Note: Blue highlights =Edits of 04/28/2025\*\***

**\*\*Note: Yellow highlights indicate amendments made at Council requests\*\***

**\*\*Note: Green highlights indicated amendments made at direction of legal counsel and staff since first draft\*\***

### ORDINANCE NO. 2038 **"OPTION B"**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL, MARYLAND TO AMEND CHAPTER 6 ARTICLE I, SECTION 6.1- PURPOSE, SECTION 6-2- APPLICABILITY, SECTION 6-3- DEFINITIONS, ARTICLE II, SECTION 6-4- THE BOARD OF ELECTION SUPERVISORS AND ELECTION JUDGES- APPOINTMENTS, SECTION 6-5- POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE BOARD OF ELECTION SUPERVISORS, SECTION 6-6- COMPENSATION AND OATHS OF BOARD OF ELECTION SUPERVISORS, ARTICLE III, VOTERS, SECTION 6-7- VOTERS LISTS, ARTICLE IV- CANDIDATES FOR PUBLIC OFFICE, SECTION 6-9- NOMINATIONS AND CERTIFICATES OF CANDIDACY, SECTION 6-10- QUALIFICATIONS FOR CANDIDATES FOR PUBLIC OFFICE, SECTION 6-11, ACCEPTANCE OF NOMINATIONS FOR PUBLIC OFFICE, SECTION 6-12- CANDIDATES TO COMPLY WITH LAWS AND REGULATIONS, SECTION 6-13- ELECTION OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS TO BE NON-PARTISAN, ARTICLE V- CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS, SECTION 6-14- ESTABLISHMENT OF WARD ELECTION DISTRICTS, SECTION 6-15 ELECTION DAY, SECTION 6-16- ELECTIONEERING ACTIVITIES, SECTION 6-17 CONDUCT AT POLLING PLACES, SECTION 6-18- CHALLENGERS AND WATCHERS, SECTION 6-19- CAMPAIGN MATERIALS, SECTION 6-20- CANVASS OF ELECTION, SECTION 6-21- RETURNS, SECTION 6-22- CERTIFICATION OF RESULTS, SECTION 6-23- RECOUNTS, ARTICLE VI- FAIR CAMPAIGN FINANCE ACT, SECTION 6-24- DISTRIBUTION OF SUMMARY OF ELECTION LAWS, SECTION 6-25- APPOINTMENT OF CAMPAIGN TREASURER; CANDIDATE JOINING TICKET OR SLATE, SECTION 6-26- CONTRIBUTIONS AND EXPENDITURES OF PASS THROUGH TREASURER, SECTION 6-27- BOOKS, RECORDS, AND RECEIPTS OF TREASURER, SECTION 6-28- CONTRIBUTIONS OF CANDIDATE, SECTION 6-29- LIMITS OF CONTRIBUTIONS; SECTION 6-30- EXPENDITURES BY TREASURER, SECTION 6-31- ELECTION REPORTS TO BE FILED BY TREASURER, SECTION 6-32- REQUIREMENTS FOR FILING OF REPORTS BY SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE, SECTION 6-33- MAINTENANCE OF REPORTS, ARTICLE VII- VIOLATIONS OF ELECTION LAWS AND APPLICABLE PENALTIES, SECTION 6-34- PROHIBITED



**CONDUCT, SECTION 6-35- PENALTIES FOR CERTAIN PROHIBITED CONDUCT;  
AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

*Sponsored by the President at the request of the Administration.*

**WHEREAS**, on January 11, 2021, the Mayor and City Council of Laurel, Maryland approved Ordinance No. 1964, repealing and replacing Chapter 6- Elections in its entirety; and

**WHEREAS**, following the 2023 City of Laurel General Election, the Board of Election Supervisors conducted a complete review of the City Code regarding Elections and recommended the amendments to update the election laws of the City of Laurel; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and City Council of Laurel, Maryland agree with the recommendations of the City of Laurel Board of Election Supervisors on the changes as set forth herein; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED AND ORDAINED**, by the Mayor and City Council of Laurel, Maryland that Chapter 6 of the Laurel City Code be and hereby is amended as follows:

## **Chapter 6 - ELECTIONS**

### **ARTICLE I. - GENERAL PROVISIONS**

#### **Sec. 6-1. - Purpose.**

The purpose of this ~~e~~Chapter 6 and the election procedures contained herein govern the qualifications of voters and candidates for elective office, and the manner and procedures for the conduct of elections and elections processes in the City of Laurel, Maryland.

#### **Sec. 6-2. - Applicability.**

The provisions of this chapter shall apply to all elections, including all general, special, runoff, or referenda held subsequent to ~~November 2019~~ **November 2024.**

#### **Sec. 6-3.- Definitions.**

As used in this chapter and article 600 of the Charter, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated unless a contrary meaning is clearly intended from the context in which the term appears:



*Ballot* means any approved ballot, whether as a paper ballot, write-in ballot, absentee **Vote by Mail** ballot, provisional ballot, or any ballot cast in any approved voting machine or device.

*Board* means the Board of Election Supervisors for the City of Laurel and the members thereof.

*Board of Appeals* means the City of Laurel Board of Appeals.

*Business entity* means any corporation, limited liability company, general or limited partnership, or sole proprietorship (including a private consulting operation, joint venture, unincorporated association or firm, institution, trust, foundation, or other organization), whether organized for profit or not. As used in this chapter, the term "business entity" shall not include a political committee registered with the city.

**Campaign Committee means a political committee established under this article.**

~~*Campaign committee* means any combination of two (2) or more persons appointed by one (1) or more candidates or other persons, or formed in any other manner which has as a principal purpose the promotion of the success or defeat of a ballot question or candidate for elected office.~~

*Campaign finance entity* means a political committee established under this article.

*Campaign funds* means any funds contributed or loaned to a candidate, campaign finance entity, or campaign committee.

~~*Campaign materials*~~ means tangible material in any digital, electronic, printed, or other format principally intended to promote the success or defeat of any candidate(s), principle(s), or propositions(s), which has been, will be, or is sought to be submitted to a vote in any city election, including, but not limited to, any pamphlet, circular card, sample ballot, dodger, poster, advertisement, matchbook, nail file, balloon, or any other printed, multi-graph, photographed, typewritten, written manner or statement, or any matter of statement which may be copied by any device or method, or which may hereafter be used for making copies of printed or written matter in any form whatever for publication, display, or distribution, relating to or concerning any candidate or prospective candidate for public office or the acceptance or defeat of any proposition.

*Candidate* means a candidate for public office.

**Canvass means the entire process of vote tallying, vote tabulation, and vote verification, culminating in the production and certification of the election results.**

*Charter* means the Charter of the City of Laurel then and there in force and effect.

*City* means the City of Laurel, Maryland.



*City council* means the duly elected City Council of Laurel, Maryland.

**City Solicitor means the duly appointed City Solicitor of Laurel, Maryland.**

*Code* means the City of Laurel Code then and there in force and effect.

*Contribution* means the gift or transfer, or promise of gift or transfer, of money or other thing or value to a candidate or campaign finance entity to promote or assist in the promotion of the success or defeat of a candidate, ballot question, or prospective ballot question.

*Contributor* means any person or entity who makes a contribution, as the same is defined in this section.

*Councilmember* means an elected or appointed member of the Laurel City Council.

*County board* means the Prince George's County Board of Elections.

*Early voting day* means any day(s) close to, but in advance of, an election day as designated and authorized by the ~~e~~City ~~e~~Council for polls to be open to ~~qualified~~ voters for the purpose of casting ballots in an election.

*Election* means the process by which voters cast votes on one (1) or more contests under the law.

*Election day* means the official date for any general, **referenda, runoff**, or special election.

*Ethics commission* means the Ethics Commission for the City of Laurel.

*Expenditure* means a gift, transfer, disbursement, or promise of money or a thing of value by or on behalf of a campaign finance entity to promote, or assist in the promotion of the success or defeat of a candidate, political party, ballot question, or prospective ballot question in any election.

*Financial institution* means any bank that is licensed to receive deposits and make loans and is insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation; or, a credit union insured by the National Credit Union Insurance Fund.

*In-kind contribution* means the conferral of any benefit or value, other than money, contributed directly or indirectly to any candidate(s), campaign finance entity(ies), or political committee(s), including, but not limited to: goods; services for which the contributor would normally charge; or any payments made to a third-party on behalf of a candidate, political committee, or campaign finance entity. The assigned value of any in-kind contributions made by a contributor shall be defined as the fair market value of the in-kind contribution. In-kind contributions shall not include the contribution of a contributor's own time or use of a personal vehicle.



*Independent expenditures* means an expenditure by a person or a political committee for the publication or distribution of political matter advocating the election or defeat of an identified candidate which was not made in coordination or cooperation with, or with the consent of, or in consultation with, a candidate or the candidate's committee or campaign finance entity; or for the purpose of promoting the success or defeat of any matter or issue which has been submitted to a vote at an election, or is in the process of being petitioned to referendum.

*Mail-in-~~b~~B~~allot~~ or Vvote-by-~~M~~mail* means the process whereby voters make application for and submit completed ballots by either mail or in-person drop-off at a location authorized by the board of election supervisors.

**Political committee means any combination of two (2) or more persons appointed by one (1) or more candidates or other persons, or formed in any other manner which has as its principal purpose the promotion of the success or defeat of a ballot question or candidate for elected office.**

*Provisional ballot* means a ballot that is cast by an individual but not counted until the individual's qualifications to vote have been confirmed by the ~~b~~B~~oard~~ of ~~e~~E~~lection~~ ~~s~~S~~upervisors~~.

*Public office* means either the ~~m~~M~~ayor~~ or a member of the ~~e~~C~~ity~~ ~~e~~C~~ouncil~~.

*Registration* means the act by which a person becomes qualified to vote in any election.

*Report* means a campaign finance report filed with the ~~b~~B~~oard~~ of ~~e~~E~~lection~~ ~~s~~S~~upervisors~~ under this chapter.

**Slate means a political committee of two or more candidates who join together to conduct and pay for joint campaign activities.**

*Special election* means any election to resolve tie votes in any election, or to fill vacancies that arise at any time more than eighteen (18) months prior to any scheduled general election.

*State Bboard* means the State of Maryland Board of Elections.

*Surplus campaign funds* means any amount of money which remains in a candidate's campaign account after payment of all expenses, loans, and obligations after the certification of an election, at a time when the candidate or committee has elected not to pursue further elective office.

*Treasurer* means any person appointed by a candidate or campaign committee to receive or disburse money or other things of value to promote the success or defeat of any candidate or principle or proposition submitted to a vote at any election.

*Voter* means a person who is registered and qualified to vote in any election in the ~~e~~C~~ity~~.



## ARTICLE II - ELECTION OFFICIALS

### Sec. 6-4. - The ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Election ~~s~~Supervisors and ~~e~~Election ~~j~~Judges— Appointment.

(a) There shall be a ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Election ~~s~~Supervisors. The ~~b~~Board shall be responsible for managing and supervising all elections in the ~~e~~City. The ~~b~~Board shall be comprised of five (5) qualified duly registered voters of the City. The Board shall include a chairperson and four (4) chief judges comprised of two (2) from ~~of~~ each of the two (2) wards.

(b) On or before the second Monday of March 2019, and on the same day every four (4) years thereafter, the ~~m~~Mayor shall, with the advice and consent of the ~~e~~City ~~e~~Council, appoint a voter to serve as chairperson of the ~~b~~Board. The ~~m~~Mayor, with the approval of the ~~e~~City ~~e~~Council, shall appoint two (2) chief judges, ~~one~~ two (42) from each of the two (2) wards. The appointment of the two (2) chief judges shall be for a term of four (4) years and they shall serve until their successors ~~shall~~ have been nominated and duly qualified.

(c) In the event of a vacancy of the chairperson of the ~~b~~Board, or either or both of the chief judges, whether by sickness, death, or other inability to serve and discharge their respective duties and responsibilities, the ~~m~~Mayor, with the approval of the ~~e~~City ~~e~~Council, may appoint a substitute chairperson or chief judge(s) in accordance with this section.

(d) The ~~m~~Mayor shall have the power to remove any member of the ~~b~~Board or any election judge, for cause, with the approval of the ~~e~~City ~~e~~Council.

(e) Restrictions on members of the board, judges and employees. During their term(s) or tenure, members of the ~~b~~Board, election judges, and permanent, part-time, or temporary employyee(s) of the ~~b~~Board shall not: hold any other office within the ~~e~~City; be a candidate for public office; hold any position with any campaign finance entity or campaign committee; or, serve or assist any combination of candidates, campaign finance entity(ies), or campaign committee(s) in campaign activities. Members of the ~~b~~Board, election judges, and permanent, part-time, or temporary employee(s) of the ~~b~~Board may not actively participate in, support, or otherwise promote the success or defeat of any candidate or ballot question while holding office or being employed by the ~~b~~Board. Members of the ~~b~~Board, election judges, and permanent, part-time, or temporary employee(s) of the ~~b~~Board shall not directly or indirectly enter into any contract or contracts with the ~~e~~City.

### Sec. 6-5. - Powers and ~~d~~Duties of the ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Election ~~s~~Supervisors.

(a) *Powers and duties.* The ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Election ~~s~~Supervisors shall manage, oversee, and supervise the conduct of all elections for public office in the city.



(b) *Actions of the **B**board.* As deemed necessary from time to time, the board, with the approval of the city administrator, may obtain assistance and support from the eCity staff to assist the ~~b~~Board in the discharge of its official duties.

(c) *Administrative duties and record keeping.* In addition to any power, duty, or responsibility provided in the eCity Charter, the ~~b~~Board shall have the authority to direct the eCity eClerk in:

(1) Issuing and maintaining all election records in a separate filing system provided by the eCity, ~~and~~

~~(2) Keeping, maintaining, administering, and updating the supplemental voter registry and accepting, examining and, as appropriate, approving registration applications for the supplemental voter registry.~~

(d) *Campaign finance.* The ~~b~~Board shall have authority to provide, receive, and review campaign finance reports and all supportive information and correspondence submitted therewith and thereafter certify that campaign reports are timely and complete as outlined in this chapter, and the ~~b~~Board may delegate some or all of these responsibilities.

(e) *Election duties.* In addition to any power, duty, or responsibility provided for in the Charter and elsewhere in this chapter, the ~~b~~Board shall:

(1) Provide for the processes to certify candidates ~~nominations~~ for elected public office;

(2) Verify the eligibility of candidates for public office and thereafter to certify ~~nominations~~ of eligible candidates;

(3) Select and train election judges to assist in the operation of polling places for elections in the eCity;

(4) Issue the official election ballot;

(5) Provide a form for the certification of challengers and watchers;

(6) Provide for absentee vote by mail and provisional ballots;

(7) Prescribe, print, or obtain all necessary forms and related materials in such mediums as the ~~b~~Board may approve, and, if printed, in such quantities as may be reasonably be deemed necessary for the conduct of an election;

(8) Oversee operations of all polling places;

(9) Validate the authenticity and compliance with applicable laws governing the ~~of all~~ returned absentee of Vote by Mail ballots and any provisional ballots completed and submitted in early voting or on election day;

Underlining indicates new language added.

Strikethroughs indicate language deleted.

\* \* \* Asterisks indicate intervening language and section unchanged.



(10) Oversee the count, canvass, and certification of all election results;

(11) Provide for the recount of ballots; and

(12) Provide guidelines for the use of ~~mail-in ballots~~/vote-by-mail ballots.

(f) *Enforcement and review.* In addition to any power, duty, or responsibility provided for in the Charter or in this Code, the ~~b~~Board shall:

(1) Administer and enforce all election laws;

(2) Supervise and exercise control over all activities taking place in and around polling locations on any election or early voting days, including to regulate the conduct of candidates, campaign orders, challengers, and watchers; and

(3) Conduct administrative reviews of complaints made and directed to the ~~b~~Board in matters involving all aspects relating to the conduct of election matters.

(g) *Rulemaking.* The ~~b~~Board shall have the authority to enact such rules and administrative procedures and regulations as may be necessary to implement the provisions of this chapter and article 600 of the Charter.

## **Sec. 6-6. - Compensation and ~~e~~Oaths of ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Election ~~s~~Supervisors.**

(a) The ~~b~~Board and election judges shall receive compensation for their services as may be from time to time determined by the ~~m~~Mayor, with the approval of the ~~e~~City ~~e~~Council, using funds derived from the operating budget of the ~~e~~City.

**(b) Each Election Judge shall take an oath administered by the Mayor to read as follows:**

**Do you solemnly swear that you will obey and support the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution and laws of the State of Maryland, the Charter and Code of the City of Laurel, and that you will fairly, honestly and impartially execute the office of Election Judge, according to the Constitution and laws of this State?**

**(c) Immediately following the oath, each Election Judge shall sign a printed copy of the oath. The signed oath shall be retained by the City Clerk and filed with the election documents.**

## **ARTICLE III. - VOTERS**

### **Sec. 6-7. - Voter lists.**



*List of registered voters.* All eligible persons registered to vote with the ~~e~~County ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Elections, who reside in the ~~e~~City, and whose names appear on a list of registered voters, supplied by the ~~e~~County ~~b~~Board, shall be considered registered voters of the ~~e~~City and shall have their names placed upon the voter register.

## **Sec. 6-8. - Reserved.**

## **ARTICLE IV. - CANDIDATES FOR PUBLIC OFFICE**

### **Sec. 6-9. - Nominations and Certificates of eCandidacy.**

(a) All individuals wishing to have their name included on a ballot as a candidate for public office shall:

(1) Be duly registered ~~and qualified~~ voters in the ~~e~~City;

(2) File a completed candidate packet which including includes, but is not limited to, a certificate of candidacy and affidavit, appointment of treasurer, financial disclosure form, and all additional documents as may be required of all candidates by the Board, on the forms prescribed and provided by the ~~b~~Board on or before 12:00 noon on date set by the Board but no later than the first Friday in the month of August ~~the last Friday in the month of September~~ of the year that the election is to be held and tender the filing fee in an amount to be established by the ~~b~~Board; and

(3) Comply with all other qualifications and provisions of this Code, the Charter, and laws of the ~~s~~State.

(b) The ~~b~~Board shall timely review all ~~certificates of candidacy~~ submissions provided in the candidate packets and shall conduct any necessary investigations to determine eligibility of each applicant for candidacy, including verification that the applicant prospective candidate satisfies the residency requirements. ~~is a bona fide resident of the e~~City.

(c) The ~~b~~Board shall meet on a date set by the Board but no later than the ~~on the first third~~ Monday in ~~October~~ August of any election year to accept and review the required documentation of each applicant for nomination candidacy ~~to run~~ for public office.

### **Sec. 6-10. - Qualifications for cCandidates for pPublic eOffice.**

(a) All candidates for public office shall be qualified duly registered voters as defined in this chapter; and

(b) No person shall be deemed qualified to be a candidate for public office if:



(1) Such person is in arrears in the payment of any eCity tax, assessment, fine, penalty, or other financial obligation, **without limitation**, unless such tax, assessment, penalty, **or other financial obligation** etc., ~~without limitation~~, is the subject of an active and timely appeal to the appropriate tribunal or authority having jurisdiction over the appeal;

(2) Such person is in violation of any ordinance, regulation, statute, or provision etc., arising under the Charter or the Code, unless the violation is subject to a timely appeal to the appropriate tribunal or authority having jurisdiction over the appeal; ~~and~~

(3) Such person is in violation of any of the provisions of the Code or Charter governing elections and election laws of the eCity, including, but not limited to, any reporting requirements arising under the Code or the Charter, unless the violation is subject to a timely filed, pending and proper appeal; ~~or~~

(4) Such person fails to file an affidavit attesting and averring under oath or affirmation that the person is not in violation of any of the provisions in this section or any other requirement set forth in this chapter.

Candidate Financial Discloser—ref to ethics law, 2.56.

(c) Decisions on a person's qualifications, including satisfaction and compliance with all other provisions governing qualifications for candidacy for public office shall be determined by the ~~b~~Board. ~~In the event that A~~any person is aggrieved by a decision of the ~~b~~Board ~~on candidacy and contests any ruling which determines the qualifications or sufficiency of a nomination of a person candidate~~ for public office, that person shall have the right to appeal the decision **within three (3) business days thereof** to the ~~b~~Board of ~~a~~Appeals. ~~Appeals from decisions of the board shall be filed within three (3) calendar days of the date of the Board's decision.~~ The Board of Appeals shall schedule and hear any appeals referred to it within ten (10) calendar days of the date of the appeal. In the event that a person is aggrieved by any action of the ~~b~~Board of ~~a~~Appeals rendered under this section, the person shall have the right to appeal the matter to the Circuit Court for Prince George's County. Decisions of the circuit court shall be final with no further right of appeal.

## **Sec. 6-11. - ~~Acceptance of nominations~~ Filing for Candidacy for ~~p~~Public ~~e~~Office; w~~W~~ithdrawal of ~~e~~Candidacy.**

(a) Any person accepting **filing for candidacy** ~~a nomination~~ for public office shall file along with the nominating petition, file **a written affirmation under oath stating the person's** an affidavit containing ~~a sworn statement providing at a minimum the candidate's name, date of birth, residence address, and Social Security number,~~ **and such other information as the Board of Election Supervisors may require of all candidates**. The statement shall be made on forms provided and approved by the ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Election ~~s~~Supervisors. Any candidate who fails to comply with the filing requirements set forth herein, or who files a false statement shall



be deemed unqualified and the ~~b~~Board shall remove that candidate's name from the ballot prior to the election.

(b) Candidates may withdraw their candidacy at any time on or before the Monday following the filing deadline for applications for candidacy. Candidates withdrawing candidacy shall file a final report under ~~s~~Section 6-312.

#### **Sec. 6-12. - Candidates to ~~e~~Comply with ~~l~~Laws and ~~r~~Regulations.**

Every candidate shall be responsible for compliance with all laws, statutes, and regulations, including compliance by any challenger or watcher identified and appointed by the candidate or the campaign committee at or around a polling place on any election or early voting day. In addition, every candidate shall be responsible for the lawful placement of signs, placards, campaign advertisements, or other campaign related materials in any public right(s)-of-way, or on any ~~e~~City property.

#### **Sec. 6-13. - Election of ~~p~~Public ~~e~~Officials to be ~~n~~Non-~~p~~Partisan.**

Candidates for public office shall not run for office as a candidate, representative, or nominee of any political party.

### **ARTICLE V. - CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS**

#### **Sec. 6-14. - Establishment of ~~w~~Ward ~~e~~Election ~~d~~Districts.**

For election purposes, the ~~e~~City shall be divided into two (2) wards as the same are described in the Charter.

#### **Sec. 6-15. - Election ~~d~~Day.**

Elections, other than special elections, shall be held on the first Tuesday of November of each year an election for public officials is to be held. Polls shall be open to ~~qualified~~ registered voters. Voting shall commence at 7:00 a.m. and continue until 8:00 p.m.

#### **Sec. 6-16. - Electioneering ~~a~~Activities.**

(a) *General conduct of persons prior to election days, on or before early voting days and on election day.* The ~~b~~Board shall be responsible for and have authority to control all activities conducted in connection with elections, including the concurrent exercise of authority and jurisdiction over placement of campaign materials, signage, displays, placards, stickers, and other advertisements related to any political campaign. The ~~b~~Board, along with the City of



Laurel Department of Fire Marshal and Permit Services, shall enforce all sign ordinances and other regulations governing for placement of campaign materials, campaign signage, displays, placards, stickers, and other advertisements related to any political campaigns which shall not be displayed or erected more than forty-five (45) days prior to election day and shall be removed within seven (7) days following the election. In addition, on all days other than election day or any early voting days, the ~~b~~Board, along with the City of Laurel Department of Fire Marshal and Permit Services, shall remove and may thereafter destroy or dispose of any signs, displays, placards, stickers, and other advertisements related to any political campaign placed in any public right-of-way, on any property owned or controlled by the ~~C~~eity, or on other public property located in the ~~e~~City.

(b) *Authority of election judges.* At each polling place, each of the duly appointed election judges shall be vested with authority to keep and maintain the peace. In addition, the chief judge shall have the authority to contact any duly qualified law enforcement agency having jurisdiction in the City law enforcement for: any breach of the peace; any breach of election laws of the ~~e~~City; any interference with the progress or conduct of an election, the canvass of the ballots, or the ascertainment and transcription of the votes recorded on voting machines or ballots cast. Election judges in the City shall have the same duties, responsibilities, and powers as the same are delegated to election judges under Title 10 of the Election Article of the Maryland Annotated Code, and as more particularly set forth in Section 10-393 of the Election Article of the Maryland Annotated Code.

(c) *Electioneering at polling places.* No person shall canvass, electioneer, post, or distribute any campaign material or other handouts of any kind in any polling place or within a one-hundred-foot radius from the ~~front~~ main entrance to of any polling location. Polling places and voting stations shall be frequently cleaned to ensure the removal of any candidate paraphernalia and any other campaign or election related materials.

(d) *Traffic control.* The ~~b~~Board shall have the authority to: control ingress and egress to polling places; to ensure the safe and unimpeded passage for all voters and members of the public to polling places; ~~and to prevent any obstruction or impediment to voters and the public in accessing or leaving any polling locations;~~ and to identify parking areas for voters and all others seeking access to a polling place under the restrictions created in this Code, the Charter, and the laws of the State. The chief judge shall have the authority to direct law enforcement officers to maintain unfettered and unimpeded access to polling places.

(e) *Signage at polling places on election or early voting days.* The ~~b~~Board shall have the authority to control the placement of signs, displays, billboards, vehicles, advertisements, and other election related promotional materials at or near polling places to ensure that no sign, display, billboard, vehicle, advertisement, or other campaign related materials obstruct, impede, or otherwise interfere with safe passage and travel in and out of polling locations. This provision is not intended to prohibit vehicles bearing bumper stickers or other campaign signage from using public thoroughfares for purpose of accessing polling places.



(f) *Law enforcement.* It shall be the duty of all sworn law enforcement officers (on or off duty) present at polling places to obey the lawful order of any election judge to enforce the provisions of this chapter.

## **Sec. 6-17. - Conduct at ~~p~~Polling ~~p~~Places.**

(a) Each of the chief judges s has the authority to keep the peace and to cause any person to be arrested for any breach of the peace, or for any breach of the election laws of the ~~e~~City, or any interference with the progress or conduct of an election, the canvass of ballots, or the ascertainment and transcription of the votes recorded on the voting machines. It shall furthermore be unlawful for any person to canvass, electioneer or post any campaign material in a polling place or on public property within a certain radius from the entrance and exit of the building closed to that part of the building in which voting occurs. ~~This radius shall be that established pursuant to Ann. Code of Md, Art. 33, Sec. 24-23, as amended from time to time.~~

(b) The chapter ~~isn~~ not intended to prevent vehicles bearing campaign stickers or signs from using public thoroughfares that may be within the established radius for ingress and egress. Nor is this chapter intended to prevent canvassing, electioneering, and posting of any campaign material outside of the prescribed limit.

(c) It shall be the duty of all officers of the law present to obey the order of any election judge, and an officer making an arrest shall be protected in so doing ~~fulling~~ as if a warrant had been issued to him to make such arrest.

## **Sec. 6-18. - Challengers and ~~w~~Watchers.**

(a) *Authorized.* Each candidate or political committee shall have the right to designate a registered voter as a challenger and watcher at each place of registration and election. Such persons shall be assigned to such designated positions s near the judges inside the registration or polling room, so as to enable them to see each person as ~~he~~ they enter a polling place ~~offers to register to vote.~~ The challengers and watchers shall be protected in the discharge of their duty by the judges.

(b) *Certificate as evidence of right to be present.* A certificate signed by any candidate or chairman of a ~~campaign~~ political committee shall be sufficient evidence of the right of such challenger and watcher to be present in the registration or polling room. ~~A~~ a certificate shall meet the requirements established by ~~of the~~ Bboard.

(c) *Rights; unlawful acts.* Each challenger ~~or~~ and watcher shall have the right to remain in the polling place from the time the polls are opened until the returns are completed. It shall be unlawful for any such challenger and watcher to inquire or ascertain for what candidate any voter may intend to vote, or has voted, or to converse in the polling place or within one hundred (100) feet thereof with any voter or to assist them in the preparation of the voter's ballot or in the operation of the voting machine. Any challenger and watcher offering or attempting to do



so shall lawfully be ejected by the judges and shall also be subject to the punishment provided in this chapter.

(d) *Removal.* A challenger and watcher may be removed at any time by the same person who appointed the challenger ~~or~~ **and** watcher.

(e) *Other persons allowed in polling places.* Persons other than accredited challengers and watchers who desire to challenge the vote of any person shall be permitted to enter the polling place for that purpose, but a majority of the judges may limit the number of persons to be allowed in the polling places at any one **time** for such purpose; and all such persons shall leave the polling place as soon as the right to vote of the person challenged by them has been decided.

(f) *Form of certificate.* The form for the certificate of a challenger and watcher shall be in the following form:

\_\_\_\_\_

#### CHALLENGERS AND WATCHERS CERTIFICATE

City of Laurel, Maryland

\_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_

To the Judges of Election:

This is to certify, ~~That~~ \_\_\_\_\_, a registered voter, has been designated by me to act as Challenger and Watcher, for \_\_\_\_\_ Election District, during the Election to be held on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_.

Respectfully submitted,

(Name of Candidate or Chairman of Campaign Committee)

(Office)

Duties ~~and~~ **of** Challengers **and** of Watchers

**"Provided that a challenger and watcher complies with all regulations and provisions of the Charter, the Code, and any direction given by an election judge, e**~~Each~~ challenger and watcher shall have the right to remain in the polling room in the designated area from the time the polls are opened until they are closed, and after that time ~~he~~**they** shall be permitted to remain until the returns are completed."



A challenger and watcher shall not converse with voters, assist a voter in voting, or operate a voting machine.

## **Sec. 6-19. - Campaign ~~m~~Materials.**

(a) All campaign materials published, disseminated, distributed or otherwise made available to the public in any format shall contain the authority line of a candidate, campaign finance unit or campaign committee, or statement of disclaimer by the person, committee, or entity responsible for issuance, publication or dissemination of the material.

(b) *Authority line.* Except as otherwise provided in this section, any item of campaign material authorized by a candidate, campaign finance entity or political committee shall contain, set apart from any other message, a legible authority line that clearly states as follows:

(1) **As to campaign material published, distributed, or disseminated by** ~~If to a candidate or campaign finance entity: the name and address of the treasurer of the each campaign finance entity responsible for production, distribution, publication and/or dissemination of the campaign material; and as to each treasurer named, the name and address of the candidate and campaign finance entity for which the treasurer is acting responsible for the campaign material;~~ and

(2) **As to campaign material published, distributed, or disseminated by any other person or entity,** ~~If from any committee, individual, or other entity responsible for production, distribution, publication and/or dissemination of the campaign material, the name and address of the person or entity responsible for the campaign material.~~

(c) Notwithstanding anything contained herein to the contrary, if the campaign material is too small to include the information required under this subsection **(b)(1) in a legible manner,** the authority line need only contain the name and title of the treasurer or person or **of one campaign finance entity responsible for the campaign material and the name of the campaign finance entity for which the treasurer is acting.** ~~If the campaign material is too small to include the information required under subsection (b)(2) in a legible manner, the authority line need only contain the name of the~~ **or person or entity responsible for the campaign material.**

(d) **Campaign materials not authorized by candidate.** ~~For Campaign materials that are not authorized are~~ **is published or distributed in support of or in opposition to a candidate, but is** ~~not authorized by a candidate or the campaign finance entity, the campaign materials shall include the following message:~~

"This information has been authorized and paid for by (NAME OF THE PAYOR, PERSON OR ORGANIZATION), (NAME OF TREASURER, IF ANY), Treasurer. This message has not been authorized or approved by any candidate."



## Sec. 6-20. - Canvass of eElection.

(a) *Tallying voting machines.* The ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Election ~~s~~Supervisors shall tally the machine votes once the polls have been closed. Once the voting machine tallies have been completed those results will be publicly announced as the unofficial results.

(b) *Tallying paper ballots.* The ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Election ~~s~~Supervisors shall meet no later than 5:00 p.m. on the day after the election to tally the paper ballots.

(c) *[Illegible or mismarked ballots.]* Illegible or mismarked ballots shall be counted so long as a majority of the ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Election ~~s~~Supervisors agrees that the intent of the voter can be ascertained. Partial ballots that vote for less than the number of candidates running for an office or leave some offices blank shall be counted for any candidate clearly voted for.

## Sec. 6-21. - Returns.

(a) *Preparation.* The chief judges shall make duplicate statements or returns of the result of the canvass of said votes, each of which shall, if possible, be upon a single sheet of paper, and shall contain a caption containing the day on which said election was held and the hours thereof, and showing the whole number of votes given for each candidate, designating the office for which they were given. Such statements or returns shall be printed, or partly printed or written. In case a proposition of any kind has been submitted to the voters at any election, it shall also show in like manner the number of votes for and against such proposition. At the end of each such statement or return shall be printed or written a certificate that the same is correct in all respects; which certificate and each sheet of paper forming a part of the statement shall be signed by the judges of such election.

(b) *Where sent.* ~~If any judge shall decline to sign such return, he or she shall state his or her reasons thereof in writing, and a copy thereof, signed by himself or herself shall be enclosed with each return;~~ **If any judge shall decline to sign such return, the judge shall set forth their reason for declining in a signed writing and a copy shall be enclosed with each return.** ~~and~~ **E**ach return or statement shall be enclosed in an envelope which shall then be securely sealed and each of the judges shall ~~then write his or her~~ **their** name across the **sealed** fold of the envelope. All envelopes shall be delivered to the chief ~~of~~ judge to be delivered to the ~~b~~Board of elections.

(c) *Challenges.* All challenges to elections or votes ~~much~~ **shall** be in writing fully stating the grounds for such challenge and delivered to the chairperson of the ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Elections **Supervisors** by ~~5:00~~ **04:00** p.m. on the Thursday following the Tuesday election.

(d) *Preservation of ballots.* All ballots or official voting tallies of any ~~e~~City election shall be preserved for at least six (6) months from the date of the election, after which time they may be destroyed. Absentee **Vote by Mail** ballot applications, certifications, ballot envelopes, and



ballots shall be kept separate from ballots cast in the regular voting places and retained for six (6) months after the election.

## **Sec. 6-22. - Certification of ~~r~~Results.**

The ~~e~~City ~~e~~Council shall meet on the Thursday after each election at the Joseph R. Robison Laurel Municipal Center or other location designated by the ~~m~~Mayor and ~~e~~City ~~e~~Council to receive and certify the election returns as provided in section 6-21.

Within 30 days after the results of a City election are certified, the City Clerk shall submit to the State Board an electronic copy of the election results for each office or question voted on at the election, including:

(1) vote totals for each office or question reported separately by each of the following voting methods, if applicable:

(i) in-person early voting;

(ii) ~~V~~vote by ~~M~~mail;

(iii) provisional voting; and

(iv) in-person election day voting.

## **Sec. 6-23. - Recounts.**

(a) *Mandatory recount.* The ~~b~~Board shall conduct a recount of the votes cast in an election if the difference in the number of votes between the two (2) highest vote getting candidates for ~~m~~Mayor and/or ~~e~~Councilmember at-large is less than three (3.00) percent of the total number of votes cast for that office. In addition, the ~~b~~Board shall conduct a recount of the votes cast in an election if the difference in the number of votes between the two (2) highest vote getting candidates for ~~e~~Councilmember for each ward is less than three (3.00) percent of the total votes for ~~e~~Councilmember cast for ~~e~~Councilmember in that ward.

(b) *Permissive recount.* The ~~b~~Board may conduct a recount of votes cast in an election upon filing of a written petition for recount submitted by a candidate who **voted ran** in the election. The petition shall be filed with the ~~b~~Board within twenty-four (24) hours of the public announcement of the returns. The petition shall set forth the alleged basis supporting the request for recount. The petitioner shall bear the burden of proof to provide evidence of any irregularities in the election, including, **but not limited to:** proof of persons casting multiple votes in the election; irregularities in the casting, counting, or canvassing of any early voting, absentee, provisional, or machine ballots cast at any polling place; or irregularities resulting from any alleged fraud in the election process, the conduct of the election, or the canvass thereof. Any petitioner seeking a permissive recount shall submit a deposit of one thousand



dollars (\$1,000.00) with the petition for any request for recount of a mayoral and at-large council race. A deposit of five hundred dollars (\$500.00) shall be submitted with any petition for recount in connection with a request for recount of results in any councilmanic election for Ward 1 or Ward 2. **In the event the petition for recount is denied, the deposit shall be refunded to the petitioner.** The ~~b~~Board shall have the discretion to waive or reduce the amount of the required deposit. The ~~b~~Board shall have sole authority to determine, in its discretion, whether to grant a permissive recount upon a majority vote of members of the ~~b~~Board.

## ARTICLE VI. - FAIR CAMPAIGN FINANCE ACT

### Sec. 6-24. - Distribution of ~~s~~Summary of ~~e~~Election ~~l~~Laws.

The ~~e~~City ~~e~~Clerk shall summarize provisions of the election laws of the ~~e~~City relating to campaign contributions and expenditures and provide for the distribution of this summary to all candidates for election to public office at the time such candidates file for election and shall prepare and include in such distribution to each candidate specimen forms provided for in this Chapter. ~~subtitle.~~

### Sec. 6-25. - Appointment of ~~e~~Campaign ~~t~~Treasurer; Resignation of Treasurer; ~~e~~Candidate ~~j~~Joining ~~t~~Ticket or ~~s~~Slate.

(a) Each candidate for, or election to, public office, upon or before, and as a condition precedent to qualifying as such candidate, shall appoint one (1) campaign treasurer and shall file the name and address of the campaign treasurer with the ~~b~~Board as provided in subsection (c) of this section. A campaign treasurer shall be a resident of the Maryland and have resided in the state for six (6) months prior to the date of ~~his or her~~ their appointment. Every treasurer so appointed shall accept such appointment, in writing, prior to filing thereof. The ~~b~~Board shall not accept any certificate of candidacy unless the name of the treasurer has been filed with it as provided in this subsection. No candidate's family member shall be appointed or serve as a treasurer.

(b) The ~~e~~City ~~e~~Clerk shall devise and maintain a form for appointment of a treasurer and the acceptance of such appointment by the treasurer. Each candidate shall obtain and use, without alteration, the ~~e~~City 's form for appointment of a treasurer.

(c) Any candidate, after filing the name of a treasurer as prescribed in subsection (a) of this section, may choose, at any time after such filing and the first filing to join a group, combination or organization of candidates, commonly known as a "ticket" or "slate," at which time the candidate must notify the ~~b~~Board of the fact that he has joined the ticket or slate **by submitting the Appointment of Treasurer Slate form.** The treasurer of the ticket or slate shall report in the same manner as the treasurer of any political committee as prescribed in this article.



(d) No person may solicit or collect funds to be used in furtherance of the election to municipal office of any person who has not filed a ~~certificate of candidacy~~ **complete candidate packet including** and the notice of appointment of treasurer required by subsection (b) of this section.

**(e) A treasurer who resigns shall do so in writing on a form prescribed by the Board of Election Supervisors filed with the City Clerk. The candidate immediately shall appoint and file a new treasurer in accordance with this section. The treasurer's resignation shall not be effective until a successor is registered with the City Clerk. A treasurer, when resigning, shall certify that the treasurer has served until all duties have been performed and a successor was duly chosen.**

#### **Sec. 6-26. - Contributions and ~~e~~Expenditures of p~~Pass t~~Through t~~Treasurer;~~ Campaign Bank Accounts.**

**(a) A political committee must establish a checking account exclusively for campaign use. The checking account must be established at a financial institution that is located or operates branches in Maryland. The name of the political committee must be on the account. All income (including loans) must be deposited in the campaign bank account. Personal bank accounts of the responsible officer or the candidate may not be used.**

**(b)** All contributions, money or other valuable things collected, received or disbursed by any candidate, **slate** or committee for any purpose, shall be paid over to and made to pass through the hands of the treasurer and shall be disbursed by ~~him or her~~ **the treasurer**; and it shall be unlawful and a violation of this chapter for any candidate or any member of a committee, **slate** or for any member of a political committee, to make any expenditure, to disburse or expend money or any other valuable things, for any purposes until the money or other valuable things so disbursed or expended shall have passed through the hands of the treasurer; except, that it shall not be unlawful for a candidate, or a person designated by ~~him~~ **the candidate**, to expend ~~his~~ **their** own personal funds; provided, that such expenditure is reported to the treasurer, a receipt is issued by the treasurer and the treasurer's report indicates whether those funds are reimbursed.

#### **Sec. 6-27. - Books, ~~r~~Records and ~~r~~Receipts of ~~t~~Treasurer.**

(a) *Account books.* Every treasurer shall keep detailed, full and accurate accounts in proper books, to be called "account books," to be provided and preserved by ~~the treasurer~~ ~~him or her~~, of all contributions, money or valuable things received by or promised to, and all expenditures, disbursements and promises of payment or disbursements of money or valuable things made by any committee, or any of its officers or members, or by any person acting under its authority, or on its behalf or by such treasurer, and setting forth in such statement and accounts the sum or valuable thing so received, disbursed or promised, as the case may be,



and the date when, the name of the person and ~~his or her~~ their address from whom received or promised, or to whom paid or promised, as the case may be, and the object and purposes for which the sum, or other valuable thing, was received, disbursed or promised, as the case may be. Such books and records may be destroyed or discarded at any time after one (1) year from the date of filing the final report required under this chapter unless a court of competent jurisdiction shall order their retention for a longer period.

*(b) Campaign contribution receipts.*

(1) Upon receipt and before depositing a campaign contribution, a "campaign contribution receipt" shall be issued by the treasurer to each person or treasurer of a committee, slate or group or organization of persons making a contribution to the campaign or purchasing a ticket or tickets to any campaign-related event or purchasing any campaign-related item or items in the amount of fifty-one dollars (\$51.00) or more, or upon receipt for any lesser amount, to the candidate, slate or committee of which ~~he is~~ they are the treasurer, setting forth:

- a. The date of the contribution or purchase of a ticket or other item;
- b. The name and address of the person making the contribution or purchase of a ticket or other item;
- c. The amounts of the individual contributions and/or cost of the ticket(s) or other item(s) and the total for all contributions and/or purchases;
- d. The name of the candidate or organization.

(2) A check received by a treasurer shall itself serve as a receipt and no additional receipt shall be necessary. Such check shall be recorded by the treasurer in the account books and shall include the date of the check, the amount of the check, the bank upon which it is written and the name of the person signing the check.

(3) The treasurer shall retain all campaign contribution receipts with ~~his~~ their books and records as required by subsection (a) of this section and report the information therein in the statement of contributions and expenditures required under this chapter.

(4) The campaign contribution receipt issued to a contributor shall serve as evidence of a contribution by such contributor.

(c) *Anonymous contributions.* Any money or other thing of value received from any unknown person or source by any treasurer or other person slate or committee authorized to incur obligations or to pay or defray obligations or expenses under the provisions of this chapter, shall not be used for any political purpose whatsoever, but shall be paid by the treasurer, slate or other persons or committee so receiving the same to the city finance officer who shall donate the funds to a non-profit organization within the Ccity limits.



## **Sec. 6-28. - Contributions of eCandidate.**

(a) *Contribution.* Any person who is a candidate for public office may make voluntary contributions or payment of money to any treasurer, subject to the provisions and restrictions of this chapter, and for any of the purposes permitted by this chapter, and for no other purposes.

(b) *Expenses.* Any person who is a candidate for public office may pay that candidate's ~~own~~ **bona fide campaign-related** personal expenses for filing fees, telegrams, telephoning, travel and board. The payment of such personal expenses shall not be subject to the limitations provided in ~~s~~Section 6-30.

## **Sec. 6-29. - Limits of eContributions.**

It shall be unlawful for any individual, either directly or indirectly, to contribute any money or thing of value greater **than** four thousand dollars (\$4,000.00) in any ~~e~~City election. The limit of contribution shall be considered for adjustment after each general election.

## **Sec. 6-30. - Expenditures by tTreasurer.**

(a) *Proper expenditures.* It shall be lawful for any treasurer in connection with any election and in making provisions therefore, to pay all lawful expenses including, but not limited to, the following expenses:

- (1) Hiring of ~~halls~~ **venues** and music for public meetings and for advertising the same;
- (2) Printing, ~~and~~ circulating, **and/or distributing** political articles, circulars, pamphlets and books or renting radio and television time and newspaper space for political speeches and advertising;
- (3) Printing and distributing the sample or specimen ballots or instructions to voters, subject, however, to such prohibitions or restrictions as may be imposed by this chapter upon the publication and distribution of such sample or specimen ballots or instructions;
- (4) Renting rooms and headquarters;
- ~~5) Compensating clerks, stenographers and typists employed in the committee rooms;~~
- ~~(5)~~ **6**) Traveling and other legitimate expenses of political agents, committees, and public speakers; **and**
- ~~(6)~~ **7**) Necessary postage, stationery, telegrams, telephoning, and printing expenses.



(b) *Time for presentation of statement of money due.* Any statement of money owing by a treasurer must be presented for payment to the treasurer within thirty (30) days following the election in connection with which such liability was incurred **and shall include receipts and documentation for all expenditures made in connection with a campaign.**

**Sec. 6-31. – Election Campaign Finance rReports to be fFiled by tTreasurer.**

(a) The treasurer designated by a candidate prior to an election shall file reports or statements of contributions and expenditures as prescribed by the ~~b~~**B**oard of ~~e~~**E**lection ~~s~~**S**upervisors.

(1) A successful candidate, shall file a final campaign financial report that is accepted and approved as sufficiently itemized and complete by the election ~~b~~**B**oard or its designee no later than noon on the day **that is three (3) calendar days** prior to the date on which the successful candidate takes office.

(2) Unsuccessful candidates shall file a final campaign **finance** report that is accepted and approved as sufficiently itemized and complete by the election ~~b~~**B**oard or its designee within thirty (30) days of the election.

(b) Before filing a final campaign **finance** report, the treasurer shall pay all outstanding obligations. It shall be the responsibility of each candidate to advise the candidate's creditors that invoices must be received by the candidate within fourteen (14) days of the election. Any unpaid debts reflected in the final campaign **finance** report shall be deemed a contribution and therefore subject to the limitations of contributions prescribed in ~~s~~**Section 6-2930.**

(c) It is the responsibility of the treasurer to file the report and such report shall be in full and accurate detail. Each report shall contain all contributions received and expenditures made since filing of the initial report. Any campaign financial report which simply displays lump sum funds spent or obligated to campaign consultants, public relations firms or other entities without reasonable itemization of services provided shall be rejected and returned to the treasurer as failing to meet campaign **finance** reporting guidelines.

(d) **Disposition of Surplus Funds. After all campaign expenditures have been made and prior to filing a final campaign finance report under subsection (a) of this section, any remaining balance in the account of the campaign finance entity shall be returned pro rata to the contributors or paid to:**

**(1) the City; or**

(2) A charitable organization registered or exempt from registration under the Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act in Section 6-101 et seq of the Business Regulation Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland; **or**



(3) In the case of a continuing campaign committee, surplus funds may be carried forward to be used in a subsequent election cycle provided such funds are reported as carry-forward receipts during the subsequent election cycle.

~~It shall be unlawful for a treasurer to accept money or any other thing of value for or intended to be used on behalf of the candidate more than twenty-one (21) days after an election.~~

(e) A violation of this section shall be punishable in accordance with ~~s~~Section 6-365.

## **Sec. 6-32. - Requirement for ~~f~~Filing of Campaign Finance rReports by ~~s~~Successful eCandidate.**

(a) No person shall enter upon the duties of any public office, or receive any salary, benefits or emoluments related thereto, unless and until the successful candidate shall have filed the campaign finance reports required under this chapter.

(b) The provisions of this section, with respect to the timing for the filing of campaign finance reports, shall be mandatory and not discretionary. A candidate who fails to fulfill said requirement shall be deemed to have withdrawn his or her their certificate of candidacy and forfeited the candidate's right to elective office.

## **Sec. 6-33. Payment for Political Endorsement Prohibited** ~~on early voting days and election day.~~

(a) Prohibited. No candidate, or campaign committee, or any person acting on behalf of any of the foregoing may at any time, directly or indirectly, pay or incur any obligation to pay, nor may any person receive, directly or indirectly, any sum of money or thing of value in return for a political endorsement.

## **Sec. 6-334. - Maintenance of ~~r~~Reports.**

The ~~b~~Board shall keep and maintain all filings and reports filed pursuant to the provisions in the Charter and Code for a period of eight (8) years following the date of the election for which the report was submitted. This may be in the form of scanned documents, and filed electronically. Submitted reports shall be posted on the ~~e~~City website for the general public to review.

# **ARTICLE VII. - VIOLATIONS OF ELECTION LAWS AND APPLICABLE PENALTIES**

## **Sec. 6-345. - Prohibited ~~e~~Conduct.**



(a) In addition to provisions of the Charter, no person shall violate any of the following, nor shall any person solicit, induce, procure, assist, direct, or otherwise cause another person to commit any of the following acts or omissions.

(1) A person may not directly or indirectly give, offer, or promise money, aid, a gift, an advantage, a preferment, an emolument, or any other valuable thing to another person for the purpose of inducing or procuring that person to vote or refrain from voting for or against:

a. An individual, question, or measure at an election; or

b. The election of a candidate for public office.

(2) A person may not directly or indirectly receive, accept, request, or solicit money, aid, a gift, an advantage, a preferment, an emolument, or any other valuable thing from another person for the purpose of inducing or procuring a third person to vote or refrain from voting for or against an individual, question, or measure in any election.

(3) A person may not vote or refrain from voting for or against an individual, question, or measure at an election, in consideration of money, aid, a gift, an advantage, a preferment, an emolument, or any other valuable thing paid, received, accepted, or promised to the advantage of that person or of another person.

(4) A person, to defray the costs of a campaign finance entity, may not directly or indirectly pay, give, or promise money or any other valuable thing to any person other than a campaign finance entity.

(5) Notwithstanding the provisions of subparagraph (4), the foregoing shall not apply to the following:

a. An individual volunteering the individual's time or personal vehicle; and

b. Advertising costs or other expenses incident to the expression of personal views, provided that the advertising costs and expenses are not coordinated between the campaign finance entity, the candidate or anyone acting on behalf of the candidate or campaign finance entity.

(6) A person may not directly or indirectly pay or promise to pay a campaign finance entity in a name other than the person's name.

(7) A responsible officer of a campaign finance entity may not knowingly receive a payment or promise of payment and enter it or cause it to be entered in an account book in a name that the responsible officer knows is not the name of the person that made the payment or the promise to pay.



(8) An employer who pays employees in envelopes may not mark on or enclose in the envelopes a political motto, device, or argument that contains express or implied threats intended to influence the political opinions or actions of those employees.

(9) During the ninety (90) days before an election, an employer may not exhibit, or make in the employer's workplace any threat, expressed or implied, intended to influence the political opinions or actions of the employer's employees.

(10) A person may not publish, disseminate, or distribute, or cause to be published, disseminated, or distributed, any campaign material that does not bear an authority line required under the Code or Charter.

(11) A candidate may not make a payment, contribution, or expenditure, or incur any liability to pay, contribute, or expend, from the candidate's personal funds any money or valuable thing that is not a proper loan or contribution by a candidate to the campaign finance entity.

(12) An individual may not sign the name of any other individual on any form or other document under this title, without the authority of the individual whose name is signed.

(13) An individual may not falsely state or misrepresent the name or identity of any contributor making contributions or use a false name or false identity in connection with any campaign contribution.

#### **Sec. 6-356. - Penalties for eCertain pProhibited eConduct.**

(a) A person who violates subsection 6-35(a) shall be: guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction is:

(1) Subject to a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) ~~or imprisonment not exceeding sixty (60) days, or both; and~~

(2) Shall be ineligible to hold any public office for a period of four (4) years after the date of the offense.

(b) Any person, campaign finance entity, or committee who violates any of the other provisions of the Code or Charter shall be guilty of a municipal infraction(s). The ~~b~~Board shall have the power and authority to impose fines for said infractions not exceeding a fine of one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00). In addition to the ~~b~~Board's power to impose fines for violations of any provision of this chapter or the Charter, the ~~b~~Board shall have the authority and power to remove the candidate from the ballot. Any person aggrieved shall have the right to appeal the decision within five (5) business days thereof to the Circuit Court for Prince George's County, pursuant to Title 7 of the Maryland Rules of Procedure. ~~by any action of the bBoard under this section shall have all the rights of appeal set forth in section 6-10 for violations of this chapter.~~



(c) Assessment of late fees and penalties. The ~~b~~Board shall be authorized and empowered to assess late fees on any person, campaign committee, or campaign finance entity for failure to timely file ~~any applications~~s, ~~reports~~s, ~~statements~~s of contributions or expenditures, or any other material ~~or~~, information required under the Code or Charter, or as may be requested by the ~~b~~Board based on any submission made by a person responsible for filing the report, statement, or applications. ~~shall be assessed against any candidate, treasurer of any campaign finance entry, or campaign committee responsible for submission of the materials required under this section.~~ The late fee amount is twenty dollars (\$20.00) per day for every day or part of a day that a submission due to the ~~b~~Board is overdue. The ~~e~~Clerk to the ~~b~~Board shall accept for any late filed report, statement of contributions or expenses, and any other material required to be submitted under the Code, Charter or at the request of the ~~b~~Board. Late fees shall not continue to accrue on any late filed report, statement of contributions or expenditures, or any other filing due under this section provided that the person required to make the submission fully and completely complies with the filing requirements. Notwithstanding the foregoing, incomplete submissions to the ~~b~~Board required under the Code, Charter or at the ~~b~~Board's request shall, in the ~~b~~Board's discretion, continue to accrue late fees until all information required shall be properly submitted to the ~~b~~Board. Person(s) responsible for filing any of the materials or information required under the Code or Charter shall not pay directly, or indirectly any late fees or fines assessed under this section using monies derived from contributions made to the candidate or campaign finance entity.

**AND, BE IT FURTHER ENACTED AND ORDAINED**, that this Ordinance shall take effect on the date of its passage.

**PASSED** this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**SARA A. GREEN, CPM, MMC**  
City Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
**KYLA M. CLARK**  
President of the City Council

**APPROVED** this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**KEITH R. SYDNOR**  
Mayor





# CITY OF LAUREL, MARYLAND

**\*\*Note: Yellow highlights indicate edits made at Council request\*\***

## CHARTER RESOLUTION NO. 181

A CHARTER RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL, MARYLAND AMENDING, REARRANGING AND RENUMBERING ARTICLE 600 "REGISTRATIONS AND ELECTIONS", SECTION 601- "VOTERS AND REGISTRATION"; SECTION 602- "ELECTION OF MAYOR AND COUNCILMEMBERS"; SECTION 603 "WARD BOUNDARIES"; SECTION 604- "POLLING PLACES"; SECTION 605- "VOTING PROCEDURES"; SECTION 606- "SAME DAY REGISTRATION"; SECTION 607 "VOTE-BY-MAIL- BALLOTS"; SECTION 608- "ELECTIONEERING"; SECTION 609 "ELECTION EQUIPMENT AND SAMPLE BALLOTS"; SECTION 610- COMPLIANCE WITH ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS, ATTENDANCE, RECALL, DISQUALIFICATION AND SUSPENSION OF ELECTED OFFICIALS"; SECTION 611- "RECALL OF ELECTED OFFICIAL"; SECTION 612- "GROUNDS FOR RECALL OF ELECTED OFFICIAL"; SECTION 613- "SUSPENSION OF ELECTED OFFICIALS"; SECTION 614- "REFERENDA"; SECTION 615- "ADVISORY REFERENDA"; SECTION 616- ADOPTION AND INCORPORATION OF STATE LAW PROVISIONS"; SECTION 617- EXTRAORDINARY POWERS- CIVIL EMERGENCY".

*Sponsored by the President, at the request of the Administration.*

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and City Council of Laurel, Maryland adopted Charter Resolution No. 172 on January 11, 2021 that repealed and replaced Article 600 "Registrations and Elections", in its entirety; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Election Supervisors completed a comprehensive review of the City of Laurel Election laws and proposed amendments including rearranging sections, renumbering sections, and substantive changes to sections of Article 600 and; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Election Supervisors drafted the proposed amendments and forwarded them along with a recommendation to the Mayor and City Council dated December 31, 2024; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor and City Council agree with the amendments as proposed by the Board of Election Supervisors; and

## ARTICLE 600. - REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS

**Sec. 601. - Voters and rRegistration.**



All voters shall register in accordance with the laws, rules, and regulations of Prince George's County, Maryland and the State of Maryland. Every person who is registered with the Prince George's County Board of Elections and who is a resident of the City of Laurel shall be entitled to vote in all eCity elections.

## **Sec. 602. - Election of mMayor and eCouncilmembers.**

~~(a)The City shall be governed by a duly qualified and elected Mayor and five (5) duly qualified and elected Councilmembers, all of whom shall be elected by voters. No persons shall be eligible to hold office as Mayor or Councilmembers except those who, upon the day of election, shall be citizens of the United States, registered voters and residents of Laurel, and, in the case of candidates for either ward, a resident of the ward for which seek election.~~

(a)b)Election of the Mayor and Councilmembers shall occur at a general election which shall be held on the first Tuesday of the month of November 2019, and on the same date every two (2) years thereafter for all five (5) eCouncilmembers and every four (4) years thereafter for the eOffice of Mayor. Of the five (5) eCouncilmembers, there shall be two (2) eCouncilmembers elected from each of the two (2) wards, and one (1) eCouncilmember who shall be elected from the City as an at-large member of the City Council. Other than the eCouncilmember elected to the office of at-large-eCouncilmember, eCouncilmembers seeking office in either of the two (2) wards shall at all times be domiciled in and a resident of the respective ward for which the eCouncilmembers shall seek or hold office. All registered voters may cast votes for the eOffice of Mayor and eCouncilmember at-large. Only registered voters residing in one (1) of the two (2) wards may vote for candidates seeking the office of eCouncilmember for the ward in which the voter resides.

(b)e)The elected Mayor and members of the City Council shall be sworn in at the second regular meeting of the City Council following any election.

(c)d)The Mayor and Councilmembers shall, throughout the entirety of their respective terms of office and any extension thereof, comply with all qualifications necessary for candidacy, including residency requirements and prohibitions on conflict of interest. Failure of any public official to maintain and retain all qualifications for candidacy of office shall cause a forfeiture of their respective offices.

## **Sec. 603. - Ward bBoundaries.**

(a) The said City of Laurel shall be, for election purposes, divided into two (2) wards as follows:

*Ward No. 1.* The first ward shall embrace all of the Ceity lying northerly of the following boundary: Eastbound along Maryland Route 198 (Gorman Avenue) from its intersection with the westerly most boundary of the Ceity to its intersection with Van Dusen Road; thence southerly along Van Dusen Road to its intersection with Crow's Branch; thence easterly along Crow's Branch to its intersection with Harrison Drive; thence northeasterly along Harrison Drive to its



intersection with White Way; thence northwesterly 52.09± feet to the northwest property line of Lot 49 (AKA 1047 Harrison Dr.), Block "J," Fairlawn Subdivision; thence northeasterly 95.86± feet along the northwest property line of Lot 49; thence 8.3± feet along the northwest property line of Lot 48; thence northeasterly 1,314.348± feet along the rear property lines of Lots 48 through 27 (AKA 1003 Harrison Dr.), Block "J," Fairlawn Subdivision; thence southeasterly 114.2± feet along the northeast property line of Lot 27 to Harrison Drive; thence easterly along Montrose Avenue to its intersection with Eight Street; thence northeasterly along Eight Street to its intersection with Crow's Branch; thence easterly along Crows Branch to its intersection with Washington Boulevard (U.S. Route 1, Southbound); thence southerly along the aforesaid Washington Boulevard (Baltimore/Washington Boulevard) to its intersection with Cherry Lane; thence running with the existing Ceity boundary to the easterly most boundary of the Ceity at the Prince George's County-Anne Arundel boundary line.

*Ward No. 2.* The second ward shall embrace all of the eCity lying southerly of the boundary line of Ward No. 1.

(b) The eCity eCouncil shall, not less than once after the publication of each decennial census of the population of the United States, evaluate the wards of the eCity to ensure that the representation is reasonably equal, and shall have the power to change boundaries thereof. The effective date of any change of boundaries shall be determined by the eCity eCouncil.

#### **Sec. 604. - Polling pPlaces.**

There shall be no less than one polling place in each of the City's two wards. In the event that the Mayor and City Council shall determine that for the convenience of the public, because of necessity, emergent circumstances, or to comply with any regulations, ordinances, laws, or other statutes, that it is advisable or necessary to designate additional or alternate polling places in either or both wards, then they may by resolution provide for additional polling places. In such event the Mayor and City Council shall identify the geographic boundaries of any additional polling place, as applicable. The Mayor shall appoint such additional judges of the election as may be necessary.

#### **Sec. 605. - Voting pProcedures.**

(a) *Voting in Elections—Types.* The City shall permit ~~qualified~~ voters to cast ballots in Elections for public office, on any question, proposition, for recall, referenda, or in any special election using procedures and processes set forth in the Charter and this Chapter under procedures promulgated by the Board.

(b) *Voting Places, Procedures, and Hours.*

(1) *Election Day.* Voting in Elections at designated polling places shall occur on Election Days beginning at 7:00 a.m. and shall continue until 8:00 p.m. of the same, except that the Board shall permit any ~~qualified~~ voter who shall be in line to vote at a polling place at 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.



(2) *Early Voting.*

~~(A)~~ **(a)** The City Council or Board may provide for one or more early voting days in any election. Early voting for any election whether for public office or for any ballot question, proposition, or referendum submitted to ~~qualified~~ voters shall be scheduled on dates and times established by resolution of the Mayor and City Council, with voting to be held at the Joseph R. Robison Laurel City Municipal Center and any other location determined in the resolution. Resolutions permitting early voting shall be adopted by the Mayor and City Council not later than May 31 in any year of a general election or less than sixty (60) days prior to any special election.

~~(B)~~ **(b)** No Early Voting Day shall be held more than fifteen (15) days prior to the Election Day.

~~(C)~~ **(c)** Polls shall be opened to ~~qualified~~ voters on designated early voting days at such times and places as may be designated by the Board. Polls shall be open for a minimum of eight (8) hours per day if early voting shall be conducted on a Saturday and at least four (4) hours if early voting is to be conducted on any other day of the week.

**Sec. 606. -- Same day registration.**

~~•The City of Laurel Board of Election Supervisor shall allow for Same Day Registration for residents that live in the City of Laurel Corporate Boundaries. Those wishing to exercise their right to Same Day Registration for City Elections shall adhere to the following: (1) bringing a document showing proof of residency, Maryland driver's license, identification card with your current address, paycheck stub, bank statement, utility bill. •Once the Chief Election Judge determines you are a resident of the City and qualified to register, you will be permitted to vote in the election.~~

**Sec. 606- Vote by Mail**

~~(3) *Absentee Ballots.*~~

(A) **(a)** Any qualified voter of the City may vote as by mail ~~an absentee voter~~ in any election.

(B) **(b)** The ~~b~~Board shall be responsible for preparing and making available such forms for absentee Vote by Mail ballots as the Board deems necessary to permit voters to cast an ~~absentee~~ Vote by Mail ballot, including applications, affidavits, appointments of duly authorized agents and envelopes, to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of the absentee Vote by Mail ballot.

~~(C)~~ **(c)** A ~~qualified~~ voter shall submit an application to the Board for an ~~absentee~~ Vote by Mail voting ballot. The application shall be made in writing and signed by the applicant, voter or, if the applicant ~~voter~~ is unable to sign the application, shall bear the mark of the applicant voter and the signature of two (2) competent witnesses.

**(d)** Applications for absentee Vote by Mail ballots must shall be presented to the Board not later than 5:00 12:00 p.m. on the day Tuesday that is seven (7)



days before any Election, ~~excluding Saturdays, Sundays, or legal holidays.~~ Applications may be submitted by mail or delivered in person by the voter or the applicant's voter's duly authorized agent or by any other manner as may be approved by the Board of Election Supervisors. A voter may designate a duly authorized agent by any signed writing to the ~~that~~ effect or if the applicant ~~voter~~ is unable to sign the designation, then the application shall bear the applicant's voter's mark and the signature of two (2) witnesses.

(e) A person who appears at the Joseph R. Robison Laurel Municipal Center by 12:00 pm the day before Election Day and who produces a government issued photo ID reflecting their name and address and who is a registered voter who has not previously been issued a Vote by Mail ballot for the same election, will be given a Vote by Mail ballot.

~~(D)~~ (f) The Board shall review the application for absentee Vote by Mail ballot and shall reject any application if:

(i) The application is not filed before the applicable deadline;

(ii) The application is missing any of the information required by the Board as set forth in the application form;

(iii) The applicant is not eligible to vote;

(iv) The Board voter had has already been previously received a request for an application approved for an absentee Vote by Mail ballot, from the applicant;

(v) The applicant ~~has~~ already cast a ballot on an early voting day.

~~(E)~~ (g) The Board shall issue an absentee Vote by Mail ballot unless the Board in its discretion is unanimous in its decision to reject the application. In the event that an application is rejected by the Board, the Board shall forthwith notify the applicant that the application was rejected.

~~(F)~~ (h) Voters who have applied for, received, and thereafter submitted an absentee Vote by Mail ballot to the Board may not cast a ballot at any polling place.

~~(G)~~ (i) Other than as described in subsection (3)(C) ~~(c)~~ of this subsection, no person submitting an absentee Vote by Mail ballot may cast a vote using an absentee Vote by Mail ballot issued by the Board to another person.

~~(H)~~ (j) The Board shall not open or unfold any absentee Vote by Mail ballot received at any time prior to the closing of the polls on Election Day and then only at the commencement of the canvass of the election. Absentee Vote by Mail ballot applications and absentee Vote by Mail ballots returned shall be separated from all other ballot types and election materials.

~~(I)~~ (k) The canvass of the absentee Vote by Mail ballots shall be conducted by ward, in accordance with the applicable provisions of Section 602 of the Charter.



~~(J)~~ **(I)** Prior to opening any absentee **Vote by Mail** ballot, the Board shall inspect the ballot to determine whether the forms have been completed, including the oath or affirmation; that the voter is entitled to vote; and that the voter had not already cast a ballot in the election.

~~(K)~~ **(m)** In the event that **the** Board concludes that the absentee **Vote by Mail** ballot envelope satisfies all of the criteria set forth in subsection ~~(J)~~ **(IL)** above, the Board shall open the ballot envelope and separate the envelope from the ballot.

~~(L)~~ **(n)** The Board may only reject an absentee **Vote by Mail** ballot upon a unanimous vote of the entire Board if:

(i) The ballot was not received by the Board prior to the closing of the polls on Election Day;

(ii) The voter's oath was not sufficiently executed;

(iii) There is more than one ballot in the ballot envelope;

(iv) The ballot was not cast by a person eligible to vote;

(v) The voter has voted at the polls prior to the review of the absentee **Vote by Mail** ballot;

(vi) The ballot contained votes for candidates in excess of the maximum number of votes permissible in a given race, in which event only the race for which there is an over vote shall be excluded;

(vii) The ballot contains extraneous marks which does not permit the Board to clearly determine the voter's intent for that race;

(viii) The Board has received multiple absentee **Vote by Mail** ballots on behalf of the voter, in which event only the earliest absentee **Vote by Mail** ballot received shall be counted.

### **Sec. 607- Write-In Ballots**

~~(d)~~ *Write-In Ballots.* In all elections, a ~~registered and qualified~~ voter may cast a ballot by writing in the name of a candidate for public office, and said ballot shall be counted, provided that the ballot clearly and legibly identifies a candidate who meets **and has satisfied** all of the qualifications for public office **within five (5) business days of the canvass.**

### **Sec. 608- Provisional Ballots**

~~(e)~~ *Provisional Ballots.*

**(a1)** An individual is eligible to cast a provisional a ballot if:



~~(A)~~ **(1a)** The individual declares in written affirmation under oath submitted with the submission of the provisional ballot that the individual is a registered voter in Prince George's County, Maryland and the City of Laurel and is eligible to vote in the election; and

~~(B)~~ **(b2)** The individual's name does not appear on the City's election register or list of voters; or

~~(c3)~~ an election official asserts that the individual is not eligible to vote; or

**(d4) the individual does not have the necessary identification.**

**(b2)** Application for Provisional Ballot.

~~(A)~~**(1a)** Before an individual may cast a provisional ballot, the individual shall:

(i) Complete and sign the provisional ballot application approved by the Board; and

**(ii) Provide a copy of a current and valid Maryland driver's license or MVA ID card, student, employee, or military ID, U.S. passport; and**

**(iii) A copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document with the voter's name and current address (the same address shall be written on the provisional ballot application). Current shall mean that the document is dated within three (3) months of the election.**

**(iv) an individual who does not have the necessary identification required under this subsection shall be required to sign an acknowledgement that in order for their provisional ballot to count, they must submit the required identification to the City of Laurel Board of Election Supervisors not later than 4pm on the first Thursday after election day.**

~~(ii) **(iv)** Be given a data sheet setting forth the process by which the individual may obtain information on whether the provisional ballot was counted or not and the reasons, therefore.~~

**(c3)** Procedure.

~~(A)~~ **(1a)** An **individual who is eligible under subsection (a4) of this section** ~~eligible voter~~ who completes an application for a provisional ballot shall be issued and may submit a provisional ballot at a polling place on Election Day or any location and date designated for early voting.

~~(B)~~**(2b)** When submitted, a provisional ballot shall either be placed in a sealed envelope and secured in a locked box designated exclusively for provisional ballots, or otherwise stored in an electronic format, all at the direction of the Board.



(3e) An individual who submits a provisional ballot pursuant to subsection (c)(1) shall be given a data sheet setting forth the process by which the individual may obtain information on whether the provisional ballot was counted or not and the reasons therefore.

(d4) Canvass of Provisional Ballots.

(A) (1a) The Board shall adopt regulations regarding the handling and canvassing of provisional ballots.

~~(B)~~(2b) Envelopes containing provisional ballots shall not be opened until the Board has approved the provisional ballot application applicable to that ballot.

~~(C)~~ (3e) The Board may not reject a provisional ballot except upon a unanimous vote.

~~(D)~~(4d) The Board shall reject a provisional ballot if:

(i) The individual is not qualified to vote in a City election;

(ii) The individual failed to sign the oath or affirmation on the provisional ballot application;

(iii) The individual cast more than one (1) ballot in the same election;

(iv) The provisional ballot is marked by an identifying mark that is clearly evident and which can be used to establish the identity of the individual submitting the provisional ballot.

~~(v) The Board shall establish a system that permits individuals who have submitted provisional ballots to determine whether the provisional ballot was accepted and counted.~~

## **Sec. 6069. - Same Day Registration.**

(aA)The City of Laurel Board of Election Supervisors shall allow for Same Day Registration for residents that live in the City of Laurel Corporate Boundaries. Those wishing to exercise their right to Same Day Registration for City Elections shall adhere to the following: ~~(1) bringing a document showing proof of residency, Maryland driver's license, identification card with your current address, paycheck stub, bank statement, utility bill.~~

(1) Provide a copy of a current and valid Maryland driver's license or MVA ID card, student, employee, or military ID, U.S. passport; and

(2) A copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document with the voter's name and current address (the same address shall be written on the voter registration application). Current shall mean that the document is dated within three (3) months of the election.



(3) Once the Chief Election Judge determines you **that the voter is** are a resident of the City, and qualified to register, **and is at the correct polling location**, you **the voter** will be permitted to vote in the election **using a provisional ballot**.

(4) In the event that the voter is not at the correct polling location, the Chief Election Judge will provide the voter with directions including the address and a map indicating the proper polling location and direct the voter to the proper polling location to complete the proper provisional ballot.

#### **Sec. 607. - Vote-by-mail ballots.**

~~(a) Any person qualified to vote in any election may use a Vote-by-Mail ballot pursuant to the provisions of this article.~~

~~(b) The Board of Elections Supervisors is authorized and permitted by this section, to allow for a Vote by Mail in City of Laurel elections.~~

~~(c) These procedures will be established by the Board of Election Supervisors.~~

~~(d) No Vote-by-Mail ballot, completed or otherwise, shall be handled or delivered by a candidate or any individual volunteering or working for a candidate, except for their own ballot or that of their immediate family member or a member of their household.~~

#### **Sec. 60810. - Electioneering.**

(a) *General Conduct of Election Day Activities.* The Board shall be responsible for and have authority to control all activities conducted in connection with elections.

(b) *Authority of Election Judges.* At each polling place, each of the duly appointed election judges shall be vested with authority to keep and maintain the peace. In addition, the election judges shall have the authority to cause any person to be arrested for: any breach of the peace; any breach of election laws of the City; for interference with the progress of an election, the canvass of the ballots, or the ascertainment and transcription of the votes recorded on voting machines or ballots cast. The election judges shall have the authority to request and direct officers of the Laurel City Police Department or any state or federal law enforcement agency, as needed, to assist in the enforcement of the election laws of the City.

#### **Sec. 60911 - Election eEquipment and sSample bBallots.**

(a) The Board shall be responsible for the selection and procurement of all voting equipment, forms, ballot styles, and all other material necessary for the conduct of elections. The Board shall be responsible for preparing and publishing an official sample ballot not less than eight (8) days before Election **Early Voting** Day. The official sample ballot shall be published in a newspaper published in the City. In addition, the Board shall ensure that sample ballots shall be posted in several locations in each of the polling places.



(b) The City shall be responsible for all costs and expenses associated with the conduct of City elections from monies budgeted in the City's operating budget.

**Sec. 64012 - Compliance with eEligibility rRequirements, aAttendance, rRecall, dDisqualification and sSuspension of eElected oOfficials.**

*(a) Eligibility.*

(1) The Mayor and all Councilmembers shall retain and maintain throughout their respective terms of office all the qualifications necessary for their election, and their failure to retain and maintain all such qualifications shall ipso facto cause a forfeiture of their respective offices.

(2) Conflicts of Interest. Neither the Mayor nor any of Councilmember shall hold any other office with the City during their respective terms of office, neither shall they, directly or indirectly through the medium or agency of other persons, enter into any contract(s) with the City.

*(b) Attendance Required.*

(1) The Mayor and/or any Councilmember(s) may be removed from office as a result of extended absenteeism, which is defined as missing in excess of fifty (50) percent of each of the City Council's regular and special legislative meetings and ~~meetings of the committee(s) of the whole~~ in any calendar year. The Mayor, acting independently, or three (3) Councilmembers shall have the authority to convene a public hearing on the issue of the extended absenteeism by the Mayor and/or any Councilmember.

(2) After a public hearing on the issue of the extended absenteeism of the Mayor and/or any Councilmember(s) ~~pursuant to Section 608~~ the Mayor and/or Councilmember may be removed from office as a result of such extended absenteeism by an affirmative vote of two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) of the voting members of comprised of the Mayor and eCouncilmembers.

**Sec. 64113 - Recall of eElected oOfficial.**

**(1)** The mMayor or an At-Large eCity eCouncilmember may be recalled and removed from office in accordance with the following procedure:

(a) A petition signed by at least twenty (20) percent of the registered and qualified voters of the eCity must be presented to the mMayor and eCity eCouncil at a regular eCity eCouncil meeting **confirming the request** stating a desire to have the named elected official subjected to a reaffirmation **recall** by a vote of the qualified Ceity electorate. A petition shall contain the name of only one elected eCity oOfficial. The qualified registered voters signing such petition shall sign the same as their names appear on the city's **Prince George's County Voter Registration List for the City** election records and under each signature shall be typed or printed each petitioner's **registered voter's** name, current address and approximate length of residence in the eCity. At the bottom of each page of



the petition, the individual circulating the petition shall sign the same and make an affidavit before a notary public that he or she circulated the petition and saw each individual whose name appears thereon sign the same in his or her presence.

(b) The petition shall state specifically the justification for recall of the ~~m~~Mayor or, as the case may be, an At-Large City ~~e~~Councilmember, for one or more of the reasons set forth in section ~~6143~~.

(c) Upon receipt of a petition, the ~~m~~Mayor and ~~e~~Council shall forthwith refer the petition to the ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Election ~~s~~Supervisors for the ~~e~~City for verification of the appropriate number of ~~qualified~~registered voters' signatures and addresses. The ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Election ~~s~~Supervisors shall return such petition with its written findings as to required voters' signatures and addresses by certification to the ~~m~~Mayor and ~~e~~Council at its next regular meeting; and at that meeting, if the petition is authenticated and certified by the ~~b~~Board, the ~~m~~Mayor and ~~e~~City ~~e~~Council shall announce that: (1) ~~w~~Within thirty (30) days from that ~~e~~City ~~e~~Council meeting, a public hearing will be held on the petition, and that (2) within forty-five (45) days from the ~~e~~City ~~e~~Council meeting at which the certification of the ~~b~~Board of ~~e~~Election ~~s~~Supervisors was received, a special election shall be held in order to allow all ~~qualified~~registered voters of the ~~e~~City to vote on the petition for recall.

(d) The voting ballot will contain the official's name and the choice of "reaffirm" or "remove." In order for the official to be removed, a majority of those voting must vote "remove."

(e) The voting shall be conducted in the same manner as prescribed herein for general ~~e~~City elections; and, if removal results, the vacancy will be filled as provided in ~~S~~section 319 for a ~~e~~Councilmember or ~~s~~Section 356 for the ~~m~~Mayor.

## **(2) Recall of Ward-Elected City Councilmember**

**A City Councilmember that was elected to serve one of the two City voting wards may be recalled and removed from office in accordance with the following procedure:**

**(a) A petition signed by at least twenty (20) percent of the registered and qualified voters of the Ward that the Councilmember was elected to represent must be presented to the Mayor and City Council at a regular City Council meeting confirming the request to have the named elected official subjected to a recall by a vote of the City electorate. A petition shall contain the name of only one elected City Official. The registered voters signing such petition shall sign the same as their names appear on the Prince George's County Voter Registration List for the City and under each signature shall be typed or printed each registered voter's name, current address and approximate length of residence in the City. At the bottom of each page of the petition, the individual circulating the petition shall sign the same and make an affidavit before a notary public that he or she circulated the petition and saw each individual whose name appears thereon sign the same in his or her presence.**



(b) The petition shall state specifically the justification for recall of the Councilmember, for one or more of the reasons set forth in section 614.

(c) Upon receipt of a petition, the Mayor and Council shall forthwith refer the petition to the Board of Election Supervisors for the City for verification of the appropriate number of registered voters' signatures and addresses. The Board of Election Supervisors shall return such petition with its written findings as to required voters' signatures and addresses by certification to the Mayor and Council at its next regular meeting; and at that meeting, if the petition is authenticated and certified by the Board, the Mayor and City Council shall announce that: (1) within thirty (30) days from that City Council meeting, a public hearing will be held on the petition, and that (2) within forty-five (45) days from the City Council meeting at which the certification of the Board of Election Supervisors was received, a special election shall be held in order to allow all registered voters of the City to vote on the petition for recall.

(d) The voting ballot will contain the official's name and the choice of "reaffirm" or "remove." In order for the official to be removed, a majority of those voting must vote "remove."

(e) The voting shall be conducted in the same manner as prescribed herein for general City elections; and, if removal results, the vacancy will be filled as provided in Section 319 for a Councilmember.

#### **Sec. 61214 - Grounds for rRecall of eElected eOfficial.**

The justification for therecall of the mMayor or a eCouncilmember shall only be for one or more of the following:

(a) Failure to uphold the oath of office;

(b) Conviction of a criminal offense of a felony category and/or a crime of moral turpitude;

(c) Engaging in illegal conduct involving moral turpitude, fraud, deceit or intentional material misrepresentation;

(d) Engaging in conduct involving mismanagement or misappropriation of public funds, a gross abuse of public authority, misconduct in office, or a substantial and specific danger to public health, safety or welfare;

(e) The coercion of any eCity employee into taking an illegal or improper action or taking any retaliatory action against any eCity employee because of that employee's disclosure of information relating to illegal and improper action in eCity government;

(f) The inability to properly perform public duties due to a permanent or chronic physical or mental ailment or other incapacitating defect;



- (g) Gross negligence or incompetence in the performance of public duties;
- (h) Engaging in personal conduct injurious to the reputation and well-being of the government of ~~the~~ City and its citizens; or
- (i) Failing or refusing to perform, or acting contrary to, an official duty or obligation imposed by the Charter or duly enacted law or ordinance.

#### **Sec. 614~~3~~15. - Suspension of ~~e~~Elected ~~o~~Officials.**

**Any elected official who is charged with a crime which is a felony or which is related to his or her public duties shall be immediately suspended. Any elected official who enters a plea of guilty, including an Alford plea, or a plea of nolo contendere, or is found guilty of said charge(s) shall be removed from office. In the event that a conviction of guilt is at any later time vacated, reversed, or otherwise stricken, the elected official shall be reinstated for the balance of the term, if any, with all compensation and benefits restored.**

~~Any elected official found guilty of any crime which is a felony, or which is related to his or her public duties, shall be immediately suspended. In the event that the verdict or conviction of guilt is affirmed entered by any tribunal having jurisdiction over the elected official, then the elected official shall be removed from office. In the event that a plea of not guilty has been entered and is at any later time is vacated, reversed, or otherwise stricken the elected official shall be removed from office. In the event that a plea of guilty has been entered and is at any later time is vacated, reversed, or otherwise stricken, the elected official shall be reinstated for the balance of the term, if any, with all compensation and benefits restored.~~

#### **Sec. 614~~1~~16. - Referenda.**

(a) The citizens of the City shall have the right to petition to referendum any ordinance adopted by the City, pursuant to the procedures set forth in this section, except that no ~~an~~ ordinance **shall not be subject to referendum if said ordinance**~~that:~~

- (1) Imposes any tax or its equivalent;
- (2) Appropri~~e~~iates funds for current expenses of the City;
- (3) Establishes or revises **boundaries for wards determined and used** for election purposes;
- (4) Amends a zoning map; or
- (5) ~~Which~~ Expressly provides that the ordinance shall **not** be subject to a referendum.



(b) Upon the adoption of the capital improvement program, any new project not previously contained in the capital improvement program, and any additions constituting an enlargement of a project shall be subject to referendum, pursuant to the procedures contained in this section. Once a project has been approved by referendum, that portion of a subsequent enabling act or bond issue authorization ordinance relating to the project shall not be subject ~~et to~~ referendum, and if a bond enabling ordinance including the ~~perfect~~ **project** and identifying it is approved by referendum, that portion of any subsequent bond issue authorization ordinance relating to the project shall not be subject to referendum.

(c) Except as provided herein, an ordinance shall be submitted to a referendum of the voters upon petition of twenty (20) percent of the **eligible registered** ~~qualified~~ voters of the City. Such petition shall be filed with the ~~baord~~ **Board** of ~~eElection s~~**Supervisors** of the City of Laurel within thirty (30) calendar days from the date the ordinance becomes law. If such a petition is filed, the ~~ordinance~~ **ordinance** to be referred shall not take effect until thirty (30) calendar days after its approval by a majority of the ~~qualified~~ **eligible** voters of the ~~eC~~**ity** voting thereon at the next ensuing regular ~~eC~~**ity** election, or any special election for that purpose. ~~T~~**he** determination of whether a special election will be held **shall** ~~to be~~ at the discretion of the ~~eC~~**ity** ~~eC~~**ouncil**.

(d) An emergency ordinance shall remain in force from the date it becomes effective according to its terms, notwithstanding the filing of ~~such a~~ petition **for referendum**, but shall stand repealed thirty (30) calendar days after having been rejected by a majority of the ~~qualified~~ voters of the ~~eC~~**ity** voting thereon.

(e) A petition for referendum may consist of several papers, but each paper shall contain the text or a fair summary of the ordinance being petitioned upon; and there shall be attached to each such paper an affidavit of the person procuring the signatures thereon **attesting on the basis of personal knowledge**, that ~~to the said person's own personal knowledge~~ each signature thereon is genuine and bona fide, and that, to the best of ~~his~~ **the affiant's** ~~or her~~ knowledge, information, and belief, the signers are ~~qualified~~ **registered** voters of the City of Laurel, ~~as set opposite their names~~. A minor variation in the signature of a petitioner between ~~his or her signature~~ **a petitioner's name** on a petition and that **contained in** the voter registration records shall not invalidate the signature. The invalidation of one signature on a referendum petition shall not serve to invalidate any other signature on the petition.

(f) Each petitioner shall include ~~his or her~~ **their** address and the date of ~~his or her~~ **their** signature opposite ~~his or her~~ **their** printed or typed name. The ~~b~~**Board** of ~~eElection s~~**Supervisors** shall verify the qualification of said petitioners.

## **Sec. 64517. - Advisory ~~r~~Referenda.**

(a) The Mayor and City Council, by resolution, may direct that an advisory referendum of **the** voters be undertaken on questions set forth in said resolution. Any questions put to referenda shall be placed on the ballot at the next general election. The results of such referenda shall not be binding on the City in any way, but shall be for advisory purposes, only. Any resolution of the Mayor and



the City Council shall be adopted at least sixty (60) days prior to the next general election in order to allow adequate time for the question to be placed on the ballot.

(b) Upon passage of a resolution by the Mayor and City Council, the Board shall place all questions contained in the resolution on the official ballot and provide for the posting and dissemination of the ballot questions in suitable places and on all voting machines. The Board shall certify the results of the referenda on all questions appearing on the ballot in the same manner provided for certification of election results.

**Sec. ~~616~~18. - Adoption and ~~i~~ncorporation of ~~s~~State ~~l~~aw ~~p~~rovisions.**

Unless otherwise specifically set forth to the contrary in the Charter or Code, the Charter shall be read and construed to incorporate, adopt, and enact the provisions of Title 16, "Offenses and Penalties" of the Election Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, **in its current version or as later amended**, as the same apply to any illegal conduct committed in connection with or during the course of an election, or as a result of any illegal interference with election procedures and processes.

**Sec. ~~617~~19. - Extraordinary ~~p~~owers—Civil ~~e~~mergency.**

In the case of a declared civil emergency or other civil disaster where any date contained in this Article or Chapter 600 of the Code cannot be met because of such civil emergency or civil disaster, the Board shall establish such reasonable dates and accommodations for compliance with any filing deadlines, submission of reports, or any other deadline that may apply to a required filing or submission required herein. The Board may also change the designated Election Day based on a civil emergency or civil disaster. In no event shall the rescheduled date for any postponed election be sooner than thirty (30) days from the date of the declared end of the civil emergency or civil disaster. During any postponement of elections, public officials shall remain in office unless and until their successors are duly qualified and elected.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the City of Laurel's Charter Article 600 "Registrations and Elections", is hereby amended as follows:

**AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the date of adoption of this Charter Resolution is the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_, 2025, and that the amendment to the Charter of the City as herein adopted, shall be and become effective on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_, 2025 unless on or before the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_, 2025, a Petition for Referendum on this Charter Resolution is filed in writing with the Mayor or City Administrator, pursuant to the provision of Title 4, Subtitle 3 of the Local Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

**AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this Resolution shall become effective on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_, 2025.



PASSED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**SARA A. GREEN, CPM, MMC**  
City Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
**KYLA M. CLARK**  
President of the City Council

APPROVED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**KEITH R. SYDNOR**  
Mayor