

Resolution No: 2020-04
Public Hearing: 4/13/2020
Adopted: 4/13/2020
Effective: 4/13/2020

**RESOLUTION TO
PROVIDE FOR CONVENING THE TOWN MEETING ELECTRONICALLY, AND
PROVIDE NOTICE ELECTRONICALLY, AND ESTABLISH SPECIAL RULES OF ORDER
FOR COMMUNICATING BY ELECTRONIC MEANS, AND ESTABLISH OTHER RULES
TO RESPOND TO TECHNICAL OR PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES, AND ADOPT THE
PROPOSED BUDGET AS A PROVISIONAL BUDGET**

WHEREAS, the Governor of Maryland ordered on March 30, 2020, that a municipality may conditionally suspend the effect of provisions of Title 4, Subtitle 3, of the Local Government Article regarding public hearings to be held on proposed amendments to the municipal charter, and the date the amendments shall take effect as part of the municipal charter after the resolutions are adopted; and

WHEREAS, the Council of the Town of Washington Grove adopted a Resolution in accordance with the Governor’s Order and thereby amended the Town Charter: to allow a Town Meeting convened under emergency circumstances to be conducted electronically; to authorize the Town Council to specify an alternate date, notification procedures, and establish alternative rules for the conduct of Town Meetings; also to authorize the Town Council to set an alternate date for the elections; and to authorize the Town Council to adopt a provisional budget; and

WHEREAS, a state of emergency and catastrophic health emergency was proclaimed by the Governor of Maryland on March 5, 2020, and renewed on March 17, 2020, to control and prevent the spread of COVID-19 within Maryland, and the state of emergency and catastrophic health emergency still exists.

Part 1. NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the Town of Washington Grove that:

1. The regular Town Meeting scheduled for Saturday, May 9, 2020, will be convened as an electronic meeting with remote access only, hosted using Zoom or equivalent meeting software providing access to the meeting over the internet or by dial-in phone, such that participating members are provided the opportunity for aural communications to and from the assembly that are reasonably equivalent to those were the meeting in a physical location;
2. Notice of the Town Meeting will be provided by “Grove Alert” email messages, with a paper copy of the notice delivered to each household in the Town not on the “Grove Alert” email distribution list, such notice to include information for both video/audio and audio-only connection options;
3. The following special Rules of Order shall be used in conduct of the electronic Town Meeting, which are in no way intended to abridge the rights of qualified voters as provided for in the Charter;

Underline : Indicate matter added to the Town Charter.
[Brackets] : Indicate matter deleted from the Town Charter.
Asterisks * * * : Indicate matter remaining unchanged in the existing Town Charter but not set forth herein

a. Hosting the meeting.

The Mayor or the Mayor’s designee will Host the electronic Town Meeting, and the Mayor will serve as Chair, or as otherwise provided for in the Town Charter. Co-host for the meeting may be designated as required to manage the conduct of the electronic meeting.

b. Quorum.

- i. The Town Meeting may begin only if a quorum of 50 or more voting participants is present and is attested to by a Board of Supervisors of Elections member or designee (BoSEM). Participating members will be allowed access to the electronic meeting by providing their name and place of residence to a BoSEM, who will certify them as a registered voter in the Town of Washington Grove and record them as a voting participant, or they will be present as a non-voting participant.
- ii. The continued presence of a quorum will be presumed unless a point of order is raised by a participating member doubting the presence of a quorum, after which the meeting may continue only when an audio or electronic roll call of participants present indicates a quorum is present, as again attested to by a BoSEM.

c. Being recognized and obtaining the floor.

Anticipating more than 50 separate participants at the meeting, direct requests to be recognized by participants may prove cumbersome or impossible acknowledge. Two or more alternative methods of being recognized must be provided. These may include use of the “raising a hand” option in the Zoom software, receiving requests using the Chat interface, receiving requests via other text messaging software, providing a separate call-in number to a co-Host of the meeting, or any other method as may be devised.

d. Voting

All votes will be taken initially by voice vote, with all participating members enabled for communicating to the Host and co-Hosts aurally, and with those voting against and abstentions requested first. If the Chair declares the outcome of a voice vote, and immediately determines that no participating member objects to the declaration, the outcome will be presumed ratified. Upon receiving an objection, or when the Chair declines to declare the outcome of the voice vote, an audio or electronic roll call vote of participating members will be taken by a BoSEM, who will attest to the outcome.

e. Technical and other considerations

The Mayor or his designee is empowered to take such actions as deemed necessary to respond to any technical or other practical difficulties with electronic Town Meeting operations.

Part 2. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Council of the Town of Washington Grove that the budget for Fiscal Year 2021 as recommended by the Council is hereby declared to be the proposed budget; and a summary of the proposed budget will be circulated to all residences of the Town prior to the Town Meeting; and in the event the May 9, 2020 Town Meeting is

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rescheduled, the proposed budget is hereby adopted as the provisional budget, and will be presented to the rescheduled Town Meeting for consideration and adoption.

Part 3. AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution is effective immediately upon adoption.

ADOPTED AT A PUBLIC MEETING ASSEMBLED ON THIS 13th DAY OF April, 2020.

TOWN OF WASHINGTON GROVE

Mayor

ATTEST:

Town Clerk

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