

Resolution No: 2021-06
Introduced: 04/09/2021
Adopted: 04/09/2021
Effective: 04/09/2021

RESOLUTION

TO PROVIDE FOR CONVENING THE 2021 ANNUAL 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, in accordance with authority granted by the Governor of Maryland on March 30, 2020, the Council of the Town of Washington Grove adopted Resolution 2020-03 amending the Town Charter to allow the Town Council, to authorize by Resolution, that the Annual Town Meeting be conducted electronically when convened under emergency circumstances, and to specify alternate notification procedures and alternative rules for the conduct of the Town Meeting; and

WHEREAS, the state of emergency and catastrophic health emergency proclaimed by the Governor of Maryland on March 5, 2020 to control and prevent the spread of COVID-19 within Maryland continues in force to the present;

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 8, 2021, 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 and the proposed Annual Town Budget for Fiscal Year 2022 will be provided in the electronic Town Bulletin and by “Grove Alert” email messages, with a paper copy of the notice delivered to each household in the Town not on the email distribution lists, 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;

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-hosts 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 to 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 2022 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 8, 2021 Town Meeting is 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 12th DAY OF April, 2021.

TOWN OF WASHINGTON GROVE

Mayor

ATTEST:

Town Clerk