

# County Council of Howard County, Maryland

2026 Legislative Session

Legislative Day No. **1**

## Resolution No. 23 -2026

**Introduced by:** Christiana Rigby

**SHORT TITLE:** Charter Amendment – Gender Neutrality

**TITLE:** A RESOLUTION proposing to amend the Howard County Charter to make the language of the Charter gender neutral; and submitting this amendment to the voters of Howard County for their adoption or rejection in accordance with Article X of the Howard County Charter and Article XI-A of the Maryland Constitution.

---

Introduced and read first time \_\_\_\_\_, 2026.

By order \_\_\_\_\_  
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

Read for a second time at a public hearing on \_\_\_\_\_, 2026.

By order \_\_\_\_\_  
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

This Resolution was read the third time and was Adopted\_\_\_\_, Adopted with amendments\_\_\_\_, Failed\_\_\_\_, Withdrawn\_\_\_\_, by the County Council on \_\_\_\_\_, 2026.

Certified By \_\_\_\_\_  
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

NOTE: [[text in brackets]] indicates deletions from existing law; TEXT IN SMALL CAPITALS indicates additions to existing law; ~~Strike-out~~ indicates material deleted by amendment; Underlining indicates material added by amendment

1           **WHEREAS**, the Howard County Charter is the foundational governing document of the  
2 County and establishes the structure, powers, and responsibilities of County government; and  
3

4           **WHEREAS**, portions of the Howard County Charter currently contain gender-specific  
5 language, including the use of “he,” “she,” “his,” and “her,” when referring to County officials,  
6 employees, and residents; and  
7

8           **WHEREAS**, in June 2025, the Howard County LGBTQIA+ Commission recommended  
9 adopting gender-neutral terminology throughout the Charter; and;  
10

11           **WHEREAS**, the use of gender-specific language in governing documents does not  
12 reflect contemporary standards of inclusivity or the diversity of individuals who serve in or are  
13 affected by County government; and  
14

15           **WHEREAS**, gender-neutral language promotes clarity, consistency, and equal treatment  
16 by ensuring that Charter provisions apply uniformly to all persons, regardless of gender identity;  
17 and  
18

19           **WHEREAS**, the replacement of gender-specific pronouns with gender-neutral language  
20 is a technical and non-substantive amendment intended solely to modernize the text of the  
21 Charter; and  
22

23           **WHEREAS**, many jurisdictions have undertaken similar updates to governing  
24 documents to modernize language while preserving existing rights, duties, and authorities,  
25 including Anne Arundel County, Baltimore County, Harford County, Prince George’s County,  
26 the City of Hyattsville, and the Town of Upper Marlboro; and  
27

28           **WHEREAS**, the Howard County Council finds that it is in the interest of good  
29 governance for the Howard County Charter to employ clear, inclusive, and contemporary  
30 language;

1           **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, by the County Council of Howard County,  
2 Maryland, that, upon the approval of the voters of Howard County, the following sections of the  
3 Howard County Charter are amended to read as follows:  
4

5                           **Article II. – The Legislative Branch**

6   **Section 202. - The County Council.**

7   The legislative power of the County is vested in the County Council of Howard County which  
8 shall consist of five members who shall be elected from the Councilmanic Districts.  
9

10 (a) *Mode of election.* Each of the members of the Council shall be nominated and elected by the  
11 qualified voters of the Councilmanic District in which [[he or she]] THEY reside[[s]]. Each  
12 Councilmanic District shall elect one Council member.

13 (b) *Qualifications.*

14       1. In General. Each candidate for the council shall have resided in the County for a  
15 period of not less than two years immediately prior to nomination; shall be a registered  
16 voter; and shall be a resident of the Council District which the candidate seeks to  
17 represent at the time of filing for candidacy and during the full term of office; and shall  
18 not be less than twenty-five years of age at the time of election.

19       2. Other Offices or Employment. No person shall qualify or serve as a member of the  
20 council: while holding any other office of profit or trust of or under the State or County  
21 government; while employed by the County; or while employed by any agency, board,  
22 commission, unit or other entity which receives funds through the County budget. No  
23 member of the Council shall, during the whole term for which [[he or she was]] THEY  
24 WERE elected, be eligible for appointment to any County office or position or be eligible  
25 for employment by the County.

26       3. Forfeiture of Office. If a member of the Council ceases to be a qualified and registered  
27 voter of the County, moves [[his or her]] THEIR residence from the councilmanic district  
28 [[he or she was]] THEY WERE elected to represent, accepts any other office of profit or  
29 trust of or under the state or county government, becomes employed by the County or any  
30 other entity which receives funds through the County budget, or is convicted of any crime

1 involving moral turpitude, [[he or she]] THEY shall immediately forfeit [[his or her]]  
2 THEIR office.

3  
4 (e) *Vacancies*. Unless provision for filling a vacancy by special election has been established by  
5 ordinance, a vacancy occurring in the office of the Council member prior to the expiration of  
6 [[his or her]] THEIR term shall be filled by the Council within thirty days after the vacancy occurs  
7 by the appointment of a person whose name is to be submitted in writing to the Council by the  
8 State Central Committee of Howard County representing the political party to which the  
9 previous member belonged at the time of the member's most recent election. If a name is not  
10 submitted by the appropriate State Central Committee within twenty-five days after the vacancy  
11 occurs or if the previous incumbent was not a member of a political party at the time of the  
12 member's most recent election, then the vacancy shall be filled by a majority vote of the  
13 remaining members of the Council. The member so appointed shall reside in the same  
14 Councilmanic District as [[his or her]] THEIR predecessor and shall possess and maintain the  
15 same qualifications as an elected Council member. The member so appointed shall serve the  
16 unexpired term of [[his or her]] THEIR predecessor.

17  
18 **Section 203. - Officers.**

19 (a) *Presiding officer*. The Council at its first meeting in December of each year shall elect from  
20 its membership a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. The Chairperson, or in[[his or her]] THEIR  
21 absence the Vice Chairperson, shall preside at all meetings. On all questions before the Council,  
22 the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson shall have and may exercise the vote to which each is  
23 entitled as a Council member.

24  
25 **Section 209. - Legislative procedure.**

26 (g) *Executive veto*. Upon the passage of any legislation by the Council, with the exception of  
27 such measures as may in this Charter be made expressly exempt from the executive veto, the  
28 same shall be presented within three calendar days to the County Executive for [[his or her]]  
29 THEIR approval or disapproval, and within ten calendar days after such presentation the County  
30 Executive shall return any such legislation to the Council with [[his or her]] THEIR approval  
31 endorsed thereon or with a statement in writing of [[his or her]] THEIR reasons for not approving

1 the same. Upon approval by the County Executive, any such legislation shall stand enacted. Any  
2 such legislation presented to the County Executive and returned with [[his or her]] THEIR veto  
3 may be reconsidered by the Council. The County Executive's objections shall be entered upon  
4 the Journal of the Council, and not later than at its next legislative session, the Council may  
5 reconsider the enactment thereof; and if two-thirds of the members of the Council vote in the  
6 affirmative, the legislation shall stand enacted. Whenever the County Executive shall fail to  
7 return any such legislation within ten days after the date of its presentation to [[him or her]]  
8 THEM, the Administrator of the Council shall forthwith record the fact of such failure in the  
9 Journal and such legislative act shall thereupon stand enacted. The County Executive may strike  
10 out or reduce any item in a supplementary appropriation bill and the procedure in such a case  
11 shall be the same as in the case of the veto of a bill by the County Executive.

12  
13 **Section 210. - Recording, printing and compilation of laws.**

14 (d) *Cumulative supplement.* The County Solicitor shall cause to be prepared and published a  
15 cumulative supplement to The Howard County Code, with an index and such appropriate notes,  
16 citations, annotations and appendices as [[he or she]] THEY may deem desirable or as may be  
17 required by the Council.

18  
19 **Section 211. - The referendum.**

20 (b) *Form of petition.* A petition may consist of several papers, but each paper shall contain a fair  
21 summary of the Act or the part of the Act petitioned upon; and there shall be attached to each  
22 such paper an affidavit of the person procuring the signatures thereon that, to the said person's  
23 own personal knowledge, each signature thereon is genuine and bona fide, and that to the best of  
24 [[his or her]] THEIR knowledge, information and belief the signers are registered voters of the  
25 State of Maryland and Howard County, as set opposite their names. The Board of Supervisors of  
26 Elections shall verify the registration of said petitioners.

27  
28 **Section 212. - County Auditor.**

29 The Council shall, by resolution, appoint a County Auditor who shall hold office for an  
30 indefinite term at the pleasure of the Council and shall receive such compensation as the Council  
31 may determine. The County Auditor shall be a certified public accountant licensed for the

1 practice of [[his or her]] THEIR profession under the laws of this State, and shall be appointed on  
2 the basis of [[his or her]] THEIR knowledge of governmental accounting and auditing and [[his or  
3 her]] THEIR experience pertaining to the duties of [[his or her]] THE office. The County Auditor  
4 shall, not later than November 30 of each year, prepare and submit to the Council and to the  
5 County Executive, a complete financial audit for the preceding fiscal year of all offices,  
6 departments, institutions, boards, commissions, corporations, courts and other agencies of the  
7 County government. The Council may in its discretion except those agencies whose entire  
8 records, accounts and affairs are completely audited each year with the approval of or by the  
9 State government. Such audit shall include a report thereon together with such explanatory  
10 comments as the Auditor may deem appropriate. Notice of the availability of the report shall be  
11 published in at least one newspaper of general circulation in the County, and copies of the  
12 complete audit shall be available to the public and the press in the County Auditor's office and at  
13 the public libraries. In addition to any financial audit required by this section, the County Auditor  
14 shall have the authority to conduct other financial or management audits. All records and files  
15 maintained by all officers, agents and employees of the County and all offices, departments,  
16 institutions, boards, commissions, courts and corporations and other agencies thereof, shall at all  
17 times be open to the inspection of the County Auditor where necessary for the conduct of [[his or  
18 her]] THE office. The County Auditor shall promptly call to the attention of the Council and the  
19 County Executive any irregularity or improper procedure which [[he or she]] THEY may, from  
20 time to time, discover. The Council shall have the power to implement the provisions of this  
21 section and to assign additional functions, duties and personnel to the County Auditor not  
22 inconsistent with those provided herein. All actions of the Council pursuant to this section shall  
23 be exempt from the executive veto.  
24

### 25 **Section 213. - Special audits.**

26 Either the Council or the County Executive may at any time order the examination or audit of the  
27 accounts of any department, office or agency receiving funds from the County government.  
28 Upon the death, resignation, removal or expiration of the term of any County administrative  
29 officers, the County Auditor shall cause an audit and investigation of the accounts maintained by  
30 the officer, and by [[his or her]] THE OFFICER'S department, office or agency, to be made. The  
31 County Auditor shall report the results of [[his]] THE audit to the County Executive and the

Council, and copies shall be made available to the public and press no later than four months after the ordering of the audit. If, as a result of any such audit, an officer shall be found to be indebted to the County, the County Executive shall proceed forthwith to collect the indebtedness. All actions of the Council pursuant to this section shall be exempt from the executive veto.

**Section 215. - Noninterference with executive branch.**

Neither the Council nor any of its members shall attempt to influence the head of any department, office or agency of the County government concerning the appointment of any person to, or [[his or her]] THEIR removal from, any office or employment, nor in any way take part in the appointment of or removal of officers and employees of the County except as specifically provided in this Charter. Formal communications from the Council to the executive branch shall be addressed to the Executive, and neither the Council nor any member thereof shall give orders either publicly or privately to any subordinate of the County Executive.

**ARTICLE III. - THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH**

**Section 301. - Composition.**

The Executive Branch of the County government shall consist of the County Executive and all officers, agents and employees under [[his]] THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S supervision and authority.

**Section 302. - The County Executive.**

The executive power of the County shall be vested in the County Executive who shall be the chief executive officer of the County and the official head of the County government. In such capacity [[he or she]] THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE shall be the elected executive officer mentioned in Section 3 of Article XIA of the Constitution of this State. The County Executive shall devote full time to the duties of [[his or her]] THEIR office.

(a) *Mode of election.* The Executive shall be nominated and elected by the qualified voters of the County as provided by law.

(b) *Qualifications.*

1. In General. The Executive shall be a resident of the County for a period of not less than five years immediately prior to election and a registered voter at the time of filing

1 for candidacy and shall be not less than thirty years of age at the time of [[his or her]]  
2 THEIR election.

3 2. Other Offices. No person shall qualify or serve as Executive while holding any other  
4 office of profit or trust of or under State, County or Federal government; while employed  
5 by the County; or while employed by any agency, board, commission, unit or other entity  
6 which receives funds through the County budget. No Executive shall, during the whole  
7 term for which [[he or she was]] THEY WERE elected, be eligible for appointment to any  
8 County office or position or be eligible for employment by the County.

9 3. Forfeiture of office. If an Executive ceases to be a registered voter of the County or is  
10 convicted of any crime involving moral turpitude, [[he or she]] THEY shall immediately  
11 forfeit [[his or her]] THEIR office.

12 (c) *Term of office.* The Executive shall qualify for the office on the first Monday in December  
13 following [[his or her]] THEIR election, or as soon thereafter as practicable and shall enter upon  
14 the duties of [[his or her]] THE office immediately. The County Executive shall hold office for a  
15 term of four years commencing at the time of [[his or her]] THEIR qualification and continuing  
16 until [[his or her]] THEIR successor shall qualify. No person shall be eligible to succeed [[himself  
17 or herself]] THEMSELVES in office if [[he or she has]] THEY HAVE served as Executive for two  
18 consecutive four-year terms.

19  
20 (e) *Change in compensation and allowances.* The Compensation Review Commission  
21 established pursuant to [Section 202](#)(d) of this Charter shall review the Executive's compensation  
22 and allowances and make recommendations to the Council. The Council shall have the power to  
23 increase the compensation and allowances provided in this Charter for the Executive by the  
24 affirmative vote of not less than a majority of its members. To reduce the Executive's  
25 compensation and allowances the affirmative vote of not less than two-thirds of the Council  
26 members is required. In no event shall such compensation be reduced by a figure lower than that  
27 provided in this Charter except by amendment thereto. The compensation and allowances of the  
28 Executive shall not be increased or reduced during [[his or her]] THEIR current term.

29 (f) *Vacancy.* Whenever for any cause the office of the Executive shall become vacant, the Chief  
30 Administrative Officer shall serve as acting Executive until a new Executive shall be appointed.  
31 The office of County Executive shall be filled by resolution within thirty days by the affirmative



1 vote of a majority of the members of the Council. The person so elected by the Council shall  
2 possess the same qualifications for the office as provided in [Section 302](#)(b), shall belong to the  
3 same political party as **[[his or her]]** THEIR predecessor at the time of the Executive's most recent  
4 election (unless **[[his or her]]** THEIR predecessor was not a member of a political party) and shall  
5 serve the unexpired term of **[[his or her]]** THEIR predecessor and until **[[his or her]]** THEIR  
6 successor shall qualify.

7  
8 (h) *Inability to perform duties.* If an Executive is unable to perform the duties and responsibilities  
9 of **[[his or her]]** THE office as set forth in [Section 302](#)(i) of this Article for a continuous period of  
10 six months, **[[his or her]]** THE office may be declared vacant by the affirmative vote of not less  
11 than two-thirds of the members of the Council and such vacancy shall thereupon be filled in the  
12 manner above provided in [Section 302](#)(f) of this Article.

13 (i) *Powers and duties.* The Executive shall be responsible for the proper and efficient  
14 administration of such affairs of the County as are placed in **[[his]]** THE EXECUTIVE'S charge or  
15 under **[[his]]** THE EXECUTIVE'S jurisdiction and control under this Charter or by law. **[[His]]** THE  
16 COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S express responsibilities, duties and powers shall include, but not be  
17 limited to, the following:

- 18 1. To supervise, direct and control the offices and departments of the County  
19 Government, subject to law and the provisions of this Charter;
- 20 2. To present to the Council the annual County budget in the manner and form hereinafter  
21 in this Charter provided;
- 22 3. To report to the Council and the public at least once a year a general statement of  
23 finances, government and affairs of the County, with a summary statement of the  
24 activities of the several departments and offices thereof;
- 25 4. To present to the Council from time to time such other information concerning the  
26 business and affairs of the County as **[[he or she]]** THE EXECUTIVE may deem necessary,  
27 or as the Council by resolution may request, and to recommend such measures for  
28 legislative action as **[[he or she]]** THEY may deem to be in the best interest of the County;
- 29 5. To see that the County officers, boards, agencies, commissions, departments and  
30 employees faithfully perform their duties;

- 1       6. To see that the laws of the State pertaining to the affairs, good order and government
- 2       of the County, and the acts, resolutions, ordinances and public local laws of the County
- 3       are duly executed and enforced within the County;
- 4       7. To make or cause to be made any study or investigation which in [\[\[his or her\]\]](#) THE
- 5       EXECUTIVE’S opinion may be in the best interests of the County, including but not limited
- 6       to investigations of the affairs, functions, acts, methods, personnel or efficiency of any
- 7       department, office or officer under [\[\[his or her\]\]](#) THEIR jurisdiction;
- 8       8. To veto, in [\[\[his or her\]\]](#) THE EXECUTIVE’S discretion, legislative acts of the Council, in
- 9       the manner, at the times and subject to the limitations provided in Article II, [Section](#)
- 10      [209\(g\)](#) of this Charter;
- 11      9. To appoint, subject to confirmation by the affirmative vote of a majority of the
- 12      members of the Council, the County Solicitor;
- 13      10. To appoint the Chief Administrative Officer and the heads of all offices and
- 14      departments which are subject to [\[\[his or her\]\]](#) THE EXECUTIVE’S supervision and control
- 15      under this Charter or by law;
- 16      11. Unless otherwise specified in this Charter, to appoint the members of all boards,
- 17      commissions, authorities and corporations created in or pursuant to this Charter or by
- 18      law;
- 19      12. To sign or cause to be signed on the County's behalf all deeds, contracts and other
- 20      instruments, including those which prior to the adoption of this Charter required the
- 21      signature of the Chairperson or any member of the Board of County Commissioners, and
- 22      to affix the County Seal thereto;
- 23      13. Except as otherwise expressly provided in this Charter, to issue, or cause to be issued,
- 24      all executive orders, directives, licenses and permits, including those which prior to the
- 25      adoption of this Charter, were issued or granted by the County Commissioners;
- 26      14. To prepare and issue, or cause to be prepared and issued, rules and regulations of the
- 27      character which prior to the adoption of this Charter were prepared or issued by the
- 28      County Commissioners, provided that before taking effect, all such rules and regulations,
- 29      other than those concerned exclusively with the internal operating procedure of the
- 30      executive branch of the County government, shall be approved by the Council;

1 15. To perform such other executive duties as may be prescribed by this Charter or  
2 required by ordinance or resolution of the Council or as may be necessarily implied from  
3 the powers and duties herein specified.  
4

5 **Section 304. - Temporary appointments.**

6 (a) *Chief Administrative Officer.* During the temporary absence of the Chief Administrative  
7 Officer, or if the office of Chief Administrative Officer shall become vacant, the Executive shall  
8 appoint an Acting Chief Administrative Officer pending, in the case of a vacancy, the  
9 appointment of a successor. In ~~[[his or her]]~~ THEIR capacity as Acting Chief Administrative  
10 Officer, the appointee need not possess, but the successor shall possess, all those qualifications  
11 hereinabove in this Article specified for an original appointee.

12 (b) *Other officers.* The Executive, in the case of a vacancy or temporary absence, may designate  
13 any person to serve as acting head of any office or department in the executive branch until the  
14 appointment of a successor. Unless at the time of such appointment the temporary appointee is a  
15 subordinate officer in the office or department to which ~~[[he or she is]]~~ THEY ARE designated as  
16 acting head, ~~[[he or she]]~~ THEY shall possess all the qualifications for the office specified in  
17 Article IV of this Charter for an original appointee.  
18

19 **ARTICLE IV. - OFFICES, DEPARTMENTS, AND BOARDS**

20 **Section 405. - The Office of Law.**

21 (a) *The County Solicitor.* The Office of Law shall be administered by the County Solicitor, who  
22 shall be a member in good standing of the Bar of the Maryland Court of Appeals for five years  
23 and shall have been actively engaged in the general practice of ~~[[his or her]]~~ THEIR profession in  
24 the State of Maryland for at least five years immediately prior to ~~[[his or her]]~~ THEIR  
25 appointment. The County Solicitor shall have been a resident of Howard County for at least the  
26 two years immediately preceding ~~[[his or her]]~~ THEIR appointment and shall continue to reside in  
27 the County for the duration of ~~[[his or her]]~~ THEIR term of office.

28 (b) *Powers and duties.* The County Solicitor shall be the legal advisor of the County and of its  
29 several offices, departments, boards, commissions and other agencies. Except as otherwise  
30 provided in this Charter, no office, department, board, commission, agency or branch of the  
31 County government which receives County funds shall have any authority or power to employ or

1 retain any legal counsel other than the County Solicitor. The County Solicitor shall also be the  
2 legal advisor and legislative drafter for the Council, unless the Council shall specify otherwise by  
3 resolution. The County Solicitor shall give advice and opinions upon any legal questions  
4 affecting the interests of the County which are submitted to [[him or her]] THEM:

- 5 (1) By written request of a County Council member;
- 6 (2) By written request of the Executive;
- 7 (3) By written request, approved by the Executive, of the head of any office or  
8 department in the executive branch; or
- 9 (4) By written request of any board, commission or agency.

10 All deeds, bonds, contracts, releases, agreements, advertisement bids, and other legal  
11 papers, documents and instructions involving the interests of the County to be executed  
12 and approved by any officer of the County shall be submitted to the County Solicitor and  
13 shall be approved by [[him or her]] THEM as to their form and legal sufficiency in  
14 compliance with the laws and conditions under which executed. The County Solicitor  
15 shall have the right of access at all times to the official records of any office, department,  
16 board, commission or agency of the County. The County solicitor shall have such  
17 additional legal duties as may be prescribed by directive of the Executive or by legislative  
18 act of the Council not inconsistent with this Charter.

19  
20 (f) *Term of office for the County Solicitor.* The County Solicitor shall serve at the pleasure of the  
21 Executive and the Council for a term concurrent with the term of the Executive. The County  
22 Solicitor may be removed from office during [[his or her]] THEIR term by either:

- 23 (i) The Executive with the consent of a majority of the Council; or
- 24 (ii) A two-thirds vote of the entire Council.

25 If the County Solicitor ceases to meet the qualifications set forth in [Section 405](#)(a) of this  
26 Charter, or is convicted of any crime involving moral turpitude, [[he or she]] THEY shall  
27 immediately forfeit [[his or her]] THEIR office.

## 28 29 **ARTICLE V. - BOARD OF APPEALS**

### 30 **Section 501. - The County Board of Appeals.**

1 (c) *Rules of practice and procedure.* The Board of Appeals shall have authority to adopt and  
2 amend rules of practice governing its proceedings which shall have the force and effect of law  
3 when approved by legislative act of the Council. Such rules of practice and procedures shall not  
4 be inconsistent with the Administrative Procedure Act of the Annotated Code of Maryland. The  
5 rules may relate to filing fees, meetings and hearings of the Board, the manner in which its  
6 Chairperson shall be selected and the terms which ~~[[he]]~~ THEY shall serve as Chairperson and  
7 other pertinent matters deemed appropriate and necessary for the Board. Three members of the  
8 Board shall constitute a quorum of the Board, and its hearings shall receive public notice as  
9 required by law. All hearings held by the Board shall be open to the public, and provision shall  
10 be made for all interested citizens and citizens groups to be heard. The Board shall cause to be  
11 maintained complete public records of its proceedings, with a suitable index.

12  
13 (f) *Implementing legislation.* The powers and functions of the Board of Appeals as herein  
14 provided for shall be defined by implementing legislation heretofore or hereafter enacted by the  
15 Council, subject to and to the extent required by applicable State law. The Council may by  
16 legislative act increase the compensation of the members of the Board of Appeals as provided  
17 in [Section 501](#)(a) of this Article and thereafter decrease such compensation; provided, however,  
18 that no reduction shall affect the compensation of a member of the Board of Appeals during ~~[[his~~  
19 or her]] THEIR current term, and in no event shall the council have the power to decrease the  
20 compensation of members of the Board below the figure provided in this Charter. To the extent  
21 permitted by State law, the Council shall also have the power, by legislative act, to prescribe  
22 other appeals to be heard by, or to limit the jurisdiction of, the Board of Appeals in addition to  
23 those specified in this Article.

## 24 25 **ARTICLE VI. - BUDGETARY AND FISCAL PROCEDURES**

### 26 **Section 612. - Appropriation control and certification of funds.**

27 (a) No office, department, institution, board, commission or other agency of the County  
28 government shall during any fiscal year expend, or contract to expend, any money or incur any  
29 liability, or enter into any contract which by its terms involves the expenditure of money, for any  
30 purpose in excess of the amounts appropriated or allotted for the same general classification of  
31 expenditure in the budget for such fiscal year, or in any supplemental appropriation as

1 hereinabove provided; and no such payment shall be made nor any obligation or liability  
2 incurred, except for small purchases in an amount to be established from time to time by  
3 ordinance unless the Director of Finance shall first certify that the funds for the designated  
4 purpose are available. Any contract, verbal or written, made in violation of this Section shall be  
5 null and void; and if any officer, agent or employee of the County shall knowingly violate this  
6 provision, [[he or she]] THAT PERSON shall be personally liable and such action shall be cause,  
7 after public hearing, for [[his or her]] THEIR removal from office by the Executive or by majority  
8 vote of the Council, notwithstanding the provisions of Article VII of this Charter. Nothing in this  
9 Section or elsewhere in this Charter contained shall prevent the making of contracts of lease or  
10 for services providing for the payment of funds at a time beyond the fiscal year in which such  
11 contracts are made, provided the nature of such transactions reasonably requires the making of  
12 such contracts. But any contract, lease or other obligation requiring the payment of funds from  
13 appropriations of a later fiscal year shall be made or approved by ordinance which shall be  
14 effective immediately upon enactment. No contract for the purchase of real or leasehold property  
15 shall be made unless the funds therefor are included in the capital budget.

16 (b) In exercising [[his or her]] THEIR powers as the custodian of the monies of the County, the  
17 Director of Finance may advance funds in [[his or her]] THEIR custody for the discharge of  
18 obligations incurred in connection with capital projects for which a bond enabling law or laws of  
19 the County has or have been approved and money appropriated therefor prior to the issuance of  
20 such bonds; provided that repayment of any such advance shall be made out of the proceeds of  
21 the sale of the bond issue concerned or from any other monies subsequently made available for  
22 such purpose.

## 24 **ARTICLE VII. - MERIT SYSTEM**

### 25 **Section 706. - Classification and pay plans.**

26 (e) *Revisions of pay plan.* Not later than the first day of January of each year, the Personnel  
27 Officer shall submit [[his or her]] recommendations to the Personnel Board for changes deemed  
28 necessary to keep the pay plan on a current basis. The Personnel Board, not later than the first  
29 day of February, shall submit the pay plan with recommendations to the Executive. The  
30 Executive in the preparation of the annual expense budget shall consider for incorporation  
31 therein the pay plan recommendations of the Personnel Board. Prior to the adoption of the annual

1 expense budget ordinance, the Council shall approve such of the proposed pay plan changes as it  
2 may deem proper. Should it approve less than the amounts contained in the annual expense  
3 budget, it shall adjust the appropriations sought for the various budget units in the light of such  
4 action. The law enacting the pay plan shall be effective on the first day of the ensuing fiscal year.  
5

6 **Section 709. - Prohibitions.**

7 (f) *Rendering personal services.* No officer or employee of the County, elected or appointed,  
8 shall detail or cause any officer or employee of the County to do or perform any service or work  
9 outside of [[his or her]] THEIR public office or employment.

10 (g) *Improper administration.* No employee administering the merit system, examiner or other  
11 person may defeat, deceive or obstruct any person in [[his or her]] THEIR right to examination,  
12 eligibility, certification or appointment under this Article, or furnish to any person any special or  
13 secret information for the purpose of affecting the rights or prospects of any person with respect  
14 to employment in the classified service.  
15

16 **ARTICLE VIII. - CENTRALIZED PURCHASING**

17 **Section 802. - County purchasing policies and practices.**

18 The Chief Administrative Officer shall be the County Purchasing Agent and shall have the  
19 following purchasing functions which [[he or she]] THEY may delegate to a Deputy Purchasing  
20 Agent in [[his or her]] THEIR office and under [[his or her]] THEIR supervision:  
21

22 **Section 806. - Contract execution.**

23 All contract bid forms and all contracts shall be approved by the County Solicitor as to form and  
24 legality. Following such approval, all contracts shall be signed in behalf of the County by the  
25 Executive or [[his or her]] THEIR designee. A complete file of all contract bid forms and all  
26 contracts shall be maintained in the office of the County Purchasing Agent. A copy of each  
27 signed contract shall be forwarded promptly to the Director of Finance.  
28

29 **Section 808. - Furthering legislation.**

30 The Council, upon recommendations received from the Executive, or if [[he or she]] THE  
31 EXECUTIVE fails to do so, shall enact furthering legislation, not inconsistent with the provisions

1 of this Charter or with the public general laws of this State, to implement the purchasing policies  
2 herein established. Such legislation shall provide for regulating the practices of the County  
3 Purchasing Agent and other officers, agents and employees of the County in regard to the  
4 issuance of inquiries, the receipt of bids; the placement of orders and other matters relating to the  
5 making of purchases and the award of contracts. Such legislation shall also prescribe procedures  
6 and establish minimum dollar amounts for competitive bidding.

## 8 **ARTICLE IX. - GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### 9 **Section 901. - Conflict of interest.**

10 (a) *Prohibitions.* No officer or employee of the County, whether elected or appointed, shall in  
11 any manner whatsoever be interested in or receive any benefit of the profits or emoluments of  
12 any contract, job, work, or service for the County. No such officer or employee shall accept any  
13 service or thing of more than nominal value, directly or indirectly, from any person, firm or  
14 corporation having dealings with the County, upon more favorable terms than those granted to  
15 the public generally, nor shall [[he or she]] ANY OFFICER OR EMPLOYEE receive, directly or  
16 indirectly, any part of any fee, commission or other compensation paid or payable by the County,  
17 or by any person in connection with any dealings with the County, or by any person in  
18 connection with any dealings with or proceedings before any branch, office, department, board,  
19 commission or other agency of the County. No such officer or employee shall directly or  
20 indirectly be the broker or agent who procures or receives any compensation in connection with  
21 the procurement of any type of bonds for County officers, employees or persons or firms doing  
22 business with the County. No such officer or employee shall solicit or accept any compensation  
23 or gratuity in the form of money or otherwise for any act or omission in the course of [[his or  
24 her]] THAT OFFICER OR EMPLOYEE'S public work; provided, however, that the head of any  
25 department or board of the County may permit an employee to receive a reward publicly offered  
26 and paid for, for the accomplishment of a particular task.

28 (c) *Penalties.* Any officer or employee of the County who willfully violates any of the provisions  
29 of this Section shall forfeit [[his or her]] THEIR office, or shall suffer such other penalty as  
30 provided by law. If any person shall offer, pay, refund or rebate any part of any fee, commission,  
31 or other form of compensation to any officer or employee of the County in connection with any



County business or proceeding, [[he or she]] THAT PERSON shall, on conviction, be punishable by imprisonment for not less than one or more than six months or a fine of not less than \$100.00 or more than \$1,000.00, or both. Any contract made in violation of this Section may be declared void by the Executive or by resolution of the Council. The penalties in this Section shall be in addition to all other penalties provided by law.

**Section 903. - Removal of members of Boards and Commissions.**

A member of any Board or Commission may be removed from office for cause by the appointing authority with the approval of a majority of the entire Council, but such member shall first be presented with a written statement of the reasons therefor, and shall have the privilege of a public hearing if [[he or she]] THAT MEMBER so requests within ten days. A member of any Board or Commission who shall be absent from three consecutive regular meetings of such Board or Commission, unless excused by resolution thereof, shall be deemed to have vacated [[his or her]] THEIR office. Vacancies occurring in such office otherwise than by expiration of the term shall be filled for the unexpired balance of the term.

**Section 905. - Additional compensation prohibited.**

No County officer or employee who is compensated for [[his or her]] THEIR service by salary shall receive any additional salary for serving as an ex officio member of a County board, commission or agency.

**Section 914. - Definitions and rules of construction.**

As used in this Charter,

(e) The words "passage" and "adoption," when used in connection with the legislative acts of the Council, shall mean the action by the Council in approving any item of legislative business prior to its submission to the Executive for [[his or her]] approval or veto.

[[k) Whenever in this Charter the masculine gender is used such words shall be construed to include the feminine gender.]]

[[l)] (k) The words "hereafter" and "heretofore" shall refer to December 5, 1968, unless such a construction would be unreasonable.

1    ~~[(m)]~~ (L) The phrase "two-thirds of the members of the Council" shall mean at least two-thirds  
2    of all members and, in the case of a five-member Council, shall mean four members.

3    ~~[(n)]~~ (M) The term "County Government" shall include all offices, departments, institutions,  
4    boards, commissions, and agencies established under the Howard County Charter, law or  
5    resolution, and their officers, agents and employees.

6  
7            **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that at the next General Election to be held in  
8    Maryland, the proposed amendment to the Howard County Charter shall be submitted to the  
9    voters of Howard County for their adoption or rejection in accordance with the provisions of the  
10   Article X of the Howard County Charter and Article XI-A of the Maryland Constitution, and if  
11   adopted by the majority of the voters, shall stand adopted from and after the 30th day following  
12   the general election.

13  
14           **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this Resolution, having been approved by  
15   two-thirds of the members of the Howard County Council, stands adopted this \_\_\_\_ day of  
16   \_\_\_\_\_, 2026 in accordance with provisions of Article X of the Howard County  
17   Charter.