



Charles County Charter Board

Update and Next Steps

Public Hearing
District 4
February 15, 2024

What is a Charter? A Constitution

- ▶ The guiding document that establishes the structure of local government
- ▶ The equivalent of the Maryland State Constitution or incorporation for municipalities
- ▶ Composed by residents. Approved by voters. **ONLY** amended by voters
- ▶ A charter determines the way some public officials are elected, what their duties are, and how they are held accountable to the public

Forms of Government in Maryland

Commissioner

- Calvert
- Carroll
- Garrett
- St. Mary's
- Somerset
- Washington

Code Home Rule

- Charles (2002)
- Queen Anne's (1990)
- Caroline (1984)
- Worcester (1976)
- Allegany (1974)
- Kent (1970)

Charter

- Frederick (2012)
- Cecil (2010)
- Dorchester (2002)
- Talbot (1973)
- Harford (1972)
- Prince George's (1970)
- Howard (1968)
- Wicomico (1964)
- Anne Arundel (1964)
- Baltimore (1956)
- Montgomery (1948)

Code Home Rule and Charter

Code Home Rule (present)

Five Member Board of Commissioners



The Board makes both executive and legislative decisions



No power to impose new taxes.
Bonding authority is not capped



Broad authority over planning.
Imposes school excise taxes



Police department requires
General Assembly approval



Charter (proposed)

A County Council as defined in the charter

A County Executive manages day-to-day
Government. The Council enacts local laws

Cannot impose new taxes.
Can establish a tax cap. Bonding is capped (at 15%)

Broad authority over planning
State authorization to impose school excise taxes

Ability to establish a police department
in charter

Charles County Council

Key Features

(Preliminary, 1.11.24, Charles County Charter Board)

- ✓ Term Limits – maximum of two consecutive terms
- ✓ District-based Voting
- ✓ Attendance Guidelines
- ✓ Town Hall Requirements
- ✓ Council Review and Confirmation of Department Heads
- ✓ Oversight Responsibilities
- ✓ Independent Inspector General – a watchdog for taxpayers

Charles County Executive

Key Features

(Preliminary, 12.13.23, Charles County Charter Board)

- ✓ Term Limits – maximum of two consecutive terms
- ✓ Full-time Management of Services
- ✓ Restructured and Responsive Agencies
 - Permitting Department - formerly PGM*
 - Department of Environment - formerly PGM*
 - Fire Administrator within Department of Emergency Services to assist Volunteers
 - Department heads confirmed by Council
- ✓ Residency Requirements for Both Executive and Key Leadership Staff
- ✓ Town Hall Requirements

*Planning and Growth Management

Timeline

- ▶ June 8, 2023 - Charter Board Members Sworn In
- ▶ November 9, 2023 - Public Hearing, County Government Building, District 1
- ▶ December 7, 2023 - Public Hearing, Potomac Branch Library, District 2
- ▶ January 25, 2024 - Public Hearing, Waldorf West Library, District 3
- ▶ February 15, 2024 - Public Hearing, Blue Crabs Stadium, District 4
- ▶ June 2024 - Final document delivered to County Commissioners
- ▶ August 2024 - Charter delivered to the State Board of Elections
- ▶ November 5, 2024 - Voters consider the charter at the polls

The Details Matter! We Need Your Help

Public participation is critical throughout the process

- ▶ Board Meetings - 30 minutes of public comment in each meeting
- ▶ Public Hearings - one in each of the four county districts
- ▶ E-comment at www.charlescountymd.gov/government/boards-commissions/charter-board
- ▶ Engage Board Members at community meetings and events
- ▶ Invite us to meet with you at CharterBoard@CharlesCountyMD.gov
- ▶ Complete the survey
- ▶ Vote November 2024!

