

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FOR THE
TOWN OF UPPER MARLBORO**

ORDINANCE: 2021-XX
SESSION: Regular Town Meeting
INTRODUCED:
DATE ENACTED: _____

AN ORDINANCE TO REGULATE AND PROVIDE FOR THE CONDUCT OF VOTER REGISTRATION, MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS, CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS, CERTIFICATION OF ELECTION RESULTS, AND PENALTIES RELATED THERETO

WHEREAS, Section 82–59 of the Town Charter (authority to employ personnel) states that the Town shall have the power to employ such officers and employees as it deems necessary to execute the powers and duties provided by this Charter or state law and to operate the Town government; and

NOW, THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE TOWN OF UPPER MARLBORO, STATE OF MARYLAND, DOES ORDAIN AND ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Purpose and Authority: The purpose of this Ordinance is to set forth the rules and procedures for electing or selecting the five (5) Town Commissioners for the Board of Town Commissioners, as well as to define the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Supervisors of Elections, the Town Clerk and other employees charged with managing the municipal election process. The authority to hold municipal elections is contained in Article XI-E of the Constitution and the Local Government Article of the State of Maryland Annotated Code, as amended from time to time, and Sections of the Charter of the Town of Upper Marlboro. All Town election procedures shall be subject to the provisions contained in the Annotated Code of Maryland.

Section 2. Applicability:

This Ordinance applies to the process of electing and selecting the members of the Board of Town Commissioners for the Town of Upper Marlboro.

Section 3. Definitions:

- A. Absentee Voting: Voting in a location other than an official polling station.

- B. Ballot: The means by which a resident records their vote. It may be an Electronic Ballot (generated by a voting machine) or a Paper Ballot (designed by the Town Clerk or designated employee)
- C. Ballot Question: Questions the sitting Board of Town Commissioners may chose to incorporate into the ballot to receive advice or input from the Town's voters on different topics.
- D. Board of Supervisors of Elections: Is composed of at least three (3) members, with a maximum of five (5) members; who shall be appointed by the Board of Commissioners by the second Tuesday in September in odd years and serve for a term of two years.
- E.
- F. Duly Authorized Agent: a person at least 18 years of age, who is not a candidate on the ballot, and is designated in writing by a qualified voter as his or her agent in picking up and delivering an absentee ballot.
- G. Election Day: The 1st Tuesday in November of every odd-numbered year.
- H. Election Judges: Town residents who are otherwise eligible to vote in a Town election may be appointed as needed by the Board of Supervisors of Elections to assist with conducting the election. On Election Day Members of the Board of Supervisors of Elections shall also be considered to be Election Judges for the purposed of Section 8 of this ordinance.
- I. Election Procedures Manual: a reference manual for Town Commissioner elections containing detailed instructions on preparing and conducting an election as well as standard templates and relevant legal references.
- J. Prince George's County Board of Elections: the authority for conducting elections in Prince George's County.
- K. Provisional Voter: A resident not listed in the Voter Registration List, whose eligibility to vote must be established after casting a ballot
- L. Public outreach: a systematic attempt to provide information or services to a targeted group of people, such as posting to the Town website or in a newspaper of general circulation.
- M. Registration: See Universal Registration
- N. Special Election: an election held on a date other than a regularly scheduled election for the purpose of filling a Town Commissioner vacancy. A special election shall be held not less than thirty (30) days and not more than forty-five (45) days after the vacancy is created
- O. Spoiled ballot: a ballot that has been declared invalid by the Board of Supervisors of Elections and is excluded from the vote count in accordance with criteria detailed in the election procedures manual of the Town of Upper Marlboro.
- P. Supplemental Voter Registration List: a list of voters registered to vote solely in Town elections.
- Q. Town Clerk: a municipal employee charged with a set of clerical responsibilities, including management of the municipal elections process. Election preparation and management may be carried out by another designated municipal employee.

- R. Universal registration: a system of qualifying voters based on residency in the State of Maryland and its political subdivisions to vote in Federal, State, County and Municipal elections by registering only once,
- S. Voter Authorization Card (VAC): a card provided by the Prince George's County Board of Elections in conjunction with the voter registration list that must be signed before a voter may proceed to cast a vote.
- T. Voter Registration List: official voter registration list for the Town of Upper Marlboro obtained from the Prince George's County Board of Elections and maintained by the State of Maryland Board of Elections.
- U. Voting age: at least 18 years of age, per Section 82-19 of the Town Charter.
- V. Voting machine: a mechanical or electronic piece of equipment, including software, used to define ballots; to cast and count votes; to display and report election results; and to maintain an audit trail.
- W. Voting machine vendor: a business that sells or leases voting machines and provides the technical support to operate them.
- X. Write-in Vote: the action of a voter to write-in the name of a person who is not a declared candidate for Town Commissioner on the ballot.

Section 4. Voter Registration

Every person who (a) is a citizen of the United States, (b) is at least eighteen (18) years of age, (c) has resided within the corporate limits of the Town for ten (10) days next preceding any Town election and (d) is registered in accordance with the provisions of Section 82-24 of the Town Charter shall be a qualified voter entitled to vote at any or all Town elections.

Section 5. Appointment and Duties of Board of Supervisors of Elections

The Board of Supervisors of Elections exercises general supervision of the Town elections in accordance with Section 80-20 of the Town Charter. The Board of Supervisors of Elections shall be appointed by the Board of Town Commissioners on or before the 2nd Tuesday in September prior to the general Town election.

The Board of Supervisors of Elections shall appoint one of its members as chairman. Vacancies on the said Board of Supervisors shall be filled by the approval of the Board of Commissioners for the remainder of the unexpired term as needed.

It shall be the duty of the Board to: become familiar with State laws, Town ordinances and the Election Procedures Manual that guide the electoral process by attending relevant training at the State, County or municipal level; review supplemental voter registration lists and absentee voter lists; prepare the polling station and supervise the election; and tally the votes and report the election results to the sitting Board of Town Commissioners.

The Board of Supervisors of Elections may also appoint election judges to assist with carrying out an election. All election judges shall be registered voters of the Town, and the Board of

Supervisors of Elections shall submit the names of all appointed elections judges to the Town Clerk prior to the election.

The Board of Supervisors of Elections, Chairman, and election judges shall be compensated by the Town per election in the below amounts:

- Board of Supervisors of Elections Chair \$500 per election
- Board of Supervisors of Elections Member(s) \$350 per election
- Election Judge(s) \$250 per election
 - Elections Judges who do not work a full day at the polls shall receive a percentage of this pay equal to the percentage of the Election Day that they worked.

The Town Clerk shall ensure compensation is issued within seven (7) days after the election date.

Section 6. Preparing for Town Elections

Town Elections elections take place on the second Tuesday in November of every odd-numbered year.

A. Election Schedule: In September prior to the Town election, the Town Clerk shall update the election schedule for publication on the Town website in October or other suitable means of public outreach. The schedule shall contain important dates and deadlines related to the election.

B. Registration: No less than six (6) months prior to a Town election, the Town Clerk shall contact the Prince George's County Board of Elections and request the development of a plan and schedule to implement universal registration, including a voter registration list and the supporting materials for the Town election, pursuant to §3-403 of the Maryland Election Law Article, as may be amended. The Town's supplemental voter registration list shall be finalized by the Town Clerk thirty (30) days prior to the election date.

C. Board of Supervisors of Elections: Recruitment of members of the Board of Supervisors of Elections shall begin in July and August prior to the election by publicizing the position in suitable means of public outreach and the Town Clerk shall ensure that all members of the Board of Supervisors of Elections receive a course of training in their duties. The training shall take place after the candidate filing and candidate withdrawal deadlines.

D. Town Commissioner Candidacy: The Town Clerk shall notice the filing deadline of an election in suitable means of public outreach no less than sixty 60 days for a regular election, and no less than twenty days for a special election, as needed; provide Petition of Candidacy and Written Intent Statement forms to residents wishing to file for Town Commissioner candidacy; and receive and review the filed forms. The Town Clerk shall also advise candidates on all relevant election matters, including the election schedule, Candidates' Night, campaigning and other questions that may arise.

E. Campaign Material: The Town Clerk shall inform Town Commissioner candidates of the Town's campaign rules. Starting three weeks prior to the election, campaign literature may be

distributed, and campaign signs and posters may be displayed on private property, including the Town right-of-way, with the property owner's permission. Campaign signs shall:

1. Not be displayed until three (3) weeks prior to the election.
2. Not create a public safety hazard.
3. Be removed within two (2) days after the election.
4. Not be attached to utility poles.
5. Displayed on designated Town right of way locations determined by the Town Administrator together with the Director of Public Works and the Chief of Police in the August prior to each election. In a Special Election the locations used in the last regular election shall apply.

F. Write-in Candidates: The Town Clerk shall ensure the ballots provide for at least three spaces to permit the voter to write in name or names of additional candidates not listed on the ballot. A write-in candidate may win an election if they meet all the criteria to run as a Commissioner and receive at least the 5th highest vote count.

G. Candidates' Night: The Town Clerk shall arrange for a Candidates' Night to be held in October prior to a Town election. All qualified candidates confirmed at that time may participate in this moderated public forum to introduce themselves and answer questions from residents. A third party group or organization may also assist with this event. A reasonable attempt shall be made to ensure the date and time chosen allows all candidate an opportunity to participate.

H. Notice of Election: The Town Clerk shall give at least two (2) weeks' notice of every election in a paper of general circulation, or other suitable form of public outreach, and physically post the Election Notice in three (3) public places in the Town.

I. Election Supplies: The Town Clerk shall ensure that all necessary election supplies are at hand on Election Day, either for voting by paper ballot or by voting machine.

Section 7 Absentee Ballots

An eligible voter may vote by absentee ballot in a Town election for any reason, pursuant to §4-108 of the Maryland Local Government Article, as may be amended. The Town Clerk shall prepare absentee ballots and an absentee voter list to keep an accurate record of voters who request an absentee ballot.

- A. Application: A registered voter may request an absentee ballot as early as thirty (30) days prior to the election. The request can be made electronically or by mail. Absentee ballots and accompanying envelopes are made available to any eligible voter upon request until the election, including ballots requested in writing by a duly authorized agent. Requests can be made up until the closing of the polls, however all ballots must be submitted prior to the polls being declared closed in order to be counted. Upon issuing an absentee ballot the Town Clerk shall cross that persons name off the voter registration list and mark "absentee ballot" next to the name.

B. Lost or Destroyed Absentee ballots: No voter who has been issued an absentee ballot for an election shall be authorized to cast their ballot in any manner other than by casting an absentee ballot. Should an absentee ballot be lost or destroyed, without being returned to the Town Clerk, a second ballot will be issued. The Town Clerk shall verify that one (1) ballot is being submitted for each absentee voter. **If the Town Clerk finds a voter has cast more than one absentee ballot they shall challenge these ballots.** Should the absentee ballot be challenged by the Town Clerk as to the ballot being cast by the person to whom it was issued or as to the ballot being obtained and returned in accordance with the provisions of this section, the Board of Supervisor of Elections shall determine the validity of any challenged absentee ballot.

C. When the Board of Supervisors of Elections determines from proof or investigation that any person who has marked and transmitted an absentee ballot has died before Election Day, such ballot of the deceased voter shall not be counted. However, if prior to the time of such counting the Board of Supervisors of Elections shall not have determined that the absentee resident who makes a ballot had died before Election Day, such ballot shall be counted, and the fact that said absentee resident may later be shown to have been actually dead on Election Day shall not invalidate said ballot or said election.

D. Mailed Ballot Collection: A Member of the Board of Supervisors of Elections shall go to the Board of Supervisors of Elections Post office box at the closing of the polls. If any ballots are contacted within they shall be considered submitted prior to the closing of the polls and shall be counted.

B. Qualified Agent: Any registered voter voting by absentee may designate an agent to pick up and deliver an absentee ballot granted that they; are at least 18 years of age, are not a candidate on the ballot, sign an affidavit that the ballot was delivered to the voter who submitted the application, marked and placed in an envelope by the voter, or with assistance in the agent's presence; and returned to the Town by the agent.

C. Late Absentee Ballots: Any absentee ballots received after polling has closed will be handled as a spoiled ballot.

Runoff Elections: An attempt will be made to supply any voter who voted absentee with a absentee ballot for any runoff election as soon as official copies are available, and the above regulations shall apply to any runoff election.

E. Storage of Absentee Ballots: Every absentee voter shall be listed on the absentee voter list that includes name, address, date of issuance of ballot and date of receipt of voted ballot. Voted ballots shall be kept sealed in their envelopes and stored in a secure location to be opened and tallied on Election Day.

F. Absentee Ballot Delivery: On elections day, prior to the closing of the polls the Town Clerk shall deliver the absentee ballots to the place designated by the Board of Supervisors of Elections and shall make an accounting for the purpose of counting

absentee ballots as to the number of absentee ballots issued and the number returned. The Town Clerk shall keep such record of the absentee ballots in a secure place as is kept with other voting records.

Section 8 Election Day

On Election Day all members of the Board of Supervisors of Elections shall be considered Election Judges as well as being members of the Board of Supervisors of Elections. The preparation for and the conduct of an Election Day are described in detail in the Election Procedures Manual. The polls are open between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.

A. Preparing the Polling Station: The Town Clerk shall meet the members of the Board of Supervisors of Elections and Election Judges before polls open at 7:00 a.m. on Election Day to prepare the polling station. Preparation of the polling station includes:

1. Posting sample ballots and instructions outside and inside the polling station for public view. The sample ballot shall show names of declared candidates and questions, if any. The names of write-in candidates may be posted inside and outside the polling station, but not within the voting booth.
2. Demarcating a one hundred (100') foot perimeter around the polling station structure as a "no electioneering" zone. No campaigning by candidates or their supporters will be allowed within this area. Candidates for election may cross this line only to cast their own vote.
3. Setting up a voter "check-in" station, including readying of the voter registration list and Voter Authorization Cards.
4. Completing set up of voting booths. If voting machines are used, the Elections Chair, with assistance from the voting machine vendor, shall verify that they are ready for use and counters set to zero. If paper ballots are used, members of the Board of Supervisors of Elections shall ensure that each booth has a pen for marking the ballot.
5. Setting up ballot boxes if paper ballots are used. Ballot boxes must be empty and ready for use. The Town Clerk shall keep the ballot box key in secure storage until the polls close.

B. Polling Station Open: The Elections Chair supervises the polling station and may assign Election Judges to their particular stations. Upon opening of the polls, all Election Judges shall take their assigned stations. At least one member of the Board of Supervisors of Elections shall remain at the polls at all times. At least two Election Judges of Elections shall staff the voter check-in/ registration tables. One Election Judge shall staff the voting booths and one shall staff the ballot boxes, if paper ballots are used. Physically disabled voters shall be assisted as prescribed in the Maryland Election Law Article, as may be amended.

The Elections Chair shall be responsible for provisional voting and ensure that residents, who are not on the voter registration list, are able to cast a provisional ballot. Provisional ballots are set

aside for separate tallying. Votes remain provisional until the eligibility of the voter has been established by the Prince George's County Board of Elections.

The Town Clerk shall announce the closing of polls five minutes before 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. Any resident wishing to observe the tallying may remain inside the polling station when the doors are locked. No one shall be permitted to enter or re-enter the polling station while tallying is in progress.

C. Vote Count Observation and Decorum: After the last voter has voted and the polls have closed, and before the counting begins, candidates and members of the public may be permitted to enter the room where the votes will be counted. Once the counting begins, the door to the counting room will be closed and no one will be allowed to enter until the votes have been tallied. Once inside the room, anyone wishing to leave will not be readmitted until the counting has concluded. The use of electronic devices, other than those being used by the Board of Supervisors of Elections for counting, will not be permitted in the polling room during the counting of the votes. Anyone who violates the restrictions set forth herein may be, at the discretion of the election judges, ejected from the proceedings.

If paper ballots are used:

1. The ballot box key shall be returned to the Elections Chair by the Town Clerk to open the ballot boxes.
2. The Elections Chair shall remove ballots from the ballot box and organize them for tallying assisted by other members of the Board of Supervisors of Elections.
3. The Elections Chair shall read out aloud how each ballot was voted, including write-in votes and ballot questions (if any).
4. Two members of the Board of Supervisors of Elections will independently tally the votes cast for each candidate and results of each ballot question.
5. In the case of an irregular ballot, the Elections Chair shall consult with two other members of the Board of Supervisors of Elections to determine if the ballot is valid or spoiled in accordance with criteria detailed in the election procedures manual of the Town of Upper Marlboro. If spoiled, the ballot shall be marked "void" and set aside. A voided ballot shall be shown to any challenger but shall not leave the hand of the member of the Board of Supervisors of Elections.
6. When all regular ballots are tallied, the Elections Chair shall open the sealed envelopes with absentee ballots and count them. The absentee ballots shall be added to the tally of regular ballots. The result is compared with the tallied check marks on the County voter registration list and the Town supplemental voter list to ensure that the total number of voters agrees with the total number of ballots cast.
7. Provisional votes shall be tallied separately and set aside until the qualification of each provisional voter can be verified
8. Voted ballots shall be placed in envelopes, sealed and signed across the seal by three members of the Board of Supervisors of Elections. Said envelopes, marked voter registration list and Voter Authorization Cards shall be kept in a secure place until they are delivered to the Prince George's County Board of Elections for certification.

9. Tally sheets shall be verified, signed and dated by the Elections Chair and members of the Board of Supervisors of Elections. Tally sheets, together with spoiled ballots, those not distributed and not used shall be placed in envelopes, sealed, signed across the seal by at least three members of the Board of Supervisors of Elections and returned to the Town Clerk.

If voting machines are used:

1. The Elections Chair, with two other members of the Board of Supervisors of Elections, shall open the voting machines and unroll the tally sheets.
2. The machine count shall be verified by at least two members of the Board of Supervisors of Elections. Under the supervision of the Elections Chair, members of the Board of Supervisors of Elections shall tally record sheets from each voting machine. Once the machine votes have been tallied, the Elections Chair shall open the sealed envelopes with absentee ballots and count them. The absentee ballots shall be added to the tally of regular ballots. The result is compared with the tallied check marks on the County voter registration list and the Town supplemental voter registration list to ensure that the total number of voters agrees with the total number of ballots cast.
3. Provisional votes, cast by paper ballot, must be tallied separately, and returned separately to the Prince George's County Board of Elections to be certified.
4. Tally sheets shall be verified against the total count of the signed voter authorization cards, a count of check marks on the County voter registration list, and a count of checks on the Town supplemental registration list.
5. Voting machine tally sheets and absentee ballots shall be placed in envelopes, sealed, and signed across the seal by at least three members of the Board of Supervisors of Elections.
6. Voting machines shall be locked and sealed and keys placed in a sealed envelope for safekeeping until the voting machines are picked up by the vendor.

D. Tie Votes: In the case of a tie vote, the Board of Commissioners shall order and provide a run-off election between the tied candidate within twenty-one (21) days of the initial election.

E. Announcement of Election Results: The Elections Chair shall announce the five candidates receiving the highest number of votes as Commissioners-elect. The Elections Chair shall also announce the results of any Ballot Questions.

F. Statement of Election Results: After the closing of the polls, the Board of Supervisors of Elections shall determine the vote cast for each candidate or question and shall, no later than 12:00 Noon on Thursday immediately following the election, certify the results of the election to the clerk of the Town who shall record the results in the minutes of the next Town Meeting of the Board of Commissioners. The five candidates for Commissioners receiving the highest number of votes in a general election shall be declared elected.

G. Reporting Election Results and Certification: The Town Clerk shall deliver the Statement of Election Results, the marked voter registration list, Voter Authorization Cards, absentee and provisional ballots to the Prince George's County Board of Elections within four days after the

election. The County Board of Elections will independently tally the votes, including confirmed provisional votes, and certify the election.

After tallying the votes, the Prince George's County Board of Elections will return the voter registration lists, Voter Authorization Cards, and voted ballots, which shall be retained by the Town for a period of at least six (6) months.

Section 9 Ballot Questions

The sitting Board of Town Commissioners may, by Resolution, add non-binding questions to an election ballot to receive advice or input from the Town's voters on different topics. Said Resolution should list each question and provide detailed background information and a statement as to why this topic is important. The Resolution should be approved no more than thirty (30) days prior to the election date. Ballot questions shall be included in the sample ballot and posted in a paper of general circulation, or other suitable form of public outreach.

Section 10 Additional Items

A. Assistance To Voters: Any registered voter who requires assistance to vote by reason of blindness, disability, or inability to read the English language or write may be given assistance by a person of the voter's choice, not to include the voter's union or employer. Any person rendering assistance pursuant to this subsection shall execute a certification to be included in the instructions.

B. Voting Secrecy: The Board of Elections shall provide an enclosure to vote that ensures secrecy in the marking of the ballots and shall count the ballots only after the close of the polls as scheduled.

C. Penalties: Any person who shall violate any of the provisions of this Article shall, upon conviction, be sentenced to pay a fine of not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or be sentenced to imprisonment for not more than six (6) months, or both, in the discretion of the court.

Section 10 Severability

If any section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, clause, or word contained in this Ordinance shall be declared invalid for any reason, such decision shall not affect the remaining portion of this Ordinance, which shall remain in full force and effect and to this end the provisions of the Ordinance are hereby declared to be severable.

AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED AND ENACTED, by the Board of Commissioners for the Town of Upper Marlboro, Maryland, that this Ordinance 2021-05 shall replace and repeal Ordinance 2001-02 Elections.

