



# Charles County Charter Board

## Update and Next Steps

Public Hearing  
District 2  
December 7, 2023

# Charles County Charter Board

## What is the purpose of the Board?

- ▶ Draft a guiding document that will transition government from Code Home Rule to Charter

## What will the charter include?

- ▶ The structure, roles, duties, rules, and procedures of local government

## When will voters have their say?

- ▶ The charter will go before voters for ratification at the 2024 General Election
- ▶ However, residents can provide their input on the details NOW!

# 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

# 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

# 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

# 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)

## What Distinguishes Charter?

- ▶ Resident control - only voters approve the charter; only voters amend it
- ▶ The charter can be reviewed periodically to adjust to residents' needs
- ▶ The most autonomy from the state over local laws
- ▶ Separate executive and legislative branches for checks and balances
- ▶ Ability to establish a tax cap and/or a debt cap

# Charter Board Discussions

## ▶ Officials

- ▶ Jan Gardner (D), former County Executive, Frederick County
- ▶ Bob Cassilly (R), County Executive, Harford County
- ▶ Megan Limarzi, Inspector General, Montgomery County

## ▶ Experts

- ▶ Eugene Lauer, former Charles County Administrator
- ▶ David Culver, Cecil County Council Manager
- ▶ Kevin Kinnally, Legislative Director, Maryland Association of Counties

## ▶ Stakeholders

- ▶ Chief Mark Kaufmann, County Volunteer Fire Chief
- ▶ Chief Mitchell Lewis, County Volunteer EMS Chief
- ▶ Sheriff Troy Berry, Charles County Sheriff's Office



# Views from Officials and Experts

- ▶ “As a County Executive, I was able to bring more money home [to Frederick County].”
  - Jan Gardner, Former and First Frederick Executive, Former Commissioner
- ▶ “[Economic development] is the single biggest advantage.. The reason is, that’s how businesses function.. They can relate to that.”
  - Bob Cassilly, County Executive, Harford County
- ▶ “The cost of government has more to do with whom you elect to office and the choices that they make than any form of government adopted by a county.”
  - Kevin Kinnally, Maryland Association of Counties (MACo)

# Executive Questions for the Public

- ▶ Compensation?
- ▶ Term limits? How many terms?
- ▶ Qualifications and minimum standards?

## Council Questions for the Public

- ▶ Number of Council Districts?
- ▶ Election of Council Chair?
- ▶ Compensation?
- ▶ Term limits? How many terms?
- ▶ Qualifications and minimum standards?

## Checks and Balances Options for the Public

- ▶ Audits and investigations?
- ▶ Subpoena power?
- ▶ Veto and veto override?
- ▶ Appointments and confirmation?
- ▶ Budget authority?

# 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](http://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](mailto:CharterBoard@CharlesCountyMD.gov)
- ▶ Complete the survey
- ▶ Vote November 2024!



# Board Members are Here to Listen

## District 1

- ▶ Cheryl Botts
- ▶ Sarah Hammett

## District 2

- ▶ Marjorie Chiles
- ▶ Mary Stokely

## District 3

- ▶ Ramonda Davis
- ▶ Christopher Harrington

## District 4

- ▶ Eileen Lynch-Britt
- ▶ Greg Waring - Chair

## At-Large

- ▶ Dottery Butler Washington  
- Vice Chair

## Alternates

- ▶ James Crawford
- ▶ William Smith
- ▶ Michael White