

CHARTER OF THE

Town of Barclay

QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

As enacted by a Charter Amendment Resolution

Effective April 29, 1980

**CHARTER OF THE TOWN OF
BARCLAY
QUEEN ANNE’S COUNTY MARYLAND**

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ARTICLE I. INCORPORATION

Section 1.01 Corporate name.

The inhabitants of the Town of Barclay, Maryland, within the corporate limits legally established from time to time, are hereby constituted and continued as a body corporate and politic, by the name of “Commissioners of Barclay, Maryland.” (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 1.02 Definitions.

(a) The terms “town,” “municipal corporation,” or “municipality” as used in this charter shall be construed as synonymous with, and shall mean and refer to, the municipal corporation described in Sections 1.01 and 1.03 of this charter.

(b) The terms “Commissioner” and “Commissioners” in this charter shall mean a member, or the members, respectively, of the Commissioners of Barclay, the governing body of the town.

(c) The term “Commission” in this charter shall mean the Commissioners of Barclay, the governing body of the town. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 1.03 General powers.

As a body corporate and politic, the town has all the rights and powers of municipal self-government and home rule as are now or hereafter may be provided or necessarily implied by this charter and the Constitution and laws of the State of Maryland. The municipal corporation here continued, under its corporate name, has all the privileges of a body corporate and politic, by that

name to sue and be sued, to plead and be impleaded in any court of law or equity, to have and use a common seal and to have perpetual succession, unless the charter and the corporate existence are legally abrogated. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 1.04 Description of corporate boundaries.

The courses and distances showing the exact corporate limits or boundaries of the town shall be filed at all times with the Clerk of the Circuit Court for Queen Anne’s County and with the Director of the Department of Legislative Reference of the Maryland General Assembly. In addition, a copy or copies of the courses and distances describing the corporate limits or boundaries of the town shall be maintained on file in the town office and available for public inspection during normal business hours. A map or maps showing the current corporate limits or boundaries shall likewise be maintained in the town office and similarly available for public inspection. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

ARTICLE II. THE COMMISSION

Section 2.01 Number of Commissioners; selection; term.

All legislative powers of the town are vested in a Commission consisting of three Commissioners who shall be elected as hereinafter provided and who shall hold office for a term of three years or until their successors take office. The regular term of each Commissioner shall expire on the second Monday of June following the election of his/her successor or his/her re-election to another regular term. Commissioners holding office at the time this charter becomes effective shall continue to hold office for the term for which they were elected and until the succeeding Commissioners or re-elected Commissioners take office under the provisions of this charter. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 2.02 Qualifications of Commissioners.

Commissioners shall: (a) be at least 25 years of age; (b) have resided in the town for at least one year immediately preceding their election; and (c) be qualified voters of the town for at least six months preceding their election. Any Commissioner who ceases to reside in the town during his/her term of office shall immediately resign, thereby vacating his/her membership on the Commission. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 2.03 Salary of Commissioners.

Commissioners shall not receive a salary and shall perform their duties without any type of remuneration unless and until an annual salary which shall be equal for all Commissioners shall be specified from time to time by an ordinance passed by the Commission in the regular course of its business. Any ordinance making any change in any salary paid to the several Commissioners; either by way of increase or decrease, shall not take effect as to any Commissioner who signs such ordinance until the Commissioner’s successor is elected or the Commissioner is re-elected at an election held after the passage of such ordinance. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 2.04 Meetings of the Commission.

The Commission shall meet at 7:00 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month. The Commission may prescribe by its rules or by resolution to meet more, but not less, frequently. Special meetings may be called by at least a majority of the members of the Commission or by the president of the Commission. All meetings of the Commission shall be open to the public, except in circumstances when the meetings may be closed in accordance with the Maryland Open Meetings Act, as amended from time to time. The rules of the Commission shall provide that residents of the town shall have a reasonable opportunity to be heard at any meeting in regard to any municipal question. (Res. 14-03, 4-10-14; Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 2.05 Commission to be judge of qualifications of its members.

The Commission shall be the judge of the election and qualifications of its members.

Section 2.06 President and Vice President of the Commission.

At the regular meeting on the third Wednesday of June of each year or as soon thereafter as practicable, the Commission shall appoint one member by at least a majority vote to be President until the third Wednesday of June next following the appointment, and one member by at least a majority vote to be Vice President until the third Wednesday of June next following the appointment. The President shall be the chief executive officer of the town, preside at all meetings of the Commission, maintain an orderly proceeding at all meetings, and vote with the other Commissioners on all questions before the Commission. In the absence of the President, the Vice President shall preside in the President's place and shall have the authority to take all actions that would otherwise be taken by him/her. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 2.07 Quorum.

A majority of the members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, but no ordinance shall be approved nor any other action taken without the favorable votes of a majority of the whole membership of the Commission. (Res. 14-04, 4-10-14; Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2017-01; Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 2.08 Rules and order of business; journal.

The Commission shall determine its own rules and order of business. It shall keep a journal of its proceedings and enter therein the affirmative and negative votes upon final action on any question, resolution, or ordinance, or at any other time if required by any one member of the Commission. The journal shall be open to public inspection.

Section 2.09 Vacancies on the Commission.

(a) In case of a vacancy on the Commission for any reason, the remaining Commissioners shall call a special election to be conducted within forty-five days to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term.

(b) In case of more than one vacancy on the Commission for any reason, a special election shall be conducted as provided in subsection (a) herein, and the number of candidates equal to the number of vacant seats to be filled on the Commission who receive the highest number of votes in the special election shall be declared elected. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall fill the seat having the longest unexpired portion of term remaining; and, the candidate receiving the second highest number of votes shall fill the seat having the second longest unexpired portion of term remaining. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 2.10 Passage of ordinances; publication; effective date.

No ordinance shall be passed at the meeting at which it is introduced. At any regular or special meeting of the Commission held not less than six nor more than sixty days after the meeting at which an ordinance was introduced, it shall be passed, or passed as amended, or rejected, or its consideration deferred to some specified future date. In cases of emergency, the provision that an ordinance may not be passed at the meeting at which it is introduced may be suspended by the affirmative votes of all of the members of the Commission. Every ordinance shall become effective when signed by at least a majority of the members of the Commission; unless so otherwise provided in the ordinance as approved or passed. Each ordinance, or a fair summary thereof, shall be published at least twice in a newspaper or newspapers having general circulation in the town, with the first publication occurring as soon as practicable following passage. (Res. 14-05, 4-10-14; Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 2.11 File of ordinances.

Ordinances shall be permanently filed by the Commission in a safe manner insuring preservation and shall be kept available for public inspection.

Section 2.12 Powers of Commission enumerated.

(a) *General powers.* The Commission shall have the power to pass all such ordinances not contrary to the Constitution and laws of the United States of America, the State of Maryland, or this charter as it may deem necessary for the good government of the town; for the protection and preservation of the town's property, rights, and privileges; for the preservation of peace and good order; for securing persons and property from violence, danger, or destruction; and for the protection and promotion of the health, safety, comfort, convenience, welfare, and happiness of the residents of and visitors in the town.

(b) *Specific powers.* In addition to the foregoing general powers, the Commission shall have the power to pass all ordinances authorized under Division II, Title 5 of the Local Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, as amended from time to time, and shall also have the power to pass all ordinances for the following purposes:

Advertising. To provide for advertising for the purposes of the town, for printing and publishing statements as to the business of the town.

Aisles and doors. To regulate and prevent the obstruction of aisles in public halls, churches and places of amusement, and to regulate the construction and operation of the doors and means of egress therefrom.

Amusements. To provide in the interest of the public welfare for licensing, regulating, or restraining theatrical or other public amusements.

Appropriations. To appropriate municipal monies for any purpose within the powers of the Commission.

Auctioneers. To regulate the sale of all kinds of property at auction within the town and to license auctioneers.

Band. To establish a municipal band, symphony orchestra or other musical organization, and to regulate by ordinance the conduct and policies thereof.

Billboards. To license, tax and regulate, restrain or prohibit the erection or maintenance of billboards within the town, the placing of signs, bills and posters of every kind and description on any building, fence, post, billboard, pole, or other place within the town.

Bridges. To erect and maintain bridges.

Buildings. To make reasonable regulations in regard to buildings and signs to be erected, constructed, or reconstructed in the town, and to grant building permits for them; to formulate a building code and a plumbing code and to appoint a building inspector and a plumbing inspector, and to require reasonable charges for permits and inspections, to authorize and require the inspection of all buildings and structures and to authorize the condemnation thereof in whole or in part when dangerous or insecure, and to require that such buildings and structures be made safe or be taken down.

Cemeteries. To regulate or prohibit the interment of bodies within the municipality and to regulate cemeteries.

Codification of ordinances. To provide for the codification of all ordinances.

Community services. To provide, maintain, and operate community and social services for the preservation and promotion of the health, recreation, welfare, and enlightenment of the inhabitants of the town.

Cooperative activities. To make agreements with other municipalities, counties, districts, bureaus, Commissions, and governmental authorities for the joint performance of or for cooperation in the performance of any governmental functions.

Curfew. To prohibit the youth of the town from being in the streets, lanes, alleys, or public places at unreasonable hours of the night.

Dangerous improvements. To compel persons about to undertake dangerous improvements to execute bonds with sufficient sureties conditioned that the owner or contractor will pay all damages resulting from such work which may be sustained by any persons or property.

Departments. To create, change, and abolish offices, departments, or agencies, other than the offices, departments, and agencies established by this charter; to assign additional functions or duties to offices, departments, or agencies established by this charter, but not including the power to discontinue or assign to any other office, department, or agency any function or duty assigned by this charter to a particular office, department, or agency.

Dogs. To regulate the keeping of dogs in the town and to provide, wherever the county does not license or tax dogs, for the licensing and taxing of them; to provide for the disposition of homeless dogs and of dogs on which no license fee or taxes are paid.

Elevators. To require the inspection and licensing of elevators and to prohibit their use when unsafe or dangerous or without a license.

Explosives and combustibles. To regulate or prevent the storage of gunpowder, oil, or any other explosive or combustible matter; to regulate or prevent the use of firearms, fireworks, bonfires, explosives, or any other similar things which may endanger persons or property.

Filth. To compel the occupant of any premises, building or outhouse situated in the town, if it has become filthy or unwholesome, to abate or cleanse the condition; and after reasonable notice to the owners or occupants to authorize such work to be done by the proper officers and to assess the expense thereof against the property, making it collectible by taxes or against the occupant or occupants.

Finances. To levy, assess, and collect ad valorem property taxes; to expend municipal funds for any public purpose; to have general management and control of the finances of the town.

Fire. To suppress fires and prevent the dangers thereof and to establish and maintain a fire department; to contribute funds to volunteer fire companies serving the town; to inspect buildings for the purpose of reducing fire hazards, to issue regulations concerning fire hazards, and to forbid and prohibit the use of fire-hazardous buildings and structures permanently or until the conditions of town fire-hazard regulations are met; to install and maintain fireplugs where and as necessary, and to regulate their use; and to take all other measures necessary to control and prevent fires in the town.

Food. To inspect and to require the condemnation of, if unwholesome, and to regulate the sale of, any food products.

Franchises. To grant and regulate franchises to water companies, electric light companies, gas companies, telegraph and telephone companies, transit companies, taxicab companies, and any others which may be deemed advantageous and beneficial to the town, subject to the limitations and provisions of the Corporations and Associations Article and the Public Utilities Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, as each may be amended from time to time. No franchise shall be granted for a longer period than fifty years.

Garbage. To prevent the deposit of any unwholesome substance either on private or public property and to compel its removal to designated points; to require slops, garbage, ashes, and other waste or other unwholesome materials to be removed to designated points, or to require the occupants of the premises to place them conveniently for removal.

Grants-in-aid. To accept gifts and grants of federal or of State funds from the federal [and] State governments or any agency thereof, and to expend the funds for any lawful purpose, agreeable to the conditions under which the gifts or grants were made.

Hawkers. To license, tax, regulate, suppress, and prohibit hawkers and itinerant dealers, peddlers, pawnbrokers, and all other persons selling any articles on the streets of the town, and to revoke such licenses for any action or threat of action by such licensee in the course of his occupation which causes or threatens harm or injury to inhabitants of the town or to their welfare or happiness.

Health. To protect and preserve the health of the town and its inhabitants; to appoint a public health officer, and to define and regulate his powers and duties; to prevent the introduction of contagious diseases into the town; to establish quarantine regulations, and to authorize the removal and confinement of persons having contagious or infectious diseases; to prevent and remove all nuisances; to inspect, regulate, and abate any buildings, structures, or places which cause or may cause unsanitary conditions or conditions detrimental to health; but nothing herein shall be construed to affect in any manner any of the powers and duties of the State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the county health department, or any public general or local law relating to the subject of health.

House numbers. To regulate the numbering of houses and lots and to compel owners to renumber them, or in default thereof to authorize and require the work to be done by the town at the owner's expense, such expense to constitute a lien upon the property collectible as tax monies.

Jail. To establish and regulate a station house or lockup for temporary confinement of violators of the laws and ordinances of the town or to use the county jail for such purpose.

Licenses. Subject to any restrictions imposed by the public general laws of the State, to license and regulate all persons beginning or conducting transient or permanent business in the town for the sale of any goods, wares, merchandise, or services, to license and regulate any business, occupation, trade, calling, or place of amusement or business; to establish and collect fees and charges for all licenses and permits issued under the authority of this charter.

Liens. To provide that any valid charges, taxes, or assessments made against any real property within the town shall be liens upon the property, to be collected as municipal taxes are collected.

Lights. To provide for the lighting of the town.

Livestock. To regulate and prohibit the running at large of cattle, horses, swine, fowl, sheep, goats, dogs, or other animals; to authorize the impounding, keeping, sale, and redemption of such animals when found in violation of the ordinance in such cases provided.

Markets. To obtain by lease or rent, own, construct, purchase, operate, and maintain public markets within the town.

Minor privileges. To regulate or prevent the use of public ways, sidewalks, and public places for signs, awnings, posts, steps, railings, entrances, racks, posting handbills and advertisements, and display of goods, wares, and merchandise.

Noise. To regulate or prohibit unreasonable ringing of bells, crying of goods, or sounding of whistles and horns.

Nuisances. To prevent or abate by appropriate ordinance all nuisances in the town which are so defined at common law, by this charter, or by the laws of the State of Maryland, whether they be herein specifically named or not; to regulate, to prohibit, to control the location of, or to require the removal from the town of all trading in, handling of, or manufacture of any commodity which is or may become offensive, obnoxious, or injurious to the public comfort or health. In this connection the town may regulate, prohibit, control the location of, or require the removal from the town of such things as stockyards, slaughterhouses, cattle or hog pens, tanneries, and renderies. This listing is by way of enumeration, not limitation.

Obstructions. To remove all nuisances and obstructions from the streets, lanes, and alleys and from any lots adjoining thereto, or any other places within the limits of the town.

Parking facilities. To license and regulate and to establish, obtain by purchase, by lease or by rent, own, construct, operate, and maintain parking lots and other facilities for off-street parking.

Parking meters. To install parking meters on the streets and public places of the town in such places as by ordinance they determine, and by ordinance to prescribe rates and provisions for the use thereof; but the installation of parking meters on any street or road maintained by the State Highway Administration must first be approved by the Administration.

Parks and recreation. To establish and maintain public parks, gardens, playgrounds, and other recreational facilities and programs to promote the health, welfare, and enjoyment of the inhabitants of the town.

Police force. To establish, operate, and maintain a police force. All town policemen, within the municipality shall have the powers and authority of constables in this State.

Police powers. To prohibit, suppress, and punish within the town all vice, gambling, and games of chance; prostitution and solicitation therefor and the keeping of bawdy houses and houses of ill fame; all tramps and vagrants; all disorder, disturbances, annoyances, disorderly conduct, obscenity, public profanity, and drunkenness.

Property. To acquire by conveyance, purchase, or gift, real or leasable property for any public purposes; to erect buildings and structures thereon for the benefit of the town and its inhabitants; and to convey any real or leasehold property when no longer needed for the public use, after having given at least twenty days' public notice of the proposed conveyance; to control, protect, and maintain public buildings, grounds, and property of the town.

Quarantine. To establish quarantine regulations in the interests of the public health.

Regulations. To adopt by ordinance and enforce within the corporate limits police, health, sanitary, fire, building, plumbing, traffic, speed, parking, and other similar regulations not in conflict with the laws of the State of Maryland or with this charter.

Sidewalks. To regulate the use of sidewalks and all structures in, under, or above them; to require the owner or occupant of premises to keep the sidewalks in front thereof free from snow or other obstructions; to prescribe hours for cleaning sidewalks.

Sweepings. To regulate or prevent the throwing or depositing of sweepings, dust, ashes, offal, garbage, paper, handbills, dirty liquids, or other unwholesome materials into any public way or on any public or private property in the town.

Taxicabs. To license, tax, and regulate public hackmen, taxicabmen, draymen, drivers, cabmen, porters and expressmen, and all other persons pursuing like occupations.

Vehicles. To regulate and license wagons and other vehicles not subject to the licensing powers of the State of Maryland.

Voting machines. To purchase, lease, borrow, install, and maintain voting machines for use in town elections.

Zoning. To exercise the powers as to planning and zoning, conferred upon municipal corporations generally in the Land Use Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, as amended from time to time, subject to the limitations and provision thereof said article.

Saving clause. The enumeration of powers in this section is not to be construed as limiting the powers of the town to the several subjects mentioned. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 2.13 Exercise of powers.

For the purpose of carrying out the powers granted in this charter, the Commission may pass all necessary ordinances. All the powers of the Commission shall be exercised in the manner prescribed by this charter, or, if the manner be not prescribed, then in such manner as may be prescribed by ordinance. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 2.14 Enforcement of ordinances.

To assure the observance of the ordinances of the town, the Commission has the power to provide that a violation thereof shall be either a municipal infraction or a misdemeanor and has the power to affix thereto penalties of a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) for a municipal infraction and a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) or imprisonment for a period not exceeding thirty days, or both, for a misdemeanor, not to exceed the maximum penalty authorized by State law. The Commission may provide that, if the violation is of a continuing nature and is persisted in, a conviction for one violation shall not be a bar to a conviction for a continuation of the offense subsequent to the first or any succeeding conviction. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

ARTICLE III. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Section 3.01 Qualifications of voters.

Every person who (1) is a citizen of the United States, (2) is at least eighteen years of age, (3) has resided in the State of Maryland for at least one year next preceding any town election, (4) has resided within the corporate limits of the town for six months next preceding any town election, and (5) is registered in accordance with the provisions of this charter, is a qualified voter of the town. Every qualified voter of the town is entitled to vote at all town elections.

Section 3.02 Board of Supervisors of Elections.

There shall be a Board of Supervisors of Elections, consisting of three members who shall be appointed by a majority vote of the Commissioners on or before the second Monday in March in every year. The terms of members of the Board shall begin on the second Monday in March in the year in which they are appointed and run for one year. Members of the Board shall be qualified voters of the town and shall not hold or be candidates for any elective office during their term of appointment. The Board shall elect one of its members as Chairperson. Vacancies on the board, for any reason, shall be filled by an appointee selected by at least a majority vote of the Commissioners for the unexpired term of the vacated board position. The compensation of the members of the board, if any, shall be determined by the Commissioners. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 3.03 Same – Removal of members.

Any member of the Board of Supervisors of Elections may be removed for good cause by at least a majority vote of the Commissioners, if in the judgment of the majority of the Commissioners, the member of the Board is not properly performing or will not properly perform the duties of the position. Before removal, the member of the Board to be removed shall be given a written copy of the charges against him or her and shall have a public hearing on them before the Commissioners if he or she so requests within ten days after receiving the written copy of the charges. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 3.04 Clerk-treasurer to act in lieu of Board of Supervisors of Elections.

The Commission may designate the Clerk-treasurer to act in lieu of an established Board of Supervisors of Elections, in which case the Clerk-treasurer shall have the powers and duties ascribed to the Board in this charter. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 3.05 Same – Duties.

The Board of Supervisors of Elections shall be in charge of any supplemental registration list, nominations, and all town elections. The Board may appoint election clerks or other employees to assist it in any of its duties, but no salary, expenses, or other compensation shall be paid to such appointees except as provided by the Commission. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 3.06 Notice of registration days and elections.

The Board of Supervisors of Elections shall give at least two weeks' notice of every election by an advertisement published in at least one newspaper of general circulation in the town and by posting a notice thereof in some public place or places in the town.

Section 3.07 Registration.

(a) Effective Immediately. Every person who meets the qualifications of Section 3.01 of this charter may register to vote in town elections with the Clerk-treasurer at any meeting of the Commission provided said registration occurs at least thirty days prior to any town election. Registration books will close thirty days prior to any town election and will not reopen until the day after the election. Registration shall be permanent, and no person shall be entitled to vote in town elections unless he/she is registered. The Clerk-treasurer shall keep the registration lists up to date by striking from the lists persons known to have died or to have moved out of town. The Commission is hereby authorized, by ordinance, to adopt and enforce any provisions necessary to establish and maintain a system of permanent registration, and to provide for a re-registration when necessary.

(b) In accordance with Title 3, Subtitle 4 of the Election Law Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, as amended from time to time, residents of the town who are registered with Queen Anne's County to vote in County, State, and federal elections will also be qualified to vote in town elections. In addition, every person who resides in the town and is qualified to vote under the provisions of Section 3.01 of this charter but who is not registered to vote in Queen Anne's County, may register with the Clerk-treasurer to vote in town elections. The Clerk-treasurer shall maintain a supplemental registration list of those town residents desiring to vote in town elections who are not registered to vote in county, State, and federal elections. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 3.08 Appeal from action of Board of Supervisors of Elections.

If any person is aggrieved by an action of the Board of Supervisors of Elections, that person may appeal to the Commission within fourteen days. Any decision or action of the Commission upon such appeals may be appealed to the Circuit Court of Queen Anne's County within thirty days of the Commission's decision or action. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 3.09 Filing certificate of nomination.

Persons may be nominated for elective office in the town by filing a certificate of nomination at the office of the Board of Supervisors of Elections on or before the second Monday in May next preceding the town election. No person shall file for nomination to more than one elective town public office or hold more than one elective town public office at any one time.

Section 3.10 Election of Commissioners.

On the second Monday in June in every year, the qualified voters of the town shall elect one person as Commissioner to serve for a term of three years, or until his/her successor takes office. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 3.11 Conduct of elections generally.

It is the duty of the Board of Supervisors of Elections to provide for each special and general election a suitable place or places for voting and suitable ballot boxes and ballots and/or voting machines. The ballots and/or voting machines shall show the name of each candidate nominated for elective office in accordance with the provisions of this charter, arranged in alphabetical order by office with no party designation of any kind. The Board shall keep the polls open from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on election days or the hours as advertised in the election notice which is prescribed in Section 3.06. (Res. 14-02, 4-10-14; Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 3.12 Uncontested Elections

If only one certificate of nomination for a single candidate for Commissioner is filed as of the deadline set forth in Section 3.09 of this charter, then the Clerk-treasurer shall certify to the Commission that the election is uncontested, the election shall be canceled, and the candidate shall assume the office of Commissioner on the second Monday in June as if he/she had been elected. If no certificate of nomination is filed, then no election shall be held and the Commissioner whose term is expiring shall automatically retain his/her office for another term; provided, however, that if such Commissioner shall refuse to serve for another term, then his/her office shall be deemed vacated and the vacancy shall be filled in accordance with this charter. In the event an election is canceled as set forth herein, write-in ballots will not be considered. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 3.13 Absentee Ballots.

Any qualified voter of the town is entitled to vote in any town election by absentee ballot. Requests to vote by absentee ballot must be qualified in accordance with the state law. Requests to vote by absentee ballot must be received by the Clerk-treasurer at least twenty days prior to any town election. The Clerk-treasurer shall mail absentee ballots to qualified voters, at the request of those voters, not less than fifteen days prior to the election. Completed absentee ballots must be returned to the Board of Supervisors of Elections prior to election day or on election day before the polls close. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 3.14 Special elections.

All special town elections shall be conducted by the Board of Supervisors of Elections in the manner and with the same personnel, as far as practicable, as regular town elections.

Section 3.15 Vote count.

Within twelve hours after the closing of the polls, the Board of Supervisors of Elections shall determine the vote cast for each candidate or question, and shall certify the results of the election to the Commission, and the record of the results shall be recorded in the journal of the Commission. The candidate with the highest number of votes in the general election shall be declared elected as a Commissioner. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 3.16 Preservation of ballots.

All ballots used in any town election shall be preserved for at least six months from the date of the election by the Board of Supervisors of Elections.

Section 3.17 Regulation and control by the Commission.

The Commission has the power to provide by ordinance in every respect not covered by the provisions of this charter for the conduct of registration, nomination, and town elections; and for the prevention of fraud in connection therewith, and for a recount of ballots in case of doubt or fraud.

Section 3.18 Penalties.

Any person who: (1) fails to perform any duty required of him or her under the provisions of this charter concerning registration, nominations, and town elections; or any ordinances passed thereunder; (2) in any manner willfully or corruptly violates any of the provisions of this charter concerning registration, nomination, and town elections; or any ordinances passed thereunder; or (3) willfully or corruptly does anything which will or will tend to affect fraudulently any registration, nomination, or town election, is guilty of a misdemeanor. Any officer or employee of the town government who is convicted of a misdemeanor under the provisions of this section shall immediately upon conviction thereof cease to hold such office or employment.

ARTICLE IV. ADMINISTRATION

Section 4.01 Authority to employ personnel.

The Commission may employ such officeholders and employees as it deems necessary to execute the power and duties provided by this charter or other State law and to operate the town government.

Section 4.02 Merit system authorized.

The Commission may provide by ordinance for appointments and promotions in the administrative service on the basis of merit and fitness. To carry out this purpose the Commission may adopt such rules and regulations governing the operation of a merit system as it deems desirable or necessary. Among other things these rules and regulations may provide for competitive examinations, the use of eligibility lists, a classification plan, a compensation plan, a probation period, appeals by employees included within the classified service from dismissal or other disciplinary action, and vacation and sick leave regulations. The Commission, on behalf of the town, may request and avail itself of the facilities of the Commissioner of State Personnel for the administration of the town's merit system, as provided in State law. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 4.03 Unclassified and classified service.

(a) *Civil service divided into unclassified and classified service.* The civil service of the town shall be divided into the unclassified and classified service.

(b) *Unclassified service.* The unclassified service shall comprise the following offices and positions, which shall not be included within the merit system:

(1) The Commissioners, and persons appointed to fill vacancies in these positions.

(2) The Clerk–treasurer and the Town Attorney.

(3) The heads of all offices, departments, and agencies, and members of town boards and commissions, and persons appointed to fill vacancies in these positions.

(c) *Classified service.* The classified service shall comprise all positions not specifically included by this section in the unclassified service. All offices and positions included in the classified service shall be subject to any merit system rules and regulations which may be adopted.

Section 4.04 Prohibitions and penalties.

(a) *Prohibitions.* If a merit system is adopted, no person in the classified service of the town or seeking admission thereto shall be appointed, promoted, demoted, removed, or in any way favored or discriminated against because of his/her political or religious opinions or affiliations or any other factors not related to ability to perform the work; no person shall willfully, or corruptly commit or attempt to commit any fraud preventing the impartial execution of the personnel provisions of this charter or of the rules and regulations made thereunder; no officer or employee in the classified service of the town shall continue in such position after becoming a candidate for nomination or election to any public office; no person seeking appointment to or promotion in the classified service of the town shall either directly or indirectly give, render, or pay any money, service, or other valuable thing to any person for or on account of or in connection with his appointment, proposed appointment, promotion, or proposed promotion; no person shall orally, by letter or otherwise, solicit or be in any manner concerned in soliciting any assessment, subscription, or contribution for any political party or political purpose whatever from any person holding a position in the classified service of the town; no person holding a position in the classified service of the town shall make any contribution to the campaign funds of any political party or any candidate for public office or take any part in the management, affairs, or political campaign of any political party or candidate for public office, further than in the exercise of his right as a citizen to express his opinion and to cast his vote.

(b) *Penalties.* Any person who alone or with others willfully or corruptly violates any of the provisions of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine of not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00), or by imprisonment for a term not exceeding thirty days, or both, not to exceed the maximum penalty prescribed by State law. Any person who is convicted under this section shall, for a period of five years following conviction, be ineligible for appointment to or employment in a position in the town service, and, if he/she is an officeholder or employee of the town at the time of his/her conviction, shall immediately forfeit the office or position he or she holds. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 4.05 Retirement system.

The Commission, on behalf of the town, may do all things necessary to include its officeholders and employees, or any of them, within any retirement system or pension system under the terms of which they are admissible, and to pay the employer's share of the cost of any such retirement or pension system out of the general funds of the town. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 4.06 Compensation of employees.

The compensation of all officeholders and employees of the town shall be set from time to time by an ordinance passed by the Commission, subject to the restrictions imposed upon establishing the salaries of the Commissioners by this charter.

Section 4.07 Employee benefit programs.

The Commission by ordinance may provide for or participate in hospitalization or other forms of benefit or welfare programs for its officeholders and employees and may expend public monies of the town for such programs. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 4.08 Clerk-treasurer.

There shall be a Clerk-treasurer appointed by the Commission who shall serve at the pleasure of the Commission. The Clerk-treasurer shall be appointed by the Commission with approval of a two-thirds majority vote for an indefinite term. A two-thirds majority vote of all members of the Commission shall be required for his/her removal. The Clerk-treasurer's compensation shall be determined by the Commission. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 4.09 Powers and duties.

The Clerk-treasurer shall be the chief financial officer of the town. The financial powers of the town, except as otherwise provided by this charter, shall be exercised by the Clerk-treasurer under the direct supervision of the Commission. Under the supervision of the Commission, the Clerk-treasurer shall have authority and shall be required to:

- (a) Prepare an annual budget to be submitted to the Commission.
- (b) Supervise and be responsible for the disbursement of all monies and have control over all expenditures to assure that budget appropriations are not exceeded.
- (c) Maintain a general accounting system for the town in such form as the Commission may require, not contrary to State law.
- (d) Submit at the end of each fiscal year, and at such other times as the Commission may require, a complete financial report to the Commissioners.
- (e) Ascertain that all taxable property within the town is assessed for taxation.

(f) Collect all taxes, special assessments, license fees, liens, and all other revenues (including utility revenues) of the town for whose collection the town is responsible and receive any funds receivable by the town.

(g) Have custody of all public monies belonging to or under the control of the town, except as to funds in the control of any set of trustees, and all bonds and notes of the town.

(h) Do such other things in relation to the fiscal or financial affairs of the town as the Commission may require or as may be required elsewhere in this charter.

(i) Attend all Commission meetings.

(j) Keep a full and accurate account of the Commission's proceedings.

(k) Keep such other records and perform such other duties as may be required by this charter or the Commission. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 4.10 Bond.

The Clerk-treasurer shall furnish to the town for approval a surety bond in an amount to be prescribed by the Commission and approved by the Town Attorney. The bond shall be conditioned on the faithful performance of his/her official duties. The bond premium shall be paid by the town. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 4.11 Town Attorney.

The Commission may appoint a Town Attorney, who shall be a member of the bar of the Maryland Court of Appeals. The Town Attorney shall be the legal adviser of the town and shall perform such duties in this connection as may be required by the Commission. The Town Attorney's compensation shall be determined by the Commission. The Commission shall have the power to employ other legal consultants as it deems necessary from time to time. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

ARTICLE V. FINANCE

Section 5.01 Fiscal year.

The Commission shall operate on an annual budget. The fiscal year of the Commission shall begin on the first day of July in any year and shall end on the last day of June in the following year. The fiscal year constitutes the taxable year, the budget year, and the accounting year. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 5.02 Budget.

The Clerk-treasurer, on such date as the Commission by ordinance determines, but at least thirty-two days before the beginning of any fiscal year, shall submit a budget to the Commission. The budget shall provide a complete financial plan for the budget year and shall contain estimates of anticipated revenues and proposed expenditures for the coming year. The total of the anticipated

revenues shall equal or exceed the total of the proposed expenditures. The budget shall be a public record in the town office, open to public inspection at appropriate times as set by the Commission.

Section 5.03 Adoption.

Before adopting the budget, the Commission shall hold a public hearing thereon after two weeks' notice thereof in some newspaper or newspapers having general circulation within the town. The Commission may insert new items or may increase or decrease the items of the budget. If the Commission increases the total proposed expenditures it shall also increase the total anticipated revenues in an amount at least equal to the total proposed expenditures. The budget shall be prepared and adopted in the form of an ordinance. A favorable vote of at least a majority of the total elected membership of the Commission is necessary for adoption. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 5.04 Appropriations.

No public money may be expended without having been appropriated by the Commission. From the effective date of the budget, the several amounts stated therein as proposed expenditures shall be and become appropriated to the several objects and purposes named therein. Any transfer of funds between major appropriations for different purposes must be approved by two-thirds of the entire Commission before becoming effective. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 5.05 Over-expenditures forbidden.

No officeholder or employee during any budget year may expend or contract to expend any money or incur any liability or enter into any contract which by its terms involves the expenditure of money for any purpose, in excess of the amounts appropriated for or transferred to that general classification of expenditure pursuant to this charter. Any contract, verbal or written, made in violation of this charter is null and void. Nothing contained in this section, however, prevents the making of contracts or the spending of money for capital improvements, remodeling, or repairs to be financed in whole or in part by the issuance of bonds, nor the making of contracts of lease or for services for a period exceeding the budget year in which the contract is made, when the contract is permitted by law. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 5.06 Appropriations lapse after one year.

All appropriations lapse at the end of the budget year to the extent that they are not expended or lawfully encumbered. Any unexpended and unencumbered funds shall be considered a surplus at the end of the budget year and shall be included among the anticipated revenues for the next succeeding budget year.

Section 5.07 Checks.

All checks issued in payment of salaries or other municipal obligations shall be issued and signed by the Clerk-treasurer and shall be countersigned by the President of the Commission. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 5.08 Taxable property.

All real property and all tangible personal property within the corporate limits of the town, or personal property which may have a situs there by reason of the residence of the owner therein, is subject to taxation for municipal purposes, and the assessment used shall be the same as that for State and county taxes. No authority is given by this section to impose taxes on any property which is exempt from taxation by any act of the General Assembly of the State of Maryland.

Section 5.09 Budget authorizes levy.

From the effective date of the budget, the amount stated therein as the amount to be raised by property taxes constitutes a determination of the amount of the tax levy in the corresponding taxable year.

Section 5.10 Notice of tax levy.

Immediately after the levy is made by the Commission in each year, the Clerk–treasurer shall give notice of the making of the levy by posting a notice thereof in some public place or places in the town. The Clerk–treasurer shall mail to Queen Anne’s County for delivery to each taxpayer or the taxpayer’s agent at the taxpayer’s last known address a bill or account of the taxes due from the taxpayer. This bill or account shall contain a statement of the amount of real and/or personal property with which the taxpayer is assessed, the rate of taxation, the amount of taxes due, and the date on which the taxes will bear interest. Failure to give or receive any notice required by this section shall not relieve any taxpayer of the responsibility to pay on the dates established by this charter all taxes levied on the taxpayer’s property. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 5.11 When taxes are overdue.

The taxes provided for in this charter shall be due and payable as provided in the Tax-Property Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, as amended from time to time, and shall be overdue and in arrears as provided in that Article. Taxes shall bear interest while in arrears and shall be subject to additional penalties as authorized by State law. Any interest or penalty rates to be imposed by the Commission shall be established by ordinance. All taxes not paid and in arrears one year after the date on which they are due and payable shall be collected as provided for in this charter. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 5.12 Sale of delinquent property.

A list of all properties on which the town taxes have not been paid and which are in arrears as provided in this charter shall be turned over by the Clerk-treasurer to the Queen Anne’s County officials responsible for the sale of tax-delinquent property as provided by State law. All property listed thereon shall, if necessary, be sold for taxes by such official in the manner prescribed by State law. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 5.13 Fees.

All fees received by an officeholder or employee of the town government in his/her official capacity shall belong to the town government and be accounted for to the town. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 5.14 Audit.

So long as the town's auditor so authorizes, the financial books and accounts of the Commission shall be audited no less frequently than every four years in a manner determined by the Commission but not contrary to applicable state law. (Res. 2006-1, 10-26-06; Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 5.15 Tax anticipation borrowing.

During the first six months of any fiscal year, the town may borrow in anticipation of the collection of the property tax levied for that fiscal year and may issue tax anticipation notes or other evidences of indebtedness as evidence of such borrowing. Such tax anticipation notes or other evidences of indebtedness shall be a first lien upon the proceeds of such tax and shall mature and be paid not later than six months after the beginning of the fiscal year in which they are issued. No tax anticipation notes or other evidences of indebtedness shall be issued which will cause the total tax anticipation indebtedness of the town to exceed fifty per cent of the property tax levy for the fiscal year in which the notes or other evidences of indebtedness are issued. All tax anticipation notes or other evidences of indebtedness shall be authorized by ordinance before being issued. The Commission shall have the power to regulate all matters concerning the issuance and sale of tax anticipation notes or other evidences of indebtedness. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 5.16 Borrowing power.

In addition to the authority provided above with respect to tax anticipation borrowings, the town shall have the power to borrow money for any proper purpose and to evidence such borrowing by the issuance and sale of its general obligation bonds, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness in the manner prescribed in this section.

(a) As determined by or provided for in the authorizing ordinance or resolution of the Commission, the general obligation bonds, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness of the town may be issued and sold:

(i) by private (negotiated) sale without advertisement or solicitation of competitive bids at public sale after publication of the notice of sale, which notice shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the town or among the investment and financial community at least ten days before the date fixed for the sale;

(ii) for a price or prices which may be at, above, or below the par value of the bonds, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness;

(iii) at a rate or rates of interest that may be fixed or variable or may be determined by a method approved or provided for by the Commission; or

(iv) for cash or other valuable consideration.

(b) The ordinance or resolution that authorizes the municipal bonds, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness may provide for their redemption prior to maturity, at such price or prices at, above, or below par value as determined or provided for by the Commission, and for the manner of publishing or otherwise giving notice of such redemption.

(c) The official signatures and seals affixed to any municipal bonds, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness may be imprinted in facsimile.

(d) The town may enter into agreements with agents, banks, fiduciaries, insurers, or others for the purpose of enhancing the marketability of or as security for the bonds, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness and for securing any tender option granted to holders thereof.

(e) The Commission is authorized to issue municipal bonds, which may be general obligation bonds to which the full faith, credit, and general taxing power of the town are pledged. The Commission is further authorized to provide for the issuance of municipal bonds payable to principal and interest solely from revenues of one or more sources of revenue available to the town; which bonds shall not constitute an indebtedness of the town to which its full faith, credit or general taxing power are pledged.

(f) In connection with any sale of general obligation bonds, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness by the solicitation of competitive bids at public sale, any such competitive bids may be delivered by electronic and/or facsimile means and/or by any other then-commercially reasonable manner for the sale of municipal obligations at competitive bid; and any notice of sale may be published solely in summary form in a newspaper of general circulation in the town and/or in a generally recognized financial journal such as *the Bond Buyer*, or any notice of sale may be disseminated solely in electronic form and/or by any other then-commercially reasonable manner for the sale of municipal obligations, as determined by ordinance or resolution of the Commission.

(g) Any ordinance or resolution adopted by the Commission pursuant to this section may be introduced and adopted in a single session and shall not be subject to petition to referendum, notwithstanding the provisions of any other section of this charter.

(h) The power conferred on the Commission under this article of the charter shall be deemed to be additional and supplemental to any other general obligation borrowing authority granted to the Commission by the Maryland public general or public local law, and the Commission may authorize, issue, and secure any such general obligation debt in conformity with this charter and/or any other applicable law.

(i) In connection with the authorization of its general obligation bonds, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness, the town, by ordinance or resolution of the Commission, may pledge to the payment thereof, or provide that such obligations shall be payable in the first instance from, any other sources of revenue available to the town.

(j) The provisions of this section shall not apply to any tax anticipation borrowing incurred in accordance with this article. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 5.17 Payment of indebtedness.

The power and obligation of the town to pay any and all bonds, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness issued by it under the authority of this charter shall be unlimited and the town shall levy ad valorem taxes upon all the taxable property of the town for the payment of such bonds, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness and interest thereon, without limitation of amount. The faith and credit of the town is hereby pledged for the payment of the principal of and the interest on all bonds, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness issued under the authority of this charter, whether or not such pledge be stated in the bonds, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness, or in the ordinance authorizing their issuance.

Section 5.18 Previous issues.

All bonds, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness validly issued by the Commission previous to the effective date of this charter and all ordinances passed concerning them are hereby declared to be valid, legal, and binding and of full force and effect as if herein fully set forth. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 5.19 Purchasing and contracts.

All purchases and contracts for the town government shall be made by the Clerk–treasurer. The Commission may provide by ordinance for rules and regulations regarding the use of competitive bidding and contracts for all town purchases and contracts; provided, however, that the following contracts are exempt from the competitive bidding requirements of this section:

- (a) contracts involving the services of members of the medical or legal profession, architects, engineers, accountants, or other professional services;
- (b) contracts involving lease/rental of real property;
- (c) contracts involving policies of insurance or surety company bonds;
- (d) purchases made through State or federal purchase contracts;
- (e) contracts made with the State of Maryland or another political subdivision or agency thereof, the federal government, or a state adjoining the State of Maryland or any political subdivision or agency thereof; or
- (f) purchases necessitated due to an emergency requiring immediate response to an actual or immediate threat to the town and its citizens. (Res. 14–01, 4–10–14; Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

ARTICLE VI. PUBLIC WAYS

Section 6.01 Definition of public ways.

The term “public ways” as used in this charter includes all streets, avenues, roads, highways, public thoroughfares, lanes, and alleys.

Section 6.02 Control of public ways.

The Commission has control of all public ways in the town except those that are under the jurisdiction of the State Highway Administration. Subject to the laws of the State of Maryland and the provisions of this charter, the Commission may do whatever it deems necessary to establish, operate, and maintain in good condition the public ways of the town. The Commission shall not be liable in any action at law or equity based on any damage or injury to person or property caused or alleged to be caused by any defect, dangerous condition, or obstruction on or about any public way or sidewalk adjoining a public way, resulting from all conditions including, but not limited to, potholes; cracked, broken, or protruding pavements or sidewalks; accumulations of snow, ice, sleet, rain, or other slippery substances; unless the Commissioners or one of the Commissioners have actual notice of the existence of the defect, dangerous condition, or obstruction at least twenty-four hours prior to the occurrence of the damage or injury to person or property which is the basis of the action.

Section 6.03 Powers of Commission as to public ways.

The Commission may:

- (a) Establish, regulate, and change from time to time the grade lines, width, and construction materials of any town public way or part thereof, bridges, curbs, and gutters.
- (b) Grade, lay out, construct, open, extend, and make new town public ways.
- (c) Grade, straighten, widen, alter, improve, or close up any existing town public way or part thereof.
- (d) Pave, surface, repave, or resurface any town public way or part thereof.
- (e) Install, construct, reconstruct, repair, and maintain curbs and/or gutters along any town public way or part thereof.
- (f) Construct, reconstruct, maintain, and repair bridges.
- (h) Name town public ways.
- (i) Have surveys, plans, specifications, and estimates made for any of the above activities or projects or parts thereof. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 6.04 Powers of Commission as to sidewalks.

The Commission may:

(a) Establish, regulate, and change from time to time the grade lines, width, and construction materials of any sidewalk or part thereof on town property along any public way or part thereof.

(b) Grade, lay out, construct, reconstruct, pave, repave, repair, extend, or otherwise alter sidewalks on town property along any public way or part thereof.

(c) Require that the owners of any property abutting on a sidewalk keep the sidewalk clear of all ice, snow, and other obstructions.

(d) Require and order the owner of any property abutting on any public way in the town to perform any projects authorized by this section at the owner's expense according to reasonable plans and specifications. If, after due notice, the owner fails to comply with the order within a reasonable time, the town may do the work, and the expense shall be collectible in the same manner as town taxes are collectible or by suit at law. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 6.05 Powers of Commission as to water and sewers.

The Commission may:

(a) Construct, operate, and maintain a water system and water plant.

(b) Construct, operate, and maintain a sanitary sewerage system and a sewage treatment plant.

(c) Construct, operate, and maintain a storm water drainage system and storm water sewers.

(d) Construct, maintain, reconstruct, enlarge, alter, repair, improve, or dispose of all parts, installations, and structures of the above plants and systems.

(e) Have surveys, plans, specifications, and estimates made for any of the above plants and systems or parts thereof or the extension thereof.

(f) Do all things it deems necessary for the efficient operation and maintenance of the above plants and systems. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 6.06 Placing structures in public ways.

Any public service corporation, company, or individual, before beginning any construction of or placing of or changing the location of any main, conduit, pipe, or other structure in the public ways of the town, shall submit plans to the Commission and obtain written approval upon such conditions and subject to the such limitations as may be imposed by the Commission. Any public service corporation, company, or individual violating the provisions of this section is guilty of a

misdemeanor. If any unauthorized main, conduit, pipe, or other structure interferes with the operation of the water, sewerage, or storm water systems, the Commission may order it removed.

Section 6.07 Obstructions.

All individuals, firms, or corporations having mains, pipes, conduits, or other structures, in, on, or over any public way in the town or in the county which impede the establishment, construction, or operation of any town sewer or water main, upon reasonable notice, shall remove or adjust the obstructions at their own expense to the satisfaction of the Commission. If necessary to carry out the provisions of this section, the Commission may use its condemnation powers provided hereinafter in this charter. Any violation of an ordinance passed under the provisions of this section may be made a misdemeanor.

Section 6.08 Entering on county public ways.

The town may enter upon or do construction in, on, or over any county public way for the purpose of installing or repairing any equipment or doing any other things necessary to establish, operate, and maintain the water system, water plant, sanitary sewerage system, sewage treatment plant, or storm water sewers provided for in this charter. Unless required by the county, the town need not obtain any permit or pay any charge for these operations, but it must notify the county of its intent to enter on the public way and must leave the public way in a condition not inferior to that existing before.

Section 6.09 Connections.

The town shall provide a connection with water and sanitary sewer mains for all property abutting on any public way in which a sanitary sewer or water main is laid. When any water main or sanitary sewer is declared ready for operation by the Commission, all abutting property owners after reasonable notice shall connect all fixtures with the water or sewer main. The Commission may require that, if it considers existing fixtures unsatisfactory, satisfactory ones be installed and may require that all cesspools, sink drains, and privies be abandoned, filled, removed, or left in such a way as not to injure public health. All wells found to be polluted or a menace to health may be ordered to be abandoned and closed. Any violation of an ordinance passed under the provisions of this section may be made a misdemeanor.

Section 6.10 Charge.

The Commission may make a charge, the amount to be determined by the Commission, for each connection made to the town's water or sewer mains. This charge shall be uniform throughout the town but may be changed from year to year. Arrangements for the payment of this charge shall be made before the connection is made.

Section 6.11 Changes in plumbing, fixtures, or connections to prevent waste or improper use.

In order to prevent any leakage or waste of water or other improper use of the town's water system or sewage disposal system, the Commission may require such changes in plumbing, fixtures, or connection as it deems necessary to prevent such waste or improper use. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 6.12 Private systems.

The Commission by ordinance may provide that no water supply, sewerage, or storm water drainage system, and no water mains, sewers, drains, or connections therewith, shall be constructed or operated by any person or persons, firm, corporation, institution, or community, whether upon private property or otherwise, and may provide that cesspools or other private methods of sewage disposal shall be operated and maintained in such a manner that they do not and will not be likely to affect adversely the public comfort and health and any cesspool or other private method of sewage disposal affecting or likely to affect adversely the public comfort and health may be deemed a nuisance and may be abated by the Commission. Any violation of an ordinance passed under the provisions of this section may be made a misdemeanor.

Section 6.13 Extensions beyond boundaries.

The Commission may extend its water or sewerage systems beyond the corporate boundaries of the town.

Section 6.14 Right of entry.

Any employee or agent of the town, while in the necessary pursuit of his/her official duties with regard to the water or sewage disposal systems operated by the town, has a right of entry, for access to water or sewer installations, at all reasonable hours, and after reasonable advance notice to the owner, tenant, or person in possession, upon any premises and into any building in the town or in the county served by the town's water or sewage disposal system. Any restraint or hindrance offered to the entry by any owner, tenant, or person in possession, or the agent of any of them, by ordinance, may be made a misdemeanor. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 6.15 Pollution of water supply.

No person shall do anything which will discolor, pollute, or tend to pollute any water used or to be used in the town water supply system. Any violation of the provisions of this section may be made a misdemeanor.

Section 6.16 Contracts for service.

The Commission, if it deems it advisable, may contract with any party or parties, inside or outside the town, to obtain water or to provide for the removal of sewage.

Section 6.17 Charges.

The Commission may charge and collect such service rates, water rents, ready-to-serve charges, or other charges as it deems necessary for water supplied and for the removal of sewage. These charges are to be billed and collected by the Clerk-treasurer, and if bills are unpaid within thirty days, the service may be discontinued. All charges shall be a lien on the property, collectible in the same manner as town taxes or by suit at law.

Section 6.18 Exception.

The provisions of this charter relating to water and sewers shall not extend to any town located in a sanitary district or special tax area or district authorized to discharge the powers provided in this charter relating to water and sewers as to the particular powers included in the authorization.

ARTICLE VII. SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS

Section 7.01 Power of Commission to levy special assessments.

The Commission shall levy and collect taxes in the form of special assessments upon property in a limited and determinable area for special benefits conferred upon the property by the installation or construction, of water mains, sanitary sewer mains, storm water sewers, curbs, and gutters and by the construction, and paving of public ways and sidewalks or parts thereof, and it shall provide for the payment of all or any part of the above projects out of the proceeds of the special assessment. The cost of any project to be paid in whole or in part by special assessments may include the direct cost thereof, the cost of any land acquired for the project, the interest on bonds, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness issued in anticipation of the collection of special assessments, a reasonable charge for the services of the administrative staff of the town, and any other item of cost which may reasonably be attributed to the project.

Section 7.02 Procedure.

(a) *Provided.* The procedure for special assessments, wherever authorized in this charter, is as provided in this section.

(b) *Assessment of cost.* The cost of the project being charged for shall be assessed according to the front rule of apportionment or some other equitable basis determined by the Commission.

(c) *Amount.* The amount assessed against any property for any project or improvement shall not exceed the value of the benefits accruing to the property therefrom, nor shall any special assessment be levied which causes the total amount of special assessments levied by the town and outstanding against any property at any time, exclusive of delinquent installments, to exceed twenty-five per cent of the assessed value of the property after giving effect to the benefit accruing thereto from the project or improvement for which assessed.

(d) *Uniformity of rates.* When desirable, the affected property may be divided into different classes to be charged different rates, but, except for this, any rate shall be uniform.

(e) *Levy of charges; public hearing; notice.* All special assessment charges shall be levied by the Commission by ordinance. Before levying any special assessment charges, the Commission shall hold a public hearing. The Clerk-treasurer shall cause notice to be given stating, the nature and extent of the proposed project, the kind of materials to be used, the estimated cost of the project, the portion of the cost to be assessed, the number of installments in which the assessment may be paid, the method to be used in apportioning the cost, and the limits of the proposed area of assessment. The notice shall also state the time and place at which all persons interested, or their

agents or attorneys, may appear before the Commission and be heard concerning the proposed project and special assessment. Such notice shall be given by sending a copy thereof by mail to the owner of record of each parcel of property proposed to be assessed for taxation and by publication of a copy of the notice at least once in a newspaper of general circulation in the town. The Clerk–treasurer shall present at the hearing a certificate of publication and mailing of copies of the notice, which certificate shall be deemed proof of notice, but failure of any owner to receive the mailed copy shall not invalidate the proceedings. The date of the hearing shall be set at least ten and not more than thirty days after the clerk–treasurer shall have completed publication and service of notice as provided in this section. Following the hearing, the Commission, in its discretion, may vote to proceed with the project and may levy the special assessment.

(f) *Right to appeal.* Any interested person feeling aggrieved by the levying of any special assessment under the provisions of this section shall have the right to appeal to the circuit court for the county within ten days after the levying of any assessment by the Commission.

(g) *Payments; interest.* Special assessments may be made payable in annual or more frequent installments over such period of time, not to exceed ten years, and in such manner as the Commission may determine. The Commission shall determine on what date installments shall be due and payable. Interest may be charged on installments at the rate to be determined by the Commission.

(h) *When due; lien on property.* All special assessment installments are overdue six months after the date on which they become due and payable. All special assessments shall be liens on the property and all overdue special assessments shall be collected in the same manner as town taxes or by suit at law.

(i) *Collection.* All special assessments shall be billed and collected by the Clerk–treasurer. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

ARTICLE VIII. TOWN PROPERTY

Section 8.01 Acquisition, possession, and disposal of town property.

The Commission, on behalf of the town, may acquire real, personal, or mixed property within the corporate boundaries of the town for any public purposes by purchase, gift, bequest, devise, lease, condemnation, or otherwise and may sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of any property belonging to the town. All municipal property, funds, and franchises of every kind belonging to or in the possession of the town (by whatever prior name known) at the time this charter becomes effective are vested in the Commission, on behalf of the town, subject to the terms and conditions thereof. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 8.02 Condemnation.

The Commission may condemn property of any kind, or interest therein or franchise connected therewith, in fee or as an easement, within the corporate boundaries of the town, for any public purpose. Any activity, project, or improvement authorized by the provisions of this charter or any other State law applicable to the Commission is a public purpose. The manner of procedure in case of any condemnation proceeding shall be that established in Title 12 of the Real Property

Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, as amended from time to time. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 8.03 Town buildings.

The Commission, on behalf of the town, may acquire, obtain by lease or rent, purchase, construct, operate, and maintain all buildings and structures it deems necessary for the operation of the town government.

Section 8.04 Protection of town property.

The Commission may do whatever may be necessary to protect town property and to keep all town property in good condition. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

ARTICLE IX. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 9.01 Oath of office.

(a) *Oath required.* Before entering upon the duties of their offices, the Commissioners, the Clerk–treasurer, the members of the Board of Supervisors of Elections, and all other persons elected or appointed to any office of profit or trust in the town government shall take and subscribe to the following oath or affirmation: “I, , do swear (or affirm, as the case may be), that I will support the Constitution of the United States; and that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to the State of Maryland, and support the Constitution and laws thereof; and that I will, to the best of my skill and judgment, diligently and faithfully, without partiality or prejudice, execute the office of , according to the Constitution and laws of this State.”

(b) *Before whom taken and subscribed.* The aforementioned officeholders shall each take this oath or affirmation before the Clerk or the Deputy Clerk of the Circuit Court for Queen Anne’s County, who shall certify to the Clerk–treasurer that such oath has been administered; and this certification shall be filed in the public records of the Commission. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 9.02 Surety bonds.

The Clerk–treasurer and such other officeholders or employees of the town as the Commission or this charter may require, shall give bond in such amount and with such surety as may be required by the Commission. The premium on such bonds shall be paid by the town.

Section 9.03 Prior rights and obligations.

All right, title, and interest held by the town or any other person or corporation at the time this charter is adopted, in and to any lien acquired under any prior charter of the town, are hereby preserved for the holder in all respects as if this charter had not been adopted, together with all rights and remedies in relation thereto. This charter shall not discharge, impair, or release any contract, obligation, duty, liability, or penalty whatever existing at the time this charter becomes effective. All suits and actions, both civil and criminal, pending, or which may hereafter be instituted for causes of action now existing or offenses now committed against any law or

ordinance repealed by this charter, shall be instituted, proceeded with, and prosecuted to final determination and judgment, as if this charter had not become effective.

Section 9.04 Misdemeanors.

Every act or omission which, by ordinance, is made a misdemeanor under the authority of this charter, unless otherwise provided, shall be punishable upon conviction by the District Court sitting in the county within which the offense is committed by a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars or imprisonment for thirty days in the county jail, or both, in the discretion of the court. Where the act or omission is of a continuing nature and is persisted in, a conviction for one offense is not a bar to a conviction for a continuation of the offense subsequent to the first or any succeeding conviction. (Charter Amendment Resolution No. 2018-01.)

Section 9.05 Effect of charter on existing ordinances.

(a) *Ordinances, etc., not in conflict with charter remain in effect.* All ordinances, resolutions, rules, and regulations in effect in the town at the time this charter becomes effective which are not in conflict with the provisions of this charter shall remain in effect until changed or repealed according to the provisions of this charter.

(b) *Ordinances, etc., in conflict with charter repealed.* All ordinances, resolutions, rules and regulations in effect in the town at the time this charter becomes effective which are in conflict with the provisions of this charter are repealed to the extent of such conflict.

Section 9.06 Separability.

If any section or part of section of this charter is held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, this holding shall not affect the remainder of this charter or the context in which such section or part of section so held invalid appears, except to the extent that an entire section or part of section may be inseparably connected in meaning and effect with the section or part of section to which such holding shall directly apply.