



PUBLIC HEARING OF THE CITY COUNCIL, HYATTSVILLE MD MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2020 6:30 PM

Candace Hollingsworth, Mayor
Kevin Ward, W1, Council President
Carrianna Suiter, W3, Council Vice President
Bart Lawrence, W1
Robert Croslin, W2
Danny Schaible, W2
Ben Simasek, W3
Daniel Peabody, W4 (*arrived at 6:42 p.m.*)
Joseph A. Solomon, W5 (*arrived at 6:44 p.m.*)
Erica Spell Wolf, W5

Absent: Edouard Haba, W4

Also present were the following City staff members:

Jim Chandler, Assistant City Administrator
Ron Brooks, City Treasurer
Deputy Chief Scott Dunklee, City of Hyattsville Police Department
Lesley Riddle, Director of Public Works
Laura Reams, City Clerk
Sean Corcoran, Deputy City Clerk

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE:

As we continue to take precautions due to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic, the Hyattsville City Council will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, November 16, 2020 remotely via video conference. The Council meeting will be conducted entirely remotely, there will be no in person meeting attendance.

The meeting will be broadcast live on cable television channel 71 (Comcast), channel 12 (Verizon) and available via live stream at hyattsville.org/meetings.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Public Comment may be made using the e-comment feature at hyattsville.org/meetings or emailing cityclerk@hyattsville.org. All electronic comments must be submitted by 4:30 PM on November 16, 2020. Comments received will be read by City staff during the public comment portion of the meeting.

Members of the public who wish to attend the virtual council meeting must register in advance using the link below.

Register in advance for this webinar:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_h1AOKF9CSEGRIZw2Hr6g-g

1. Call to Order

Mayor Candace Hollingsworth called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.



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2. Presentation

2.a) Hyattsville Charter Amendment Resolution 2020-01: Election Day, Certification of Election, and Council Organizational Meeting

[HCC-133-FY21](#)

Sponsor: At the Request of the City Administrator

Co-Sponsor(s): N/A

[Election Presentation - Nov 16](#)

[Charter Resolution - Changing Day of Election 10.14.20](#)

[Resolution - Vote by Mail 11.10.20](#)

[Election Calendar 2021](#)

[2018 VBM Motion](#)

For Discussion and Public Input

City Clerk Laura Reams addressed the Mayor and Council with an introduction and summary of the 2021 Vote-by-Mail (VBM) proposal relaying that the measure consisted of changes to the election code, a charter amendment, and an election 2021 Resolution.

Ms. Reams recapitulated the legislation approved by Council at the previous meeting explaining that code changes were adopted to enable legislation that would retain flexibility for the City to conduct a VBM or traditional election as well as allow Council to determine the method of voting by way of a resolution based on the recommendation of the Hyattsville Board of Supervisors of Elections (BOSE). She stated that the Resolution designating the 2021 election as a VBM election would be brought to the Body for approval at the Council meeting of December 7, 2020.

City Clerk Reams explained that the Charter Amendment Resolution would change Election Day to the second Tuesday in May which would allow more time for outreach, communications, and mailings both before and after the election season. Ms. Reams further detailed that the amendment would propose changes to the process by which the Council President and Vice President are elected and decrease the time period in which BOSE certified the election from 10 days to five (5).

Ms. Reams closed the presentation with a description of the timeline of events including candidate registration, voter registration, mailing of ballots, Election Day, result certification, oath of office and election of the Council President and Vice President.

3. Public Comment

Ward 1 resident, Sam Denes, addressed the Mayor and Council questioning whether there was any concern with implementing a VBM election with a decreased certification time period citing recent challenges encountered by nearby regions to which City Clerk Laura Reams responded that in previous elections the BOSE were able to certify election results in two (2) days when taking a day to rest and there was no concern with the results of the election being tabulated in a timely and efficient manner.



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Mayor Candace Hollingsworth communicated comments received via chat stating that Taylor Johnson expressed support for a VBM election in part due to the increased turnout. She relayed a question submitted via chat inquiring whether there would be a shift toward VBM elections by default thereby eliminating in-person aspects to which **Mayor Hollingsworth** reiterated that a VBM election in the City of Hyattsville had been an ongoing discussion for the previous two (2) years and was not exclusively a reaction to the COVID-19 health crisis. She stated that the legislation allowed decisions regarding the election to be ultimately made by the Council in which they could choose exactly how to conduct the election. City Clerk Laura Reams supplemented that an in-person element would still exist in any election. She stated that, even if predominantly VBM, there would still be an Election Day polling center to process same day registrations, and provide assistance for those who did not receive a ballot or individuals with disabilities who required assistance in completing their ballot.

Ward 2 Councilmember Danny Schaible inquired as to the rationale which compelled the decision to deem postmarked ballots received after Election Day to be invalid to which Ms. Reams replied that the subject was one of extensive discussion by the Board and was also one of the aspects approved by Council on November 2nd. She stated that BOSE decided that they would prohibit ballots returned after Election Day but would be certain to make communication regarding every step of the election clear and frequent with outreach beginning nearly six (6) months prior. Ms. Reams added that all decisions made for the 2021 election are subject to change upon review of their efficiency and effectiveness.

Deputy City Clerk Sean Corcoran read a public comment submitted through chat function from Ward 2 resident David Marshall who expressed opposition to the initiative but speculated its adoption referencing the extended purview of elected officials.

4. Adjournment

The public hearing adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

ATTEST:
December 7, 2020

Laura Reams, City Clerk

Sean Corcoran, Deputy City Clerk