

Ranked-Choice Voting in Annapolis City Elections

For the purpose of electing the Mayor, City Council members, and party committee members by ranked-choice voting during elections involving only City-wide candidates; and generally relating to municipal voting regulations.

City Council of the **City of Annapolis**

Ordinance 35-25

Introduced by: Alderman Huntley
Co-sponsored by: Ald. Savidge

Referred to: Rules and City Government Committee, and Board of Supervisors of Elections

AN ORDINANCE concerning

Ranked-Choice Voting in Annapolis City Elections

FOR the purpose of electing the Mayor, City Council members, and party committee members by ranked-choice voting during elections involving only City-wide candidates; and generally relating to municipal voting regulations.

BY repealing and reenacting with amendments the following portions of the Code of the City of Annapolis, 2025 Edition:

4.04.010
4.08.030
4.16.010
4.16.040
4.16.080
4.20.090
4.20.160
4.20.180
4.24.060
4.24.070
4.24.080
4.24.090
4.24.220
4.24.250
4.32.030

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BY enacting with amendments the following portions of the Code of the City of Annapolis, 2025 Edition:

4.22.010
4.22.020
4.22.030
4.22.040
4.22.050
4.22.060
4.22.070
4.22.080
4.22.090

WHEREAS, Primary, general, and special elections in the City of Annapolis are currently conducted by single-choice plurality voting; and single-choice plurality voting pressures voters to engage in strategic voting, risks the election of candidates who are opposed by a majority of voters, and incentivizes candidates to focus their campaigns primarily on attacking each other;

WHEREAS, Charter municipalities in Maryland have full legal authority to implement ranked-choice or other voting systems of their choosing, and the City Charter of Annapolis provides for the city council to establish election procedures by ordinance; and

WHEREAS, Ranked-choice voting is an election method that allows voters to rank candidates in order of preference, and ranked-choice voting strengthens democracy by encouraging a greater range of candidates to run for office, promoting more civil and issue-oriented campaigns, and providing for broader and more inclusive political representation;

WHEREAS, Ranked-choice voting offers more choices by giving independent candidates and independent voters, who were just under 30% of overall voters in Anne Arundel County in 2024, an equal chance as major political party candidates; and

WHEREAS, Voters who have used ranked-choice voting generally choose to retain it, and surveys show voters say they prefer it over their previous system--New York City exit polls found that 96.5% of voters expressed understanding of the new system well. *(Source: poll conducted by Edison Research, with a sample size of 4,020 voters. Jay Wendland and Erin Carman, Ranking Works? An Examination Of Ranked-choice voting In New York City (Amherst, New York: Daemen College, 2021)*

SECTION I: BE IT ESTABLISHED AND ORDAINED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL that the Code of the City of Annapolis shall be amended to read as follows:

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City Code Title 4 - ELECTIONS

Chapter 4.04 - General Provisions

Section 4.04.010 - Definitions.

As used in this title, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated unless a contrary meaning is clearly intended from the context in which the term appears:

1. ~~"Approved voting device" means a paper ballot approved under § 4.24.060 or a voting device approved by the Anne Arundel County Board of Elections and the Maryland State Board of Elections.~~
"Approved voting device" means:
 - a. A paper ballot approved under § 4.24.060;
 - b. A voting device approved by the Anne Arundel County Board of Elections and the Maryland State Board of Elections; or
 - c. A Ranked-choice voting tabulation system approved by the Board of Supervisors of Elections.
2. "Absentee ballot" means a ballot not used in a polling place. Absentee ballots include "mail-in voting," as referred to in the Maryland Constitution, the Annotated Code of Maryland, and the Code of Maryland Regulations.
3. "Active candidate" means any candidate not eliminated in a ranked-choice voting election. An eliminated candidate becomes "inactive."
34. "Ballot" or "official ballot" includes:
 - a. an absentee ballot;
 - b. a mail-in ballot;
 - c. a provisional ballot;
 - d. a document ballot; or
 - e. a voting machine ballot."Ballot" or "official ballot" does not include:
 - a. a sample ballot; or
 - b. a specimen ballot.

45. "Ballot drop box" means a secure, durable, and weatherproof container officially designated by the City exclusively for voters to deposit election-related materials in person, including mail-in ballots, mail-in ballot applications, and voter registration applications.
56. "Ballot question" means a proposition formally presented to City-registered voters on the ballot for their approval or rejection.
7. "Ballot-level ranking data" means a digital record of candidate rankings on each Ranked-choice voting ballot counted.
8. "Batch elimination" means a procedure that can be used in Ranked-choice voting elections in which all candidates whose support is so low that it is mathematically impossible for them to be elected are eliminated all at once in a single round rather than one at a time in successive rounds.
- 6 ~~"Board" means the Board of Supervisors of Elections of the City and the respective members of the board. However, where the City Council delegated responsibility for administering an election under this title to the Board of Supervisors of Elections of the County, "board" refers to that body where such construction would be reasonable.~~
9. "Board of Canvassers" is where the Board of Supervisors of Elections becomes the Board of Canvassers the day after the election to review the votes and finalize the vote totals.
- a. Their meetings are known as "canvases." During these sessions, teams from the Democratic, Republican, and possibly other political parties—"canvassing teams"—examine the voting machines and count mail-in and provisional ballots, reviewing both the votes and the envelopes containing them.
- b. Once the canvass is complete, the Board of Canvassers certifies the overall vote totals and the official election results.
10. "Board of Supervisors of Elections" is the board confirmed by the Annapolis City Council that oversees various aspects of elections.
- a. This includes managing voter registration, handling nominations and candidate filings, establishing precincts and polling places, administering mail-in voting, and other responsibilities outlined in Title 4.
- b. The Board of Supervisors of Elections announces unofficial vote tabulations on election night. The following day, members of the Board of Supervisors of Elections become the Board of Canvassers for the official vote tabulation.
- c. "Board" means the Board of Supervisors of Elections of the City and the respective members of the board. However, where the City Council delegated

responsibility for administering an election under this title to the Anne Arundel County Board of Elections, "board" refers to that body where such construction would be reasonable.

- ~~7~~11. "Campaign manager" means any person appointed or designated by any candidate or the candidate's representative to exercise general overall responsibility for the conduct of a political campaign.
- ~~8~~12. "Campaign contributions" are funds received, in-kind services, and other financial transactions required to be included in the candidate's campaign finance report per § 33.13.02 of the Maryland Code of Regulations (COMAR).
- ~~9~~13. "Chair", for the purposes of § 4.44, means the leader of a political committee. The Chair shall be a registered voter of the State of Maryland and be in good standing with the election board. A candidate may serve as Chair of their own committee. A lobbyist shall not be a Chair.
- ~~10~~14. "Campaign manager" means any person appointed or designated by any candidate or the candidate's representative to exercise general overall responsibility for the conduct of a political campaign.
- ~~11~~15. "Campaign material" is defined in § 4.44.085.
- ~~12~~16. "Candidate" means any person who files a certificate of candidacy for any public or party office. Candidate also has the meaning defined in § 4.20.030.
- ~~13~~17. "Canvass" means the entire process of vote tallying, vote tabulation, and vote verification or audit, culminating in producing and certifying the official election results.
- ~~14~~18. "Challenger" or "watcher" means registered voters designated by a candidate, political party, or other group to be in a precinct to observe an election. These individuals may observe the set-up of the voting units, voting throughout the day, and the closing procedures.
- ~~15~~19. "Central committee" means the City governing body of a political party.
- ~~16~~20. "Clearly identified" is defined in § 4.44.085.
- ~~17~~21. "Contributions" means the gift, transfer or promise of gift or transfer of money or other thing of value to any candidate, or a candidate's representative, or a representative of any political party or partisan organization to promote or assist in the promotion of the

success or defeat of any candidate, political party, principle or proposition submitted to a vote at any election.

~~18~~22. "Donation" is defined in § 4.44.085.

~~19~~23. "Election" means any primary, general, special election or referendum election of the City.

~~20~~24. "Election cycle" means that period beginning on the day after the day of a general election as established by Article II, Section 5 of the Charter of the City of Annapolis and ending on the day of the next general election as established by that charter provision. A Special Election conducted pursuant to Article II, Section 7 of the Charter of the City of Annapolis shall constitute a separate election cycle for those running in the Special Election.

~~21~~25. "Expenditure" means any gift, transfer, disbursement or promise of money or valuable thing by any candidate, treasurer or other agent of the candidate, political party or partisan organization to promote or assist in the promotion of the success or defeat of any candidate, political party, principle or proposition submitted to a vote at any election.

~~22~~26. "Fundraising" in this chapter pertains to political fundraising.

~~23~~27. "General election" means the election held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in the November, at which the voters of the City vote for candidates for Mayor and aldermen.

~~28~~. "Inactive ballot" means a ballot in a Ranked-choice voting election that ceases in a round of tabulation to count for any candidate for the remainder of the tabulation of the election because either:

a. No candidate ranked on the ballot is active; or

b. Multiple candidates have been marked at the same ranking, and no candidates ranked higher are still active.

~~24~~29. "Independent expenditure" is defined in § 4.44.085.

~~25~~30. "Infamous crime" means any felony, treason, perjury, or any crime involving an element of deceit, fraud or corruption.

~~26~~31. "Judge" means any registered voter of the City of Annapolis or Anne Arundel County designated as a judge of election and shall include book judges and machine attendants.

"Judges" refers to a combination of judges which shall, at all times, include judges affiliated with the majority party and the principal minority party.

32. "Majority" in Ranked-choice voting means more than half of the votes counted for active candidates in each round.
- ~~27~~33. "Majority party" means the principal political party to which the incumbent Mayor belongs if the incumbent Mayor is a member of one of the two principal political parties; if the incumbent Mayor is not a member of one of the two principal political parties, "majority party" means the principal political party whose candidate for Mayor received the highest number of votes at the last preceding general election.
- ~~28~~34. "Mail-in ballots" means ballots requested and then submitted by mail, in person, or drop box.
35. "Lot" -- to break a tie by lot -- means a method resolving a situation where two or more candidates have the same number of votes. The method may include a random drawing process where the winner is determined purely by chance.
- ~~29~~36. "Partisan organization" means any combination of two or more persons formed to assist the promotion of the success or defeat of any candidate, political party, principle or proposition to be submitted to a vote at any election.
- ~~30~~37. "Party" or "political party" means an organized group of the electorate that attempts to control government through the election of its candidates to office and which polled 3% of the entire vote cast in the City in the last presidential general election held in the City. "Party" or "political party" shall also include any political party recognized as such by the Maryland State Board of Elections or its successors.
- ~~31~~38. "Petitioner" means:
- a. For the purposes of § 4.20, a candidate for public or party office who has been defeated based on the certified results of any City election.
 - b. For the purposes of § 4.40, City residents who have completed required the ballot question process as prescribed in § 4.40.
- ~~32~~39. "Person" means an individual, association, unincorporated association, corporation, or any other entity. "Person" also has the meaning defined in § 4.44.085.
- ~~33~~40. "Political agent" means any person appointed by any candidate, a candidate's representative, a political party or partisan organization to promote or assist in the promotion of the success or defeat of any candidate, political party, principal or proposition submitted to a vote at any election.

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- ~~34~~41. "Political committee" means any combination of two or more persons appointed by a candidate or any other person or formed in any other manner which assists or attempts to assist in any manner the promotion of the success or defeat of any candidate, candidates, political party, principle or proposition submitted to a vote at any election.
- ~~35~~42. "Principal minority party" means the other of the two principal political parties.
- ~~36~~43. "Principal political party" means a political party recognized by the State Board of Elections which is required to nominate its candidates for public office in the primary elections.
- ~~37~~44. "Provisional ballot" means a ballot that is cast by an individual but not counted until the individual's qualifications to vote have been confirmed by the local board.
45. "Qualified candidate" means an individual who has fulfilled the necessary criteria to appear on the ballot, as determined by the Board of Supervisors of Elections. Write-in candidates must also be qualified candidates. Candidates who do not meet the criteria to run for City office in Annapolis are "unqualified."
46. Ranked-choice voting is a voting method where voters rank candidates in order of preference. Votes are counted in rounds, and the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated in each round. Each voter's ballot counts as one vote for their highest-ranked remaining candidate in that round. The process continues until a candidate receives a majority of the votes, at which point that candidate is declared the winner.
47. "Ranking" means the number available to be assigned by a voter to a candidate to express the voter's preference for that candidate in Ranked-choice voting. The number "1" is the highest ranking, followed by "2" and then "3" and so on.
- ~~38~~48. "Registration" means the act by which a person becomes qualified to vote in any election in this City.
49. "Repeated ranking" occurs in Ranked-choice voting when a voter assigns the same candidate to multiple rankings.
- ~~39~~50. "Residence" means a place of fixed permanent domicile.
51. "Round" in Ranked-choice voting means a specific instance of counting votes pursuant to § 4.22.030(B).

52. "Skipped ranking" occurs in Ranked-choice voting when a voter leaves a ranking unassigned but ranks a candidate at a later position.
- ~~40~~53. "Treasurer" means any person appointed by a candidate, political agent, political committee, or political party or partisan organization to receive or disburse money or other things of value to promote or assist in the promotion of the success or defeat of any candidate, political party, principle or proposition submitted to a vote at any election.
- ~~41~~54. "Unaffiliated" means any voter who has declined to affiliate with a political party.
55. "Undervote" means a Ranked-choice voting ballot that does not rank any candidates in an election for a particular office.
- ~~42~~55. Watcher. See "challenger" above.
- ~~43~~57. "Write-in vote" means a vote cast in a contest at a general election for an individual whose name is not on the ballot for that contest.

City Code Title 4 - ELECTIONS

Chapter 4.22 - Ranked-Choice Voting

Section 4.22.010 - Election by Ranked-Choice Voting

A. Authorization.

1. The mayor, city council members, and members of central committees shall be elected using ranked-choice voting during primary, general, and special elections conducted by the City of Annapolis, pursuant to Article II, Section 5 of the City Charter.
2. The provisions of this chapter shall apply only to ranked-choice voting elections and supersede any other Title 4 provisions that apply to municipal elections.

B. Responsibilities and Oversight.

- 1. Board of Supervisors of Elections.** The Board of Supervisors of Elections ("Board") is responsible for conducting and monitoring ranked-choice voting elections and issuing unofficial ballot results.
 - a. Rulemaking Authority.** Unless specified otherwise in this chapter, the Board of Supervisors of Elections has the authority to establish any necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions outlined in this chapter.

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- b. **Ballots.** The Board of Supervisors of Elections shall determine the design of the ballot and ballot instructions for ranked-choice elections, subject to the requirements of this chapter and any state and federal election law requirements regarding ranked-choice voting.
- c. **Tabulation.** The Board of Supervisors of Election shall ensure the tabulation system has been tested by a lab certified by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission.
- d. **Voter Education.** The Board of Supervisors of Elections shall conduct a voter education campaign before each ranked-choice voting election to familiarize voters with ranked-choice voting.
- e. **Information Access.** The Board of Supervisors of Elections shall be responsible for maintaining the accuracy of the City's ranked-choice voting webpage, ensuring that all information presented is correctly updated and reliable.

- 2. **Board of Canvassers.** The Board of Canvassers shall oversee voting system integrity after the election, count mail-in and provisional ballots, and release the official election results pursuant to this chapter and Chapter 4.32.

Section 4.22.020 - Ballots.

A. Design and Instructions.

- 1. The Board of Supervisors of Elections will determine the design of the ranked-choice voting ballot and the content of its instructions, ensuring inclusion of the following requirements:
 - a. Each ballot shall have up to five ranking columns and space for a write-in candidate.
 - b. All known qualified candidates in a ranked-choice election shall be listed on the ballot.
 - c. The ballot design shall allow for electronic detection of ballot marking to allow a voter to correct a ballot that assigns equal rank to two or more candidates.
- 2. The ballot shall, in plain language, include:
 - a. Instructions that indicate how to mark a ballot to be read by the voting equipment used to tabulate results or manually, as applicable, and
 - b. How to rank candidates in order of the voter's preference, and
- 3. Instructions shall be presented before the first ranked-choice column on the ballot.

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4. This section does not limit the Board of Supervisors of Elections' authority to issue additional instructions or illustrations necessary to further the objectives of this section.

B. Candidate Ranking.

1. The ballot shall permit a voter to rank up to five candidates, including space for one write-in candidate. Only qualified write-in candidates shall be counted.
2. Each voter shall designate their preferences as First Choice, Second Choice, Third Choice, Fourth Choice, and Fifth Choice.
3. If there are fewer than five qualified candidates, the number of rankings ("Choice") may be reduced accordingly.

C. Marking the Ballot.

1. Voters may rank as many or as few candidates as the columns allow; however, they shall not mark more than one candidate in any ranking column.
2. Voters shall have the right to a replacement ballot if they make a mistake or want to change their rankings.

D. Mail-in Ballots.

In ranked-choice voting, mail-in ballots shall be handled pursuant to Chapter 4.28 of this title.

Section 4.22.030- Tabulation of Votes.

A. Means of Tabulation.

1. The Board of Supervisors of Elections shall count ballots using:
 - a. A voting system pursuant to § 4.22.010(B)(1)(c).
 - b. By hand pursuant to § 4.22.060.
2. The Board of Supervisors of Elections shall follow the mail-in voting procedures in Chapter 4.24.

B. Vote Count.

1. **Ballot Tabulation.** Each active ballot shall count as one vote for the highest-ranked active candidate selected by the voter.
2. **Elimination Rounds.** The ballot tabulation process occurs in rounds as follows:
 - a. If an active candidate receives a majority of votes, that candidate is declared elected, and tabulation is complete.

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b. If no active candidate receives a majority of the votes:

- i. If there are more than two active candidates, the candidate with the fewest votes will be eliminated.
- ii. Each ballot cast for the eliminated candidate will be transferred to the next-ranked active candidate on that ballot.
- iii. A new round of voting will begin.

3. Batch Elimination.

- a. The Board of Supervisors of Elections may carry out a batch elimination if the total number of votes for all candidates with the lowest totals is still less than the number of votes received by the next highest candidate. In this case, all candidates in the lowest group will be eliminated.
- b. A batch elimination cannot result in the elimination of the candidate with the second-highest vote total. At least two active candidates must always remain.

C. Write-in Votes.

- 1. Only qualified write-in candidates shall be counted.
- 2. Unqualified write-in candidates will be treated as eliminated candidates when the votes are counted, and any rankings for the candidate will count for each ballot's next-ranked active candidate.
- 3. When issuing unofficial results, write-in candidates may be reported as a single group of "write-in candidates" if all write-in candidates are eliminated in the First Round.

D. Treatment of Ballots.

- 1. During the tabulation process, a ballot will remain active and continue to count for its highest-ranked active candidate, regardless of any skipped or repeated rankings on the ballot.
- 2. Undervotes do not count in any round of tabulation for that election.

E. Tie Votes.

- 1. **Breaking a Tie Vote by Lot.** The Board of Supervisors of Elections shall resolve any tie by lot.
- 2. **Lot Method.** The Board of Supervisors of Elections shall:
 - a. Determine the lot system;
 - b. Document the outcome of any tie resolution; and
 - c. Apply the same tie-breaking method if a recount occurs.

Section 4.22.040 - Reporting Results.

A. Preliminary Results. The Board of Supervisors of Elections shall ensure the release of unofficial preliminary results after the polls close.

1. Public Release of Vote Count.

- a. Ballot results shall be released at regular intervals until all ballots are counted.
- b. The releases shall be as follows:
 - i. The initial release of results will occur no later than 11:59 p.m. on Election Night;
 - ii. All results will be clearly labeled as "unofficial"; and
 - iii. Each update shall include the total number of counted and uncounted ballots up to that point.

2. Form of Vote Count. The public release of the vote count shall occur in the following data formats:

- a. **Round-by-Round Reporting.** This data shall detail the number of votes each active candidate received in each round of tabulation as the vote count progresses.
- b. **Ballot-Level Ranking Data.** This data shall:
 - i. Be organized by precinct when applicable; and
 - ii. Be provided in a machine-readable format that can be easily retrieved, downloaded, indexed, and sorted.

B. Final Release of Data on Election Night. In addition to any other information required by law to be reported with unofficial final results, the Board of Supervisors of Elections shall make public:

- 1. The total number and percentage of votes each candidate received in each round of the official tabulation, including votes for eliminated candidates;
- 2. The total number of ballots that became inactive in each round of tabulation, reported as separate figures; and
- 3. Ballot-level ranking data that is issued by election (Mayor, City Council members, and Political Committee members):
 - a. In a machine-readable format that can be retrieved, downloaded, indexed, sorted, and searched by commonly used Internet search applications;

- b. In a format that is freely available for use and redistribution without restrictions; and
- c. In a manner identifiable by precinct to the extent such identification is feasible and can be provided consistent with the need to maintain voter privacy.

C. Public Access. Vote count data that is required to be made public shall be:

- 1. Published online in a website-accessible format that can be retrieved, downloaded, indexed, sorted, and searched by commonly used internet search applications; and
- 2. In a format that the public can open easily and read.

Section 4.22.050 - Candidate Withdrawal, Disqualification, Dies.

- A. If, after the ballots have been printed, a candidate withdraws, is disqualified for any reason, or passes away, the Board of Supervisors of Elections shall remove that candidate from the tabulation process.
- B. The Board of Supervisors of Elections shall inform voters through signage at the polling stations.

Section 4.22.060 - Hand Counting

- A. The Board of Supervisors of Elections shall establish rules for hand counting ballots in ranked-choice elections if hand counting becomes necessary for any reason.
- B. These rules must ensure that all rankings on a hand-counted ballot and those on system-counted ballots are tabulated according to the procedure established for ranked-choice elections.

Section 4.22.070 - Post-election Review of Voting System and Tabulation

- A. The day after Election Day, the Board of Supervisors of Elections will form the Board of Canvassers to conduct the post-election review of the voting system and tabulation results.
- B. The Board of Canvassers shall oversee voting system integrity after the election, count mail-in and provisional ballots, and release the official election results pursuant to Chapter 4.32.

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Section 4.22.080 - Recount -- Re-canvass.

A. Candidates may petition the Board of Supervisors of Elections for a recount pursuant to §§ 4.20.190-4.20.250.

B. The Board shall:

1. Conduct any recounts and certify the official result of the election or question that is the subject of the recount pursuant to §§ 4.20.190-4.20.250; and
2. Ensure the public can be present while the recount is conducted.

Section 4.22.090 - Violations.

Any person who knowingly and willfully violates any provision of this chapter shall be subject to penalties pursuant to Chapter 4.48.

City Code Title 4 - ELECTIONS

Chapter 4.08 - Board of Supervisors of Elections

Section 4.08.030 Delegation of authority for administering elections.

The City Council may contract with the ~~Board of Supervisors of Elections for the County~~ Anne Arundel County Board of Elections to administer any election conducted under the provisions of this chapter. However, such delegation of administrative responsibility shall not derogate from any ultimate decision-making authority granted under this title to the Board of Supervisors of Elections of the City.

City Code Title 4 - ELECTIONS

Chapter 4.16 - Registration of Voters

Section 4.16.010 Records.

Voter registration records of the ~~Board of Supervisors of Elections for the County~~ Anne Arundel County Board of Elections constitute the official registration records for municipal elections, except as otherwise provided in this chapter. The City shall not maintain any separate system for the registration of voters, but only shall provide for the registration of voters in accordance with procedures of the Board of Supervisors of Elections of the County.

Section 4.16.040 Deadlines.

- A. A person may not vote in a municipal election if the person registers after the fifth Monday preceding the election.
- B. A notification of change of address or name, or request for party designation or change in party affiliation, received by the ~~the Board of Supervisors of Elections for the County~~ Anne Arundel County Board of Elections after the fifth Monday preceding a municipal election is not effective for that election.

Section 4.16.080 Challenges of voters and correction of lists.

All challenges and corrections to the voter registration list shall be referred to the Anne Arundel County ~~Election Board~~ Board of Elections .

City Code Title 4 - ELECTIONS

Chapter 4.20 - Nominations and Candidacy

Section 4.20.090 Nomination by petition—Requirements.

- A. A person seeking the office of Mayor or Alderman who is registered as unaffiliated as defined in this title or who is not registered as a member of a political party that is recognized by the Maryland State Board of Elections may be nominated by petition, as provided in this section.
- B. A candidate for public office seeking nomination by petition shall file a certificate of candidacy at the time and place and in the manner provided in this chapter and shall comply with all other applicable provisions of this title, in the same manner as candidates for nomination at a primary election.
- C. ~~In order to have the name of a proposed candidate placed on the ballot under this section, the candidate shall file with the board petitions signed by the number of voters specified in subsection D of this section. Petitions shall be filed as required by Section 4.20.100(A).~~
To have a proposed candidate's name included on the printed ballot, the candidate must submit petitions signed by the number of voters specified in subsection D of this section. These petitions must be filed in accordance with Section 4.20.100(A).
- D. A candidate for Mayor shall file petitions bearing the signatures of not less than five hundred registered voters, of whom not less than fifty shall reside in each ward of the City. A candidate for Alderman shall file petitions bearing the signatures of not less than one hundred registered voters residing in the ward from which the candidate seeks nomination.

- E. The board shall prescribe the form of petitions filed under this section. The signatures shall be on separate papers, bearing one or more signatures and being no more than eight and one-half inches in width or fourteen inches in length. Each person shall append to his or her signature the signer's residence, and the ward where the signer is registered as a voter, and immediately below the signature of any signer there shall be either printed or typed the name of the signer. Every paper shall be accompanied by an affidavit signed under penalty of perjury, to the effect that the signer is, to the best knowledge and belief of the affiant a registered voter of the City as set forth in the petition, and that the affiant personally saw the person sign the paper.
- F. A person may not sign more than once for the same nominee for an office.

Section 4.20.160 Filling vacancies.

- ~~A. Vacancies in nomination may be filled by the central committee of the political party to which the nominee belongs. The person filling the vacancy shall satisfy the requirements of Section 4.20.010. In the event of any vacancy occurring because of the declination, disqualification or death of any person nominated, or because of a tie vote in any primary election, except as provided in this section, the vacancy shall be filled at least thirty days before the election. Where the vacancy results from a tie vote, the nominee selected to fill the vacancy shall be one of the candidates receiving the tie vote.~~
- A. Vacancies in nominations may be filled by the central committee of the political party to which the nominee belongs.
 - 1. The person filling the vacancy shall satisfy the requirements of § 4.20.010.
 - 2. If a nominee declines, is disqualified, or passes away, any resulting vacancy must be filled at least 30 days before the upcoming election, unless stated otherwise in this section.
- B. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no certificate of nomination filling a vacancy may be filed within ten days of the day of the election.

Section 4.20.180 Canvass, certification and declaration after declination, death or disqualification.

- A. **Before Certificate of Nomination.** If the death, declination or disqualification of a candidate occurs after the primary but before a certificate of nomination has been issued, the canvass and certification shall nevertheless proceed as if the death, declination or disqualification had not occurred. If the person who is certified as the nominee has died, declined or been disqualified, a new nominee may be named in the manner provided by law.
- B. **After Ballots Printed and Before Election Day. In a Ranked-choice voting election, if a candidate withdraws, is disqualified for any reason, or passes away after the ballots have**

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been printed but before Election Day, the Board of Supervisors of Elections shall remove that candidate from the tabulation process, pursuant to Chapter 4.22.

- B.C. After the Election.** If the death, declination or disqualification of a nominee occurs after the election but before the declaration of the results, the canvass and declaration shall nevertheless proceed as if the death, declination or disqualification has not occurred. If the person who is declared elected has died, declined or been disqualified, the resulting vacancy in the office shall be filled in the manner provided by law.

City Code Title 4 - ELECTIONS

Chapter 4.24 - Voting and Voting Machines

Section 4.24.060 Voting machines — Provision — Specifications

- A. ~~The board shall provide for approved voting devices in each precinct for each election conducted under the provisions of this title as the board deems advisable or necessary.~~
- B. ~~The Board shall adopt for each City election the latest procedures concerning the use of voting machines and devices as developed and issued by the Anne Arundel County Board of Elections. The Board may make only those changes necessary to accommodate features unique to the City. Such procedures used shall address the security, delivery, inspection, and preparation of machines and materials. However, for special primary elections and special general elections held to fill not more than two vacant aldermanic, non-mayoral positions, the Board may make a determination that the use of paper ballots will be more appropriate than using a voting machine or device approved by the County and State. Following such a determination to use paper ballots, the following procedures concerning the use of paper ballots are to be followed. If any conflict exists between the procedures given in this section and procedures given elsewhere in this Title, the procedures in this section shall govern.~~
- ~~1. When the ballots are printed, they are in pads of twenty-five or fifty or one hundred. Each sheet of paper in the pad consists of a ballot and a stub. A ballot gets torn off its stub when the ballot is given to a voter. Each stub is individually numbered with a unique serial number. The ballots do not have serial numbers. Records are kept to show what serial numbers are delivered to each polling place.~~
 - ~~2. Upon receiving the ballots, the election judges shall count them to verify that the polling place has received the correct quantity of ballots, and that the serial numbers are correct according to what was supposed to be received. The election judge also prepares each ballot by writing his or her initials in a designated place on the back of each ballot.~~
 - ~~3. Before voting begins, all election judges shall look into the ballot box to make sure it is empty.~~

4. ~~When a voter arrives at the polling place, the voter's name is looked for in the list of registered voters. If the voter's name is found, the election judge official tears off a ballot from a pad, folds the ballot correctly with the side for marking votes on the inside and initials on the outside. The election judge then hands the folded ballot to the voter.~~
5. ~~The voter goes into a booth and marks the ballot using the pen provided by the election judges. After marking the ballot, the voter folds it again so that the votes are on the inside and the election judge's initials are on the outside. The voter places the ballot into the locked ballot box in front of an election judge.~~
6. ~~When the polling place is closed at the end of the day, the ballot boxes are transported to the Election Office at 145 Gorman Avenue where the ballot boxes shall be immediately opened and the ballots are counted. Everyone looks into the ballot box to make sure that it is empty and all ballots have been taken out.~~
7. ~~The number of voted ballots must be exactly the same as the number of voters' names. Also, the number of ballots used must be exactly the same as the number of ballots that were removed from their stubs on the ballot pads. Any difference must be accounted for such as ballots destroyed or incorrectly completed.~~
8. ~~Counting of the ballots shall be completed using a tally sheet with pencil strokes. A pencil stroke is a mark that a person makes with a pencil on paper. For each five pencil strokes, the first four are vertical lines which look like the letter "l" or the number "1." The fifth pencil stroke is made at an angle across the first four, to create a grouping of five. Each canvasser shall have a tally sheet with the candidates' names, and several blank lines following the name of each candidate. For each candidate there is also a "total box" where the total count of votes for that candidate must be filled in. One canvasser reads aloud the names of the candidates selected on each ballot. For each vote for a candidate, the other canvassers make a pencil stroke on a line following that candidate's name. After all the ballots are read, the total number of pencil strokes for each candidate is written in the "total box" for that candidate.~~
9. ~~When the canvass of all voting has been completed, the judges then shall prepare in ink, a general return sheet reporting the number of voters voting and the vote cast for each candidate. The result of the votes cast shall be announced distinctly and audibly one time by one of the canvassers who shall read the names of each candidate and the number of votes received at each polling place.~~
10. ~~The canvass of votes is not completed until any absentee ballots which have been received in a timely manner have been counted, i.e. postmarked, the day before the election and received the day after the election.~~

Section 4.24.060 – Voting Systems and Paper Ballots.

A. Voting Systems.

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1. Except for Ranked-choice voting, the Board of Supervisors of Elections shall follow voting system procedures as adopted by the Anne Arundel County Board of Elections.
 2. Ranked-choice voting systems shall be pursuant to Chapter 4.22.
- B. **Paper Ballots.** If using paper ballots, the Board of Supervisors of Elections shall abide by the following procedures:
1. **Ballots and Voting.**
 - a. Ballots shall be printed in pads of 25, 50, or 100 ballots with each ballot sheet connected to a stub.
 - i. Each stub shall be individually numbered and have a unique serial number. The ballot shall not have a serial number.
 - ii. The ballot shall be removed from its stub when the ballot is given to a voter.
 - iii. Records shall be kept to show what serial numbers are delivered to each polling place.
 - b. Upon receiving the pads of ballots, the election judges shall:
 - i. Count them to verify that the polling place has received the correct quantity of ballots;
 - ii. Ensure that the serial numbers are correct according to what was supposed to be received;
 - iii. Writing their initials in a designated place on the back of each ballot.
 - c. Before voting begins, all election judges shall look into the ballot box to make sure it is empty.
 - d. When a voter arrives at the polling place, the election judge shall check the list of registered voters to find the voter's name.
 - i. If the individual's name is found, an election judge shall remove a ballot from a pad and fold it in half so that the side meant for marking votes is on the inside, while the judge's initials are on the outside of the folded ballot.
 - ii. The election judge shall then hand the folded ballot to the voter.
 - e. The voter shall enter a booth and mark the ballot using the pen provided by the election judges.

- i. After marking the ballot, the voter shall fold it again so that the votes are on the inside and the election judge's initials are on the outside.
- ii. The voter shall place the ballot into the locked ballot box in front of an election judge.

2. Counting Ballots.

- a. When the polling place closes, election judges shall transport the boxes filled with ballots to the City's election office, where canvassers shall immediately open the boxes and begin the ballot-counting process.
- b. Election judges shall check each ballot box to ensure that it is empty and that all ballots have been taken out.
- c. The number of voted ballots must be exactly the same as the number of voters' names.
 - i. The number of ballots used must be exactly the same as the number of ballots removed from their stubs on the ballot pads.
 - ii. Any difference, such as ballots destroyed or incorrectly completed, must be accounted for.
- d. Canvassers shall **hand count** the ballots ~~on~~ using a tally sheet, marking the tally with pencil strokes.
 - i. A pencil stroke is a mark that a person makes with a pencil on paper.
 - ii. Each canvasser shall have a tally sheet with the candidates' names and several blank lines following each candidate's name.
 - iii. One canvasser shall read aloud the names of the candidates selected on each ballot.
 - iv. For each vote for a candidate, the other canvassers shall tally the votes by making a pencil stroke on a line following that candidate's name.
 - v. The canvasser shall make a single, short vertical line (|), in groups of four (| | | |) with the fifth stroke a diagonal line across the four, making a grouping of five strokes, and starting a new group for every set of five marks.
 - vi. After all the ballots are read, the total number of pencil strokes for each candidate shall be written in the "total box" for that candidate.

3. Voting Results.

- a. When the canvass of all voting has been completed, the judges shall prepare a general return sheet in ink reporting the number of voters voting and the votes cast for each candidate.
- b. The result of the votes cast shall be announced distinctly and audibly one time by one of the canvassers, who shall read the names of each candidate and the number of votes received at each polling place.
- c. The canvass of votes is not completed until all mail-in ballots that have been received in a timely manner, pursuant to § 4.28.100(C), have been counted.

Section 4.24.070 Ballots and ballot labels.

- A. ~~The board shall provide ballots for every election in which any voter in the City shall participate, which shall contain:~~
 1. ~~The name of every candidate who has filed or has been nominated in accordance with the provisions of this chapter; and, when applicable~~
 2. ~~A description of every Charter amendment or other question which is to be submitted to the vote of the people.~~
- B. ~~No less than twenty-five days before any election, the form and arrangement of all ballots to be used in the election, showing the offices, names of candidates, charter amendments and questions, shall be prepared by the board and made available for inspection by any registered voter. Following five days of public display, a court may not entertain a suit or grant injunctive relief to any party seeking to challenge the form or arrangement of the ballots or the wording of a charter amendment or question on a ballot. If the ballot titles of charter amendments and questions are certified prior to twenty-five days before the election, they shall be made available for inspection by any registered voter.~~
- C. ~~If any mistake is discovered, the board shall correct it without delay. If the board declines or refuses to make the correction, then upon the sworn petition of any qualified voter who would have the right to vote for a candidate or question at the approaching election, the circuit court for the County, by order, may require the board to correct the error or to show cause why the error should not be corrected.~~
- D. ~~A correct list of the names of the candidates for the designated offices shall be furnished on demand by the boards to the candidates or their authorized agents.~~
- E. ~~The ballots shall be printed in plain clear type in black ink and, except in primary elections, upon clear white materials, of such size and arrangement as to fit the construction of the machine. For primary elections the ballots may be printed upon clear material or material of different colors, in the discretion of the board.~~

Section 4.24.070 Content—General Specifications.

- A. Except for ranked-choice voting, the Board of Supervisors of Elections shall follow ballot procedures as adopted by the Anne Arundel County Board of Elections.
- B. Ranked-choice voting ballots shall be pursuant to Chapter 4.22.

Section 4.24.080 ~~Ballots and ballot labels~~Ballot Content—Party Designation.

A candidate for Mayor or Alderman who is affiliated with a political party as recognized under the Annotated Code of Maryland will have that party designation included on the ballot. A candidate for Mayor or Alderman who is not affiliated with a political party shall be classified under the heading "Unaffiliated" on the ballot as required under the Annotated Code of Maryland and COMAR Title 33.

Section 4.24.090 ~~Ballots and ballot labels~~Ballot Content—Candidates.

- ~~A. In all elections, the names of the candidates for every office shall be arranged alphabetically on the ballots of their party according to their surnames, under the designation of the office. The use of titles, degrees or other professional designations on the ballot is prohibited.~~
- ~~B. Additional regulations shall be~~
 - All candidates for the same office, as far as possible, shall be placed in one column or in one row on the ballots. However, another column, row, or punchcard side, as appropriate, may be used for the printing of names, if the required number of spaces assigned to each party or office is exhausted. If two or more columns or rows are used for the names of candidates for the same office, the same number of names, so far as possible, shall be printed in each column or row. The initial letters of the given names of the several candidates shall be printed, if columns are used, directly beneath each other in a vertical line, and, if rows are used, directly across from each other on the same horizontal line. The respective party designations of these several candidates shall be printed, if paper ballots are used, directly beneath each other, and, if voting machines are used, to the left or above.
- ~~C. The titles of offices may be arranged horizontally or vertically on the ballots, with the names of candidates for an office arranged longitudinally under or transversely opposite the title of the office. The titles of offices shall be so arranged that:~~
 - 1. ~~There first appears the title of Mayor;~~
 - 2. ~~There next appears the title of Alderman; and~~
 - 3. ~~The titles of party offices follow the titles of public offices on all ballots.~~
- ~~D. The party designation of each candidate, properly separated from the candidate's name, shall be included on all ballots at any election; provided, however, that the party name shall consist of one word only. The ballots shall be arranged so that exact uniformity, to the~~

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extent practicable, will prevail as to size and face of printing of all candidates' names and party designation.

- ~~E. The names of all candidates of a political party shall appear on the ballots in adjacent rows or columns containing generally the names of candidates nominated by such party. In primary elections the names of candidates seeking nomination by a particular party shall be segregated on the voting machines in adjacent rows or columns by parties. In both primary and general elections, the candidates of the majority party shall be placed in the first rows or columns, the principal minority party shall be in the succeeding rows or columns to be followed by other parties in order of highest voter registration, and thereafter unaffiliated.~~
- ~~F. Above the group of names of the candidates for each office, and upon a separate line immediately underneath the designation of the office, there shall be printed in bold, plain roman capitals of twelve point pica type, an appropriate direction or instruction to the voter informing the voter of the number of persons for whom the voter lawfully may vote for the particular office mentioned immediately above each such direction.~~

Section 4.24.090 - ~~Ballots and ballot labels—Candidates~~Ballot Content - Candidate Names.

A. Names.

1. In all elections, the names of the candidates for every office shall be arranged alphabetically on the ballots of their party according to their surnames, under the designation of the office.
2. The use of titles, degrees or other professional designations on the ballot is prohibited.

B. Content and Arrangement of Ballots. When creating the contents and arrangement of the ballots, the Board of Supervisors of Elections shall comply with Election Law Article §§ 9-201--9-217 of the Annotated Code of Maryland, COMAR § 33.01.06, the Anne Arundel County Board of Elections, and this chapter.

Section 4.24.220 ~~Announcement of vote.~~

- ~~A. The result of the votes cast shall be announced distinctly and audibly one time by one of the judges, who shall read the name of each candidate on the ballot and the number of votes cast for that candidate and the number of votes cast for and against each question on the ballot.~~
- ~~B. During such proclamation, ample opportunity shall be given to any person lawfully present to compare the results so announced with the printed record of the machine.~~

Section 4.24.250 Report of tabulation.

- A. ~~The judges of each precinct, immediately upon completion of the tabulation of the vote, shall report the unofficial result to the Election Board and also the time when the tabulation of the vote was completed.~~
- B. ~~Immediately after the vote has been ascertained, the statement of the vote shall be posted on the door of the polling place.~~

City Code Title 4 - ELECTIONS

Chapter 4.32 - Board of Canvassers

Section 4.32.030 Statements of votes cast.

- A. ~~The Board of Canvassers shall open the envelopes with the print outs and shall canvass and add up the votes and make abstracts or statements thereof as per the technology of the machines used. All votes for Mayor and aldermen, for any other officer, and all votes for or against any proposition all shall be on one sheet. Three originals shall be made of each abstract or statement; upon each original, all numerals or words representing a number of votes cast shall be either printed or typed.~~
- B. ~~If, upon the canvass of votes, in any statement or tally sheet, certain matters are omitted which should have been inserted, or any mistakes exist, the Canvassing Board shall direct the election officials who prepared and certified the returns to make corrections as the facts in the case require. Any changes shall not alter any decision previously made by the Canvassing Board, but shall cause the canvass to be correctly stated.~~

SECTION II: BE IT FURTHER ESTABLISHED AND ORDAINED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL that:

1. The City Clerk shall create rules and regulations to implement ranked-choice voting in consultation with the Board of Supervisors of Elections.
2. This ordinance shall take effect upon adoption; and
3. Ranked-choice voting shall be implemented starting with the 2029 City Council election.