

**Town of Somerset  
(2020 Election)**

Ordinance No.: 1-20  
Introduced: April 15, 2020  
Adopted: April 15, 2020  
Effective Date: April 15, 2020

**DECLARATION OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY AND  
ORDINANCE TO ACTIVATE AN EMERGENCY PLAN  
FOR THE TOWN ELECTION**

WHEREAS, on March 5, 2020, in an effort to control and prevent the spread of COVID-19, a state of emergency and catastrophic health emergency was proclaimed by the Governor within the entire State of Maryland, pursuant to Maryland Code, Public Safety Article, Title 14, and the Maryland Constitution; and

WHEREAS, on March 17, 2020, the Governor declared that the state of emergency continues and ordered that the Primary Election of April 28, 2020 be postponed to June 2, 2020, and that the State Board of Elections prepare a Comprehensive Plan for the conduct of the Primary Election, to implement measures to reasonably assure, among other things, that the public health, safety, and welfare not be endangered by the election; and

WHEREAS, on March 30, 2020, the Governor issued an Executive Order compelling all persons to stay at home (Order No. 20-03-30-01) and an Executive Order enabling municipalities to postpone elections and/or alter the method, conduct, or voting system of an election (Order No. 20-03-30-03), in order to help control and prevent the spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, Maryland Code, Local Government Article, Sec. 5-202, as amended, authorizes the legislative body of each municipal corporation in the State of Maryland to pass ordinances that such legislative body deems necessary to assure the good government of the municipality, to protect and preserve the municipality's rights, property and privileges, to preserve peace and good order, to secure persons and property from danger and destruction, and to protect the health, comfort, and convenience of the citizens of the municipality;

WHEREAS, the Maryland Emergency Management Agency Act (Md. Code, Public Safety Art., Sec. 14-101, *et seq.*) provides that local governments, including municipal governments, may declare a local state of emergency and so doing activates the local state of emergency plan, per Sec. 14-111; and

WHEREAS, per Sec. 14-102(a) of said Act, the legislative purposes and intents of the law include to confer on the Governor and on the executive heads or governing bodies of the political subdivisions the emergency powers provided in the Act, and per Sec. 14-107(d)(1), after a state of emergency is declared the effect of any statute or rule or regulation of an agency of the State or a political subdivision may be suspended in order to protect the public health, safety, or welfare; and

WHEREAS, Section 83-17 of the Town Charter authorizes the Town Council to pass ordinances not contrary to the Constitution and laws of the State of Maryland or the Town Charter, as it may deem necessary for the good government of the Town; for the protection and preservation 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 the Town and visitors thereto and sojourners therein;

WHEREAS, Section 83-9 of the Charter provides that in cases deemed to be of an emergency nature, the requirement that ordinance not be passed at the meeting at which it is introduced may be suspended by the affirmative votes of four members of the Town Council; and

WHEREAS, Section 83-35 of the Charter provides that if a state of emergency has been declared by the Governor of Maryland, within the corporate limits of the Town, the Council shall be authorized to pass an ordinance to declare a local state of emergency and implement such emergency election procedures as may be deemed necessary as a result of the state of emergency, including but not limited to changing the election date and nomination deadlines; altering the method, conduct, or voting system of the election; altering the manner of balloting; canceling an uncontested election; and eliminating the use of polling stations; and

WHEREAS, after proper notice to the public, the Town Council introduced and considered this Ordinance in public session assembled on the 15th day of April, 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor hereby declares that a state of emergency exists, as declared by the Governor of Maryland; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the state of emergency, the Town Council finds that the temporary amendment, on an emergency basis, of the election rules and regulations would help control and prevent the spread of COVID-19 and that the ordinance as hereinafter set forth is necessary for the good government of the Town; for the protection and preservation 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 the Town and visitors thereto and sojourners therein.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED AND ORDERED, this 15th day of April, 2020, by virtue of the authority given to it by the Maryland Code and the Town Charter, the Town Council does hereby adopt the following ordinance.

*SECTION 1.* BE IT ORDAINED AND ORDERED, by the Mayor and Council of the Town of Somerset, acting under and by virtue of the aforementioned authority, that the 2020 election shall proceed according to the **Emergency Plan for Town Election** attached hereto, and according to the following:

- (1) If an election shall be uncontested, and the number of nominees having been reported shall be the same number of positions to be filled by the election, the nominee(s) so reported shall be deemed elected as of election day, and no balloting shall take place. Balloting shall not take place in order to avoid the risk of spreading COVID-19.
- (2) Any election rule or regulation set forth in the Town Charter, Code of Ordinances, or election rules and regulations that is inconsistent with the provisions of the attached Emergency Plan for Town Election is hereby suspended. The Emergency Plan for Town Election shall be implemented for the 2020 election, only.

*SECTION 2.* AND BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED AND ORDERED, by the Mayor and Council of the Town of Somerset, acting under and by virtue of the aforementioned authority, that:

- (1) If any part or provision of this ordinance is declared by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, the part or provision held to be invalid shall not affect the validity of the ordinance as a whole or any remaining part thereof; and
- (2) This ordinance shall take effect upon adoption, this 15th day of April, 2020.

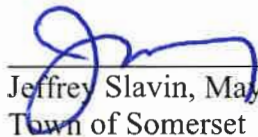
ATTEST:

TOWN OF SOMERSET

  
Matt Trollinger, Manager/Clerk-Treasurer  
Town of Somerset

  
Marnie Shaul, President  
Town of Somerset

Approved:

  
Jeffrey Slavin, Mayor  
Town of Somerset

Date: 4/16/2020

