

2026 SESSION

INTRODUCED

26102391D

1 **HOUSE BILL NO. 792**

2 Offered January 14, 2026

3 Prefiled January 13, 2026

4 A BILL to amend and reenact § 15, as amended, § 17.1, §§ 21, 22, and 32, as severally amended, and §§

5 33.1, 47, and 49 of Chapter 662 of the Acts of Assembly of 1966, which provided a charter for the City of

6 Lexington, relating to city council, city manager, city attorney, courts, and school board.

7

8 Patron—Austin

9 Committee Referral Pending

10 Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

11 1. That § 15, as amended, § 17.1, §§ 21, 22, and 32, as severally amended, and §§ 33.1, 47, and 49 of

12 Chapter 662 of the Acts of Assembly of 1966 are amended and reenacted as follows:

13 § 15. Organization meeting and meetings generally.

14 On the first regular meeting following the end of the *fiscal calendar* year and following the regular

15 municipal election, the council shall meet in the council chambers and at that time the newly elected council

16 members and mayor, after first having taken the oath of office prescribed by law, shall assume the duties of

17 their offices. Thereafter, the council shall meet at such time as may be prescribed by ordinance or resolution;

18 except that they shall meet regularly not less than once each month.

19 § 17.1. Council meeting to be public; exceptions.

20 All meetings of the council shall be public and open, except when by a recorded vote of a majority of

21 those members present, the council shall declare that the public welfare requires secrecy.

22 Executive or closed meetings may be held only for the purpose and in the manner provided in the *Virginia*

23 Freedom of Information Act (Chapter 24.37 (§ 2.1-340.2.2-3700 et seq.) of the Code of Virginia).

24 § 21. Publication of ordinances.

25 Except for emergency ordinances, every ordinance shall be advertised in summary form at least once

26 seven days prior to being acted upon in a newspaper of general circulation in the City of Lexington, Virginia.

27 City council may, after certification by a majority of the members of council that an emergency exists, adopt

28 an ordinance without advertising as set forth above. Every ordinance of a general or permanent nature shall

29 be published in full once within ten days after its enactment by posting a copy thereof at one of the public

30 entrances to the city hall ~~and at two other public locations within the city~~.

31 § 22. City manager generally; appointment, qualifications and term of office.

32 There shall be a city manager who shall be responsible to the council for the proper administration of the

33 city government. The manager shall be chosen by the council without regard to political beliefs and solely

34 upon the basis of executive and administrative qualifications. He shall be appointed for an indefinite period

35 and shall hold office at the pleasure of the council. At the time of appointment, the manager need not be a

36 resident of the city or the Commonwealth, but *council may require the manager to reside within the city*

37 during the tenure of office ~~shall reside within the city on such terms as council shall establish.~~

38 § 32. City attorney.

39 There shall be a city attorney appointed by council ~~for a term of four (4) years and~~ who shall be appointed

40 *for an indefinite term, hold office at the pleasure of council, and* receive such compensation as council may

41 determine. He or she shall be an attorney at law licensed to practice under the laws of the Commonwealth.

42 The city attorney shall be the chief legal adviser of the council, the city manager, and of all departments,

43 boards, commissions and agencies of the city including the school board in all matters affecting the interest of

44 the city except in those situations when such representation would be a conflict. He or she ~~shall~~ *may* represent

45 the city in all civil proceedings and ~~shall~~ *may* prosecute those persons accused of violations of the city

46 ordinances both in the Lexington General District Court and those cases which are appealed to the Circuit

47 Court of Rockbridge County. It shall be the city attorney's duty to perform all services as may be required by

48 the laws of the Commonwealth, this charter or by ordinance.

49 § 33.1. General District Court and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court.

50 There shall be, within the city of Lexington, one court which shall be called the Lexington General

51 District Court and one court which shall be called the Lexington Juvenile and Domestic Relations District

52 Court. *The Lexington General District Court may be consolidated with the Rockbridge County General*

53 *District Court, and the Lexington Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court may be consolidated with*

54 *the Rockbridge County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court.*

55 The judges of the Lexington General District Court and the Lexington Juvenile and Domestic Relations

56 District Court shall be elected or appointed pursuant to § 16.1-69.9 of the Code of Virginia.

57 § 47. Appointment Election and term.

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59 Members of the school board shall be appointed by the city council elected for overlapping three year
60 four-year staggered terms at regular elections that coincide with the elections for the mayor and council
61 members in a manner prescribed by general law.

62 § 49. Contractual relationships.

63 The city of Lexington may enter into contractual relationships with the Commonwealth and/or its
64 departments, bureaus, boards and agencies, neighboring political subdivisions and private agencies for the
65 performance of any part or all of the functions or purposes of the city, on such terms and for such periods as
66 council may determine to be in the public interest, where such contractual relations are not specifically
67 prohibited by the Constitution and general laws of the Commonwealth. The school board, with the approval
68 of council, may enter into contractual relationships with the Commonwealth and/or its departments, bureaus,
69 boards and agencies, neighboring political subdivisions and private agencies regarding the performance of
70 any part of or all of the functions or purposes of the school board on such terms and for such periods as the
71 school board may determine to be in the public interest, when such contractual relations are not specifically
72 prohibited by the Constitution and general laws of the Commonwealth.