

Worksheet: Internet Scavenger Hunt: The Organization of Fairfax County Government

Directions: Complete the following questions using one or more of the websites bookmarked by your teacher. Print resources will be made available later in the period to fill in any gaps that may exist after your work on the computer.

1. What is the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors?
2. How many members serve on this group?
3. How are they selected?
4. Which member of the Board serves *at-large*?
5. How long do they serve?
6. Are there term limits?
7. What qualifications are needed to be a supervisor?
8. When is the next election?
9. What does the law say about the size of a supervisor's district?
10. **When** and **where** does the Board meet?

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Powers and duties of the Board of Supervisors include:

11. establishing County government_____

12. passing _____

13. approving the _____

14. setting the _____ rates

15. approving _____ plans

16. making_____

17. Two limits (or checks) on the Board include:

(1)

(2)

18. Describe the role of the Board Chairman. What, if any, limits are placed on the Chairman's power?

19. Describe the major responsibilities of the County Executive.

20. What publication lists the Board's scheduled agenda?

21. Are Board meetings open to the public?

22. What is the procedure that an individual can follow if they wish to speak at a Board meeting?

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23. What options or resources are available to a citizen that wishes to attend a Board meeting but is unable to do so? In other words, what other ways can they get this information?

24. What is the Board's Internet address?

25. What is the job of the Clerk to the Board?

Other elected officials who serve four-year terms include the Sheriff, Clerk of the Court, and Commonwealth's Attorney. **Briefly**, summarize what each of these officials does:

26. Sheriff

27. Clerk of the Court

28. Commonwealth's Attorney

**Worksheet: The Organization Of Fairfax County Government
[Answer Key]**

Directions: Complete the following questions using one or more of the resources provide by your teacher.

1. What is the Board of Supervisors? *The elected governing body of Fairfax County*
2. What is the size of this group? *10 members (nine district members plus a chairman)*
3. How are they selected? *Elected*
4. Which member of the Board serves at-large? *Chairman*
5. How long do they serve? *Four-year terms*
6. Are there term limits? *No*
7. What qualifications are needed to be a supervisor? *Must be a qualified voter and resident of the district he or she represents (by implication, supervisors must be 18)*
8. When is the next election?
9. What does the law say about the size of a supervisor's district? *Must be of equal population*
10. When and where does the Board meet? *Approximately two Mondays per month; Board Auditorium in the County Government Center*

Powers and duties of the Board of Supervisors include:

11. establishing County government **policy**
12. passing **resolutions and ordinances**
13. approving the **budget**
14. setting the **tax rates**
15. approving **land use plans**
16. making **appointments**
17. Two restraints on the Board include:
 - (1) **Authority is limited by the Virginia General Assembly , i.e. Dillon's Rule, and**
 - (2) **the exercise of the above powers must be conducted in public, i.e., sunshine laws.**

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18. Describe the role of the Board Chairman and the limits of that role.

The primary functions of the chair include serving as the ceremonial head of county government (e.g., greets official visitors, ribbon cutting), presiding at Board meetings, and exercising the same rights and duties of other Board members. The chair can make certain appointments and has only limited power to set the agenda. The chair does not have independent executive powers (i.e., the mayor) or the power to veto Board actions.

19. Describe the role, tenure, and major responsibilities of the County Executive.

The County Executive is the administrative head of the county government and is responsible for the administration of all of the affairs of the county, which the Board has the authority to control. The County Executive is appointed by the Board of Supervisors.

20. The Board's scheduled agenda can be found in what publication? **The Weekly Agenda**

21. Are Board meetings open to the public? **Yes**

22. If an individual wishes to speak at a Board meeting what is the procedure?

Sign up in advance with the Office of the Clerk to the Board (324-3151)

23. If someone wants to know what's going on at a Board meeting but is unable to attend what can he/she do? **Board meetings are telecast live on Channel 16**

24. What is the Board's Internet address? <http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/gov/bos/homepage.htm>

25. What is the role of the Clerk to the Board?

The Clerk to the Board is a full-time official whose major responsibility is preserving official records of the Board.

Other elected officials who serve four-year terms include Sheriff, Clerk of the Court, and Commonwealth's Attorney. Briefly, summarize what each of these officials does:

26. Sheriff: *operates the County Adult Detention Center, has civil and criminal jurisdiction (arrests, warrants, subpoenas), provides security for the courts*

27. Clerk of the Circuit Court: *serves an eight-year term, responsible for legal records and licenses*

28. Commonwealth's Attorney: *chief law enforcement officer in the County; prosecutes all criminal cases including felonies, misdemeanors, and traffic cases*