

LAWRENCEVILLE, TOWN OF
County of Brunswick.

Established, 1814, c 76.

Incorporation and charter, 1874, c. 305; repealed 1934, c. 194.

Charter, 1934, c. 194.

Amended 1954, c. 12 (§ 3)
 1956, c. 5 (§ 3)
 1962, c. 334 (§ 3)
 1972, c. 32 (§§ 5, 6, 7)
 1973, c. 146 (§§ 5, 7)
 1985, c. 25 (§ 6)
 1992, c. 277 (§§ 5 [repealed], 5A [added])
 2008, c. 327 (§§ 4, 5A, 6).

§ 1. The town corporate.

The inhabitants of the Town of Lawrenceville, as its limitations are now or may hereafter be established, shall constitute a body, politic and corporate, to be known and designated as the Town of Lawrenceville, and as such, shall have and may exercise all powers which are now and hereafter may be conferred upon or delegated to towns under the Constitution and laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia, as fully and completely as though such powers were specifically enumerated herein, and no enumeration of particular powers by this charter shall be held to be exclusive. (1934, c. 194)

§ 2. The town boundaries.

The corporate limits of the Town of Lawrenceville, Virginia, as heretofore established, are hereby reestablished as follows:

The land extending one-quarter of a mile north and east, one-half a mile south, and three-quarters of a mile west, from the courthouse of the County of Brunswick, together with all that territory adjacent to the territory within the limits above set forth, which is embraced in the following lines, metes, and bounds, that is to say: Beginning at a point upon the present corporate boundary line of said town to-wit: where the west side of Union street touches the right-of-way of the Southern Railway Company, thence north three degrees west eight hundred feet, thence north eighty-seven degrees east fifty-two hundred and eighty feet, thence north three degrees west ten hundred and forty feet, thence south eighty-seven degrees west thirty-seven hundred and thirty feet, thence south three degrees east one hundred and eighty feet, thence south fifty-five and one-quarter degrees west two hundred and ninety-two feet, thence north thirty-three and one-half degrees west five hundred and ten feet, thence south sixty-two degrees west three hundred and forty-three feet, thence north sixty-nine and three-quarter degrees west one hundred and seventy-nine feet, thence south fifty-four degrees west three hundred and twenty-three feet, thence north seventy-nine and three-quarter degrees west four hundred and four feet, thence south four and one-half degrees west sixteen hundred feet, thence south sixty-six degrees east for hundred and five feet, to the aforesaid point of beginning. (1934, c. 194)

§ 3. Powers of the Town of Lawrenceville.

In addition to the powers mentioned in § 1 hereof, the Town of Lawrenceville shall have the following powers:

First. To raise annually, by taxes and assessments in said town, on all such property, real and personal, as is now or may be subject to taxation by towns by the revenue laws of this Commonwealth, such sums of money as the council thereof shall deem necessary for the purposes of said town, in such manner as said council shall deem expedient in accordance with the Constitution of this State and of the United States, including the payment of principal and interest of all bonds issued by the town, without limitation of rate or amount; and to collect the taxes and assessments due the town in installments if said council ever so desires.

Second. To impose special or local assessments for local improvements and to enforce payment thereof, subject to such limitations prescribed by the Constitution and laws of Virginia as may be in force at the time of the imposition of such special or local assessments.

Third. To contract debts, borrow money and make and issue evidences of indebtedness.

Fourth. To expend the money of the town for all lawful purposes.

Fifth. To acquire by purchase, gift, devise, condemnation or otherwise property, real or personal, or any estate therein, within or without the town, for any of the purposes thereof; and to hold, improve, sell, lease, mortgage, the same or any part thereof, including any property now owned by the town.

Sixth. To construct, maintain, regulate and operate public improvements of all kinds, including municipal and other buildings, grounds and structures necessary or appropriate for the use and proper operation of the various departments of the town.

Seventh. To own, operate and maintain water works, and to acquire in any lawful manner, in any county of the State such water, lands, property rights, and riparian rights as the council of said town may deem necessary for the purpose of providing an adequate water supply to said town and of piping or conducting the same; to lay all necessary mains and service lines within and without the corporate limits of said town; to erect and maintain all necessary mains and service lines within and without the corporate limits of said town; to erect and maintain all necessary dams, pumping stations and other works in connection therewith; to make reasonable rules and regulations for promoting the purity of its said water supply and for protecting the same from pollution, and for this purpose to exercise full police powers and sanitary patrol over all lands comprised within the limits of the water shed tributary to any such water supply wherever such lands may be located in this State; to impose and enforce adequate penalties for the violation of any such rules and regulations and to prevent by injunction any pollution or threatened pollution of such water supply, and any and all acts likely to impair the purity thereof; and to carry out the powers herein granted, the said town may exercise within the State all powers of eminent domain provided by the laws of this State.

Eighth. To own, operate and maintain electric light and gas works, either within or without the corporate limits of said town and to supply gas and electricity whether the same be generated or purchased by said town, to its customers and consumers both within and without the corporate limits of the said town, at such price and upon such terms as it may prescribe, and to that end it may contract to purchase electricity and gas from the owners thereof upon such terms as it may deem expedient.

Ninth. To establish, impose and enforce the collection of water, light and sewerage rates and rates and charges for other services, products, or conveniences operated or furnished by the town; and the said council may prescribe a different rate to be paid for such services and conveniences rendered to users or consumers without the corporate limits from the charges made to those within the corporate limits of said town.

Tenth. To establish, enter, open, widen, extend, grade, improve, construct, maintain, light, sprinkle and clean public highways, streets, alleys, parkways and parks, and to alter or close the same; to regulate the use of all such highways, parks and public grounds; to prevent the obstruction of such streets and highways; to require any railroad company operating a railroad at the place where any highway or street is crossed within the town limits to erect and maintain at such crossing any style of gate deemed proper, and keep a man in charge thereof or keep a flagman at such crossing during such hours as the council may require in accordance with the general law of the State, and to regulate the length of time such crossings may be closed due to any operations of the railroad; to regulate the operation and speed of all cars and vehicles upon said streets and highways, as well as the speed of all engines, cars and trains or railroads within the town; to permit or prohibit poles and wires for electric, telephone and telegraph purposes to be erected and gas lines to be laid in the streets and alleys, and to prescribe and collect an annual charge for such privileges hereafter granted; to require the owner or lessee of any electric light, telephone or telegraph pole or poles or wires now in use or hereafter erected to change the location or move the same.

Eleventh. To acquire by gift, purchase or by the exercise of the power of eminent domain within this State, land or any interest or estate in lands, rock quarries, gravel pits, sand pits, water and water rights and the necessary roadways thereto, either within or without the town, and acquire and install machinery and equipment and build the necessary roads or tramways thereto and operate the same for the purpose of producing materials required for any and all purposes of the said town.

Twelfth. To establish, construct, and maintain sanitary sewers, sewer lines and cisterns and to require the abutting property owners to connect therewith and to establish, construct, maintain and operate sewerage disposal plants and to acquire by condemnation or otherwise, within or without the town, all lands, rights-of-way and other rights and easements necessary for the purposes aforesaid, and to charge and collect reasonable fees or assessments or costs of service for connecting with and using the same.

Thirteenth. Subject to the provisions of the Constitution of Virginia and of this charter to grant franchises for public utilities.

Fourteenth. To collect and dispose of sewerage, offal, ashes, garbage, carcasses of dead animals and other refuse and to make reasonable charges therefor; to acquire and operate reduction or other plants for the utilization or destruction of such materials or any of them, and to contact for and regulate and collect for the disposal thereof and to require and regulate the disposal thereof.

Fifteenth. To compel the abatement and removal of all nuisances within the town or upon property owned by the town beyond its limits at the expense of the person or persons causing the same, or of the owner or occupant on the ground or premises whereon the same may be, and to collect said expense by suit or distress and sale; to require all lands, lots and other premises within the town to be kept clean and sanitary and free from stagnant water, weeds, filth, and unsightly deposits, or to make them so at

the expense of the owners or occupants thereof, and to collect said expense by suit or motion, or by distress and sale; to regulate or prevent slaughter houses or other noisome or offensive business within the said town, the keeping of hogs or other animals, poultry or other fowl therein, or the exercise of any dangerous or unwholesome business, trade or employment therein; to regulate the transportation of all articles through the streets of the town; to compel the abatement of smoke and dust, and prevent unnecessary noise, to regulate the location of stables and the manner in which they shall be kept and constructed; to regulate the location, construction, and operation and maintenance of billboards and generally to define, prohibit, abate, suppress, and prevent all things detrimental to the health, morals, aesthetics, safety, convenience and welfare of the inhabitants of the town; and to require all owners or occupants of property having sidewalks in front thereof to keep the same clean and sanitary, and free from all weeds, filth, unsightly deposits, ice or snow.

Sixteenth. The council may, in its discretion, appoint a board of health for the town and invest it with authority for the prompt and efficient performance of its duties.

Seventeenth. To inspect, test, measure, and weigh any commodity or article of consumption for use within the town, and to establish, regulate, license, and inspect weights, meters, measures and scales.

Eighteenth. To extinguish and prevent fires, and to establish, regulate and control a fire department or division; to regulate the size, heights, materials and construction of buildings, fences, walls, retaining walls and other structures hereafter erected in such manner as the public safety and conveniences may require; to remove or require to be removed or reconstructed any building, structure or addition thereto, which by reason of dilapidation, defect of structure, or other causes, may have become dangerous to life or property, or which may be erected contrary to law; to establish and designate from time to time fire limits, within which limits wooden buildings shall not be constructed, removed, added to, enlarged, or repaired, and to direct that any or all future buildings within such limits shall be constructed of stone, natural or artificial, concrete, brick, iron or other fireproof material; and may enact stringent and efficient laws for securing the safety of persons from fires in halls and buildings used for public assemblies, entertainments or amusements.

Nineteenth. To charge and to collect fees for permits to use public facilities and for public service and privileges. The said town shall have the power and right to charge a different rate for any service rendered or convenience furnished to citizens without the corporate limits from the rates charged for similar service to citizens within the corporate limits.

Twentieth. To prevent any person having no visible means of support, paupers, and persons who may be dangerous to the peace and safety of the town, from coming to said town from without the same; and also to expel therefrom any such person who has been in said town less than twelve months.

Twenty-first. To provide in or near the town, lands to be used as burial places for the dead; to improve and care for the same and the approaches thereto and to charge for and regulate the use of ground therein; and to provide for the perpetual upkeep and care of any plot or burial lot therein, the town is authorized to take and receive sums of money by gift, bequest, or otherwise to be kept invested, and the income thereof used in and

about the perpetual upkeep and care of the said lot or plot, for which the said donation, gift, or bequest shall have been made.

Twenty-second. To exercise full police powers and establish and maintain a department or division of police.

Twenty-third. To restrain and punish drunkards, vagrants and street beggars; to prevent and quell riots, disturbances and disorderly assemblages; to suppress houses of ill-fame and gambling houses; to prevent and punish lewd, indecent and disorderly exhibitions in said town; and to expel therefrom persons guilty of such conduct who have not resided therein as much as one year.

Twenty-fourth. To license and regulate the holding and location of shows, circuses, public exhibitions, carnivals and similar shows or fairs, or prohibit the holding of the same or any of them within the town or within one mile thereof; to require every owner of a motor vehicle residing in the said town, on a date to be designated by the council, to annually register such motor vehicle and obtain a license to operate same by making application to the treasurer of said town, or such other person as may be designated by the council of the town to issue said license, and to require said owner to pay an annual fee therefor, to be fixed by the council, but said license shall not exceed the amount charged by the State on said machine.

Twenty-fifth. To make and enforce ordinances, not in conflict with the laws of this State, to regulate, control license and/or tax the manufacture, bottling, sale, distribution, transportation, handling, advertising, possession, dispensing, drinking and use of alcohol, brandy, rum, whiskey, gin, wine, beer, lager beer, ale, porter, stout, and all liquids, beverages and articles containing alcohol obtained by distillation, fermentation or otherwise.

Twenty-sixth. To do all things whatsoever necessary or expedient and lawful to be done, for promoting or maintaining the general welfare, comfort, education, morals, peace, government, health, trade, commerce, or industries of the town; or its inhabitants.

Twenty-seventh. To prescribe any penalty for the violation of any town ordinance, rule, or regulation or of any provision of this charter, not exceeding five hundred dollars or twelve months' imprisonment in jail, or both.

Twenty-eighth. To prohibit and punish mischievous, wanton, or malicious damage to school and public property as well as private property.

Twenty-ninth. To prohibit and punish minors from frequenting, playing in or loitering in any public poolroom, billiard parlor, or tenpin alley, and to punish any proprietor or agent thereof for permitting same.

Thirtieth. To pass and enforce all bylaws, rules, regulations and ordinances which it may deem necessary for the good order and government of the town, the management of its property, the conduct of its affairs, the peace, comfort, convenience, order, morals, health and protection of its citizens or their property, and to do such other things and pass such other laws as may be necessary or proper to carry into full effect, all power, authority, capacity, or jurisdiction, which is or shall be granted to or vested in said town, or in the council or officers thereof, or which may be necessarily incident to a municipal corporation. (1934, c. 194; 1954, c. 12; 1956, c. 5; 1962, c. 334)

§ 4. Administration and government.

The administration and government of the town shall be vested in one principal officer styled the mayor and seven councilmen. The mayor and councilmen shall be

electors of said town to be chosen as hereinafter provided, from the residents and electors of the town, and whose qualifications to hold offices, respectively, shall be the same as required of persons to vote and hold office under the Constitution and laws of the State of Virginia. The mayor and councilmen shall constitute the council of said town. A vacancy in the office of mayor shall be filled within thirty days by the council, either from their own body, or, from the electors of the town, for the unexpired term, by a majority vote of the remaining members thereof. (1934, c. 194; 2008, c. 327)

§ 5. (1934, c. 194; 1972, c. 32; 1973, c. 146; repealed, 1992, c. 277)

§ 5A. Elections.

At the regular municipal election to be held on the first Tuesday in May 1992, seven council members and the mayor shall be elected in the following manner. The seven council members shall be elected from two election districts, known as Election District 1 and Election District 2. The boundaries of the two election districts shall be as enacted by the town council. Residents may cast votes only for council seats for the election district in which they reside. Candidates may seek election only to council seats for the election district in which they reside.

Three members of council shall be elected from Election District 1 and four members of council shall be elected from Election District 2. The two candidates receiving the greatest number of votes in Election District 1 shall be elected to four-year terms of office and the candidate receiving the third highest number of votes in Election District 1 shall be elected to a two-year term of office. The two candidates receiving the greatest number of votes in Election District 2 shall be elected to four-year terms of office and the candidates receiving the third and fourth highest number of votes in Election District 2 shall be elected to two-year terms of office.

At the regular municipal election to be held on the first Tuesday in May 1994, and every four years thereafter, the mayor, one council member from District 1 and two council members from District 2 shall be elected for a term of four years each. At the regular municipal election to be held on the first Tuesday in May 1996, and every four years thereafter, two council members from District 1 and two council members from District 2 shall be elected for a term of four years each.

The mayor and council members elected under this section shall enter upon the duties of their respective offices on July 1 succeeding their election. (1992, c. 277; 2008, c. 327)

§ 6. Town officers.

The officers of the said town, in addition to the mayor and councilmen, who shall be electors of the town, shall be a treasurer, a clerk, a sergeant and a deputy sergeant. The council may by ordinance provide for such other officers, agents, and employees as may be deemed appropriate by it, prescribe their place of residency (including place of residency of the clerk, sergeant and deputy sergeant), duties, and compensation, and provide for official bonds with surety thereon in proper amounts. The treasurer, clerk, sergeant, and deputy sergeant shall be elected by the council for a term of two years. The office of treasurer and clerk may be filled by the same person. (1934, c. 194; 1972, c. 32; 1985, c. 25; 2008, c. 327)

§ 7. Salaries.

The council shall fix the salary of the mayor, treasurer, clerk, sergeant, deputy sergeant, and such other officers, agents, and employees as it may deem appropriate at its

first meeting in September, which salary shall be for a period of one year, and shall not be increased or diminished during that time period. (1934, c. 194; 1972, c. 32; 1973, c. 146)

§ 8. Meetings of council.

The council shall by ordinance adopt such rules as it may deem proper for the regulation of its proceedings and by a three-fourths vote of the whole council may expel a member for good cause. A majority of the council shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, but no ordinance or resolution shall be adopted having for its object the levying of taxes or contracting a debt except by a vote of two-thirds of the council. The mayor shall preside at all meetings of the council, and in the absence or inability of the mayor, the president of the council shall preside over said meeting, which officer shall be the oldest member of the council in point of service. The mayor or presiding officer shall be entitled to vote on all questions coming before the council, but shall have no power of veto. (1934, c. 194)

§ 9. All meetings of the council shall be public, unless the council by a recorded affirmative vote of two-thirds of its members shall declare that the public welfare demands an executive session of the council; any citizen may have access to the minutes and records of the council at any reasonable times. (1934, c. 194)

§ 10. The mayor.

The mayor shall preside at the meetings of the council and perform such other duties consistent with his office as may be imposed by the council; he shall have and exercise all power and authority conferred by general law on mayors of towns not inconsistent with this charter; he shall be the official head of the town. In times of public danger or emergency, he may take command of the police and maintain order and enforce the laws and for this purpose may deputize such assistant policemen as may be necessary. During his absence or disability his duties shall be performed by another member elected by the council. He shall authenticate by his signature such documents and instruments as the council, this charter, or the laws of this State require. (1934, c. 194)

§ 11. The treasurer.

The town treasurer shall be the disbursing agent of the town and have the custody of all moneys and all evidences of value belonging to the town or held in trust by the town. He shall receive all money belonging to and received by the town and keep a correct account of all receipts from all sources and expenditures of all departments. He shall collect all taxes and assessments, water rents and other charges belonging to, and payable to, the town and for that purpose he is hereby vested with powers similar to those which are now or may hereafter be vested in county and State treasurers for the collection of county, city and State taxes under the general law; he shall keep and disburse all moneys or funds in such manner and in such places as may be determined by ordinance or the provisions of law applicable thereto. He shall pay no money out of the treasury except in the manner prescribed by ordinance or the general law; he shall perform such duties as are usually incident to the office of commissioner of revenue in relation to the assessment of property for town taxation and the town license taxes and shall have power to administer oaths in the performance of his official duties; and shall make such reports and perform such other duties not inconsistent with the office as may be required by the mayor or by ordinance or resolution of the council. The treasurer shall not be entitled to any commission for handling the funds of the town but shall be paid such salary as may

be provided by the council, and before entering upon the duties of his office shall execute a bond in such amount and with such security as the council by ordinance may prescribe. The town council may, in its discretion, and if it deems it necessary or convenient, appoint some person or persons from the electors of the town to assist the town treasurer in the collection of all taxes and assessments, water rents, and other charges belonging to and payable to the town, which person may be the town sergeant, or superintendent of water works, but before entering upon the discharge of duties, such person shall execute a bond in such amount and with such security as the council, by ordinance, may prescribe. (1934, c. 194)

§ 12. The town clerk.

The town clerk shall be the clerk of the council, shall attend all meetings thereof and shall keep a record of its proceedings. He shall keep all papers, documents and records pertaining to the town, the custody of which is not otherwise provided for. He shall be custodian of the town seal and shall affix it to all documents and instruments requiring the seal and shall attest the same, and shall perform such other duties as are required by general law or by the council by ordinance or resolution. (1934, c. 194)

§ 13. The town sergeant.

The town sergeant shall have the same powers and discharge the same duties as a constable within the corporate limits of the town and to a distance of one mile beyond the same; he shall perform such duties as may be required of town sergeants by the general law, and such other duties not inconsistent therewith as may be required of him by ordinance or resolution of the council. (1934, c. 194)

§ 14. Police justice.

The council may by ordinance create the office of police justice for the town and such police justice may be granted jurisdiction and powers similar to the jurisdiction and powers of police justices in cities of this State. The term of office of such police justice shall not be for a term extending beyond that of the council by which he may be appointed. (1934, c. 194)

§ 15. License taxes.

License taxes may be imposed by ordinance on business, trades, professions and callings and upon the persons, firms, associations and corporations engaged therein, except in cases where taxation by the localities is now or may hereafter be prohibited by the general law of the State.

For every town license issued under this charter, there shall be charged a fee to be prescribed by ordinance, not in excess of seventy-five cents, and for transferring a license the fee shall be fifty cents, such fees to be paid by the person obtaining the license or transfer, and the license or transfer may be withheld until the fees are paid into the town treasury for town purposes. (1934, c. 194)

§ 16. Fees.

The council may by ordinance provide that all fees collected by the officers of the town shall be paid into the general fund of the town treasury, and that such officers receiving such fees shall be paid a salary, which salary is to be in lieu and stead of all fees. (1934, c. 194)

§ 17. Capitation tax.

In addition to the general power of taxation herein granted, the council may impose a tax of not exceeding one dollar per annum upon all residents of the town who

have attained the age of twenty-one years, except such persons as may be exempt by law. (1934, c. 194)

§ 18. Tax lien on real estate.

A lien shall exist on all real estate within the corporate limits for taxes, levies and assessments in favor of the town assessed thereon from the commencement of the year for which the same were assessed and the procedure for collecting said taxes, for selling real estate for town taxes and for the redemption of real estate sold for town taxes shall be the same as provided in the general law of the State to the same extent as if the provisions of said general law were herein set out at length. The said town and its treasurer shall have the benefit of all other and additional remedies for the collection of town taxes which are now or hereafter may be granted or permitted under the general law. (1934, c. 194)

§ 19. Ordinance to continue in force.

All ordinances now in force in the Town of Lawrenceville, not inconsistent with this charter, shall be and remain in force until altered, amended or repealed by the council of said town. (1934, c. 194)

§ 20. Partial invalidity.

If any clause, sentence, paragraph, or part of this act, shall for any reason be adjudged by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgment shall not affect, impair or invalidate the remainder of said act, but shall be confined in its operations to the clause, sentence, paragraph, or part thereof directly involved in the controversy in which said judgment shall have been rendered. (1934, c. 194)

§ 21. Repealing clause.

All acts and parts of acts in conflict with this charter, insofar as they affect the provisions of this charter, and all former charters and amendments thereto for the Town of Lawrence, are hereby repealed. (1934, c. 194)

§ 22. Validation of contracts.

All contracts and obligations heretofore or hereafter made by the present council and government of the Town of Lawrenceville while in office, not inconsistent with this charter or the Constitution and general laws of this State, shall be, and are hereby declared to be valid and legal. (1934, c. 194)