

Summary of Key Acts and Milestones

1. *Contents of the Circuit Court order.* The Circuit Court orders a special election, in accordance with Virginia Code § 24.2-681 *et seq.*, which requires, among other things, that the County's election officers on the day fixed in the order to open the polls. *Virginia Code § 15.2-2610.* The Court also prescribes the minimum notice of the referendum to be published (at least once, at least 10 days prior to the election). *Virginia Code § 15.2-2610.* The Circuit Court's order states the question to appear on the ballot in plain English. *Virginia Code § 24.2-684.* "Plain English" means written in nontechnical, readily understandable language using words of common everyday usage and avoiding legal terms and phrases or other terms and words of art whose usage or special meaning primarily is limited to a particular field or profession. *Virginia Code § 24.2-687(A).*
2. *Deadline for the Circuit Court's order to be entered.* The Circuit Court's order must be entered at least 81 days prior to the date of the election. *Virginia Code § 24.2-682.* In order for the referendum to be on the November 8, 2016 ballot, the Circuit Court's order must be entered by August 19, 2016.
3. *Copy of order sent to the State Board of Elections.* When the Circuit Court's order is entered, a copy of it must be sent immediately to the State Board of Elections by the Clerk of the Circuit Court. *Virginia Code § 24.2-684.*
4. *Written explanation of the bond referendum.* The County must provide a written explanation of the bond referendum. *Virginia Code § 24.2-687(A).* The explanation must contain the ballot question and a statement of not more than 500 words on the proposed question. The explanation must: (i) state the estimated maximum amount of the bonds proposed to be issued; and (ii) state the proposed use of the bond proceeds, and if there is more than one use, state the proposed uses for which more than 10 percent of the total bond proceeds is expected to be used. *Virginia Code § 24.2-687(A).* The explanation must be prepared by the County Attorney and be presented in Plain English (explained in section 1, above), is limited to a neutral explanation, and may not present arguments by either proponents or opponents of the proposal. *Virginia Code § 24.2-687(A).* The Board of Supervisors may have the explanation published by paid advertisement in a newspaper of general circulation. *Virginia Code § 24.2-687.*
5. *Other neutral materials or advertisements pertaining to the bond referendum.* In addition to the 500 hundred word explanation, the County may disseminate other neutral materials or advertisements concerning the bond referendum. The materials or advertisements shall not advocate the passage or defeat of the referendum question. *Virginia Code § 24.2-687(B).*
6. The ballot is prepared by the County's Electoral Board, which states the question submitted, and provides for a "Yes/No" answer. *Virginia Code § 24.2-684.*
7. Notice of the election is published in the form prescribed by the Circuit Court at least once, not less than 10 days before the election in a newspaper of general circulation. *Virginia Code § 15.2-2610.*
8. The 500 word explanation may be distributed at the polling places on the day of the referendum election. *Virginia Code § 24.2-687(A).*
9. If a majority of the voters approve the bond issue, the Circuit Court must enter an order to such effect, a copy of which shall be promptly certified by the Clerk of the Court to the Board of Supervisors. *Virginia Code § 15.2-2611.*