Examination of Arlington's County Board Structure and Performance

The Arlington County Board directs the following actions to provide the Board with foundational information to assess how to proceed, including whether to craft a charge for an advisory panel, to examine Arlington's County Board structure and performance.

The County Manager shall:

1. Implement Arlington's next research-based Community Satisfaction Survey in the Spring 2026, with Board review of planned questions.
2. Identify sufficient resources to ensure that all the actions in this motion are completed in a timely manner.

The County Attorney shall:

Complete legal research and provide a written report, readable to a lay audience, that summarizes:

1. Arlington's current form of government under Virginia law and government structures used in other counties and cities;
2. The current process by which Virginia's jurisdictions with populations above 150,000, including Arlington, can legally change their own structure (i.e. number of seats, districts v. at-large, timing of elections, election of chair);
3. Any impact on the structure and authorities of the Arlington School Board and Constitutional Offices that would result from taking any of the actions above; and
4. Any change in governmental authorities and liabilities that would result from Arlington changing from a county to a city.

The County Board Clerk shall:

1. Provide general information and an interest form on the CBO website, via Arlington Government email listserv, in social media, and directly to the standing Advisory Boards and Commissions; and
2. Engage a non-partisan external Research Partner(s) (RP) to analyze the history of the current Arlington government structure and civic engagement. The Clerk of the County Board will identify, no later than March 15, the financial resources and procurement process to support this external research.

The Research Partner(s) shall analyze and report on:

1. **Historical Background Report:** to analyze the history of the current Arlington government structure and how that shapes Arlington's governance and public participation today.
2. **Feedback Evaluation:** to review and summarize community feedback received to date and recommend future community engagement methods and questions.
3. **Identify Key Concepts & Questions:** to consider in future efforts.

The County Board shall:

1. Engage the Arlington School Board as a key partner and the Arlington Electoral Board as an advisor;
2. Consider the foundational information gathered in these activities to assess how to proceed, including whether to craft a charge for an advisory panel to examine Arlington's County Board structure and performance;
3. Report back publicly in July 2026 at the Recessed Meeting of the County Board; and
4. Designate Board Members Spain and Cunningham as County Board Liaisons.

Adopted Dec. 17, 2025

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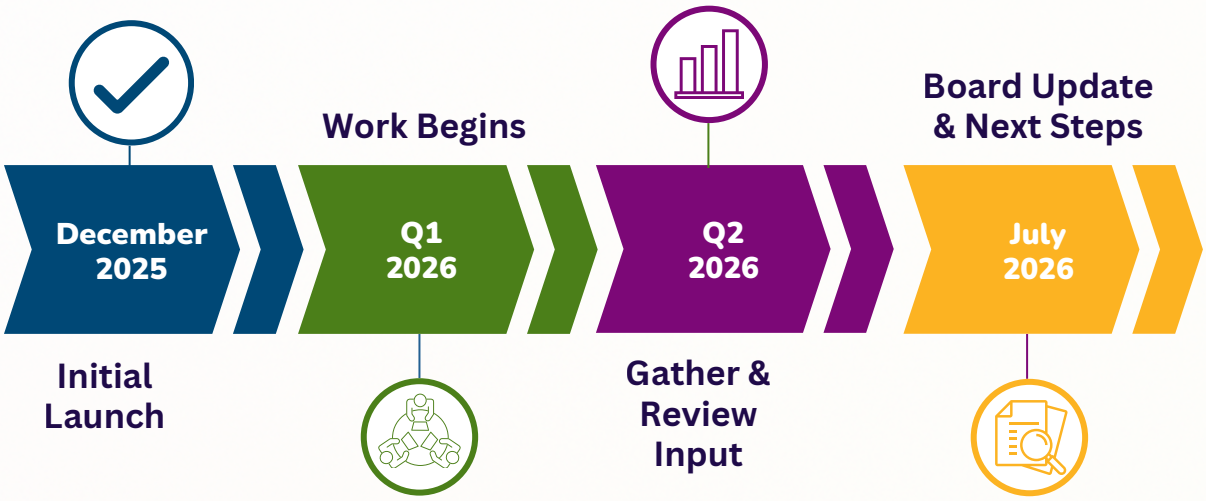

December 2025	**Initial Launch.** The County Board commits to initial efforts to examine the County Board structure and performance.
Q1 2026	**Work Begins.** The Board Office will share information with the public and advisory groups on this effort. The Board Clerk will identify, by March 15, the financial resources and procurement process to support external research. The County Attorney's Office will begin relevant legal research. The Board will engage with School Board and Electoral Board members.
Q2 2026	**Gather and Review Input.** The County Manager will implement the Community Satisfaction Survey, with Board review of planned questions. External Research Update (on Historical Background, Feedback Evaluation, and Key Concepts and Questions). The Board will review and consider information gathered up until this point.
July 2026	**Board Update and Next Steps.** The Board will report back publicly on its progress at the July 2026 Recessed meeting and determine next steps.