

West Virginia Municipal Home Rule Program

Application of the Town of Romney

January 7, 2026

West Virginia Municipal Home Rule Program
2025 Application of the Town of Romney

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Section I: Applicant Information

A. General Information

Name of Municipality:	Town of Romney
Certifying Official:	Beverly Keadle, Mayor
Contact Person:	Beverly Keadle
Address:	340 E. Main Street
City, State, Zip:	Romney, WV 26757
Telephone:	304-822-5118
Email Address:	bkeadle@townofromney.org
2020 Census Pop.:	1,722

Romney Town Council

Robin Pancake
Lisa Hileman
Paula O'Brien
Duncan Hott
Stacie Land

Municipal Classification - Class IV

B. Categories of Issues to Be Addressed

[ ] Tax [x] Organization [x] Administrative [_] Personnel [x] Other

Executive Summary

Town of Romney – 2026 Municipal Home Rule Amendment Application

The Town of Romney submits this amendment to its approved Municipal Home Rule plan as part of its continued commitment to smart, responsive, and sustainable local government. Since gaining initial Home Rule authority in 2022, Romney has worked steadily to implement the tools granted under that framework—including the successful deployment of on-the-spot citation authority for code enforcement, our integration of a rental registry with our property maintenance program, and successful market-value sales of municipal property. The on-the-spot citation authority alone has reduced response times, improved compliance rates, and empowered the Town's small staff to manage chronic nuisance issues more efficiently and fairly. The lessons learned over the last three years have shaped this new application, which proposes four additional components that build on Romney's experience and meet the evolving needs of our growing community.

Romney's approach to Home Rule remains defined by a deep commitment to responsible governance and careful resource management. As a Class IV municipality with limited staffing, the Town's Home Rule implementation strategies have been designed to complement—not overwhelm—existing administrative workflows. This model has proven successful. In fact, for the first time in four decades, Romney has experienced 18 consecutive months of population and economic growth, with new homes, small businesses, and community investments taking root across town. With these changes come new challenges—and new opportunities—that require practical, streamlined tools to sustain this momentum.

This amendment requests four additions to the Town's Home Rule authority. First, Romney seeks the ability to issue and enforce administrative citations through its Municipal Judge. While the Town's initial ordinance granted field-level citation authority, the next step is ensuring that unpaid fines can be properly recorded, judgments can be certified locally, and enforcement actions—such as dangerous structure abatement—can proceed without needing to rely on external courts. By keeping this process in-house, the Town can close the loop on its enforcement process while preserving due process and judicial oversight.

Second, Romney proposes a graduated property tax rebate ordinance to support substantial new construction and significant rehabilitation. This tool will encourage private investment by offering a five-year, declining rebate on the Town's portion of property taxes associated with improvements above a defined value threshold. Unlike abatement programs that risk revenue losses or lengthy approval processes, Romney's model allows taxes to be collected in full and returned proportionately over time—tying incentives to verified results. This approach, though novel among West Virginia municipalities, draws inspiration from successful practices elsewhere and reflects Romney's intent to deliver measurable results without compromising fiscal stability.

Third, the Town seeks to modernize its business licensing framework by replacing the outdated category-based licensing system with a simplified flat-rate model. Under current state law, business license classifications are based on legacy occupational categories that are difficult to administer and often ambiguous for applicants. Romney's new ordinance consolidates license types, establishes clear fees, and creates a dedicated vendor permitting process to account for short-term and seasonal commerce. The ordinance also aligns alcohol licensing with WVABCA classifications, providing clarity and ease of compliance for local businesses. This reform is based on the Town's experience with previous

implementation and reflects successful Home Rule licensing programs in communities such as Wardensville and Fairmont.

Finally, the Town proposes a fire insurance lien ordinance to expand its ability to address both total and partially damaged structures. Modeled in part after similar tools adopted by Fairmont and Clarksburg, the ordinance allows the Town to claim a limited portion of fire insurance proceeds if a structure remains unremediated for more than 90 days. The Town has experienced multiple instances in which fires have left buildings unsafe or vacant for years, with no timely repairs made despite insurance payouts. This ordinance will enable the Town to recover abatement costs or compel repairs before deterioration becomes irreversible, protecting neighborhood integrity and public safety.

Together, these four proposals represent a thoughtful extension of Romney's Home Rule authority—rooted in experience, responsive to emerging needs, and carefully tailored to the Town's staffing, budget, and operational capacity. Each ordinance has been developed in direct response to identified gaps in the Town's ability to serve its residents effectively and efficiently. By customizing its implementation strategy and preserving fiscal responsibility, Romney hopes to demonstrate that even the smallest municipalities can innovate in ways that deliver real results.

This amendment hopes to provide an enhancement of tools that have already proven effective. Romney remains deeply committed to responsible stewardship of public authority, and to building a flexible, forward-thinking municipal government that is equipped to support the residents, businesses, and neighborhoods that are choosing to grow here again.

1. Issue: Enforcement of Judgements, Liens, and Warrants by Municipal Judge

Issue Category: Administrative / Other – Judicial Efficiency

Overview:
The Town of Romney seeks authority to enforce administrative liens and unpaid fines through its Municipal Judge, to streamline code enforcement and ensure recovery of public costs. Under current state law, municipal courts have limited capacity to convert unpaid fines or abatement costs into liens or enforceable civil judgments. This limits the Town's ability to ensure compliance with nuisance abatement actions, dangerous structure removals, and other code enforcement penalties. By enacting a comprehensive ordinance under Home Rule, Romney proposes to formalize the Municipal Judge's authority to (1) certify liens, (2) issue monetary judgments for unpaid fines, and (3) ensure enforceable recordation in the county courthouse.

Legal Barrier:
West Virginia Code § 8-10-2 limits municipal courts to adjudicating ordinance violations and imposing fines, but lacks clear provisions for enforcement of unpaid fines through liens or civil judgment procedures without initiating an entirely separate civil action in magistrate or circuit court. Additionally, W. Va. Code § 8-12-16 allows municipalities to recover the cost of dangerous structure abatements, but provides no

explicit enforcement mechanism for unpaid charges other than pursuing a lien in circuit court, a process that is resource-intensive and inaccessible for smaller cities.

Problem Caused:
First, when the Town abates a nuisance or demolishes a dangerous structure under W. Va. Code § 8-12-16, the property owner is invoiced for the cost of abatement. In the event of nonpayment, current law offers only limited tools—typically requiring initiation of a separate action in Circuit Court to docket the cost as a lien. This creates delays, legal expenses, and imposes disproportionate burden on municipal staff and budgets.

Second, when a resident is fined by municipal court—for example, for repeated code violations or violations of fire code, housing standards, or zoning—the unpaid amount may remain outstanding for months or years. Without the ability to convert these unpaid fines into enforceable monetary judgments or liens, violators frequently disregard penalties, eroding public respect for Town enforcement actions.

Finally, failure to efficiently enforce fines and cost assessments creates fiscal strain on the Town. Without a dependable mechanism for securing payment, particularly where multiple nuisance properties are involved, Romney must shift enforcement costs to the general fund, reducing available resources for core services such as fire protection and public infrastructure.

Proposed Solution:
The Town of Romney seeks Home Rule approval for its Municipal Judge to convert unpaid fines and abatement costs into civil judgments and recordable liens, in accordance with the procedures outlined in the "Romney Municipal Judge Ordinance." This authority would enable the following key functions:

Judgment Entry for Unpaid Fines: After 30 days without payment, the Municipal Judge may enter a Civil Monetary Judgment, which includes the fine, administrative costs, and lawful interest. This process complies with W. Va. Code § 8-10-2b, which permits the use of municipal court orders for judgment enforcement and driver's license suspension where appropriate.

Cost Assessment and Liens: When the Town abates a nuisance, removes a dangerous structure, or performs other corrective actions under § 8-12-16(g), the costs will be documented and submitted to the Municipal Court. The Judge shall review and, if deemed reasonable, approve a cost order. If unpaid, a lien may then be issued and recorded with the Hampshire County Clerk.

Due Process and Notice: Before any lien is recorded, notice is sent to the owner and known lienholders, with an opportunity to contest the amount or validity of the charge. A formal hearing is held before the Judge if objections arise. Upon determination, a certified Lien Order may be entered and recorded against the property.

Appeals and Safeguards: All adverse judgments or liens may be appealed by the property owner to the Circuit Court under the procedures of W. Va. Code § 8-10-2 and § 8-12-16(k). The ordinance includes full due process protections, including required notice, right to hearing, and judicial oversight. The ordinance also preserves supplemental administrative appeal procedures.

Lien Priority and Release: Once recorded, liens under this ordinance will have the same priority as municipal tax liens, protecting the Town's position in the event of foreclosure or sale. Upon payment, a formal Satisfaction and Release is recorded.

This system balances judicial due process and administrative efficiency, and mirrors mechanisms already approved in other Home Rule cities.

Some Comparable Home Rule Precedents include the following:
Romney (2022): Romney's Dangerous Structures Ordinance authorizes its Municipal Judge to issue citations and certify liens and judgments after unsafe structures are abated and invoices remain unpaid. Martinsburg and Clarksburg utilize home rule authority for lien and fine enforcement by municipal court under similar provisions. Fairmont (2021) likewise incorporated expanded municipal court functions into its Home Rule application for civil judgment enforcement in code matters.

In Conclusion, the proposed Municipal Judge ordinance allows the Town of Romney to recover enforcement costs, deter noncompliance, and protect public safety. It ensures parity with larger Home Rule municipalities while preserving full procedural safeguards.

Attachments:

- Romney Municipal Judge Ordinance

2. Issue: Graduated Municipal Property Tax Rebate for New Construction and Substantial Renovation

Issue Category: Other - Economic Development

Overview:
The Town of Romney seeks to implement an innovative, locally administered property tax rebate program designed to encourage new construction and substantial rehabilitation of both residential and commercial properties. This initiative—authorized through the Town's Home Rule authority—establishes a 5-year, graduated rebate schedule that returns a declining percentage of the Town's municipal property tax increment to qualifying property owners. The program is structured to apply only to the Town's share of property taxes and does not affect the assessments, rates, or collections of the County or other taxing entities.

The rebate is calculated solely on the incremental assessed value resulting from a qualifying project—meaning only the increased value attributable to the improvement is eligible for rebate. In Year 1 of eligibility, the Town will rebate 100% of the tax on the improvement, with the percentage declining annually through Year 5. This design both incentivizes property investment and allows the Town to gradually benefit from the improved tax base. Importantly, it provides stable long-term fiscal planning, as the base value remains unaffected and the Town retains the full tax benefit after the incentive period ends.

Legal Barrier:
Under the common law doctrine of Dillon's Rule, which governs municipal powers in West Virginia, a city or town cannot implement tax-related policies—including rebates, exemptions, or reallocation of revenues—unless specifically authorized by state statute. The relevant limitation arises from the general rule established in *State ex rel. City of Charleston v. Coghill*, 156 W. Va. 877 (1973), which confirms that municipal taxing and revenue powers must be expressly granted or necessarily implied by statute.

W. Va. Code § 8-13-1 et seq. permits municipalities to impose property taxes, but no statutory provision exists that allows a city to independently issue a rebate or refund of property tax revenue based on new construction or renovation without express state authority. Nor do current provisions of the West Virginia Tax Increment Financing Act (W. Va. Code § 7-11B-1 et seq.) allow municipalities to directly rebate incrementally collected municipal property taxes. Therefore, without Home Rule authorization, Romney may not implement this incentive.

Problem Caused by Legal Barrier:
The lack of authority to issue local property tax rebates creates a major competitive disadvantage for West Virginia towns like Romney. Neighboring states—including Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Ohio—authorize a wide variety of municipal-level tax incentives to promote new construction, business attraction, and infill redevelopment. West Virginia municipalities are left with limited tools, particularly in small towns without the resources or capacity to administer complex federal or state grant programs.

Romney has no active property tax incentive programs and no locally directed means of rewarding owners who significantly improve deteriorated properties. The Town has enjoyed some increased interest in construction and renovation within the Town after the successful implementation of its blight-addressing policies (also enabled by Home Rule authority), and many of these contractors and developers have indicated that they would have an increased willingness to invest further in the Town if more incentives for new construction were available. While being able to provide this incentive would be a direct answer to that request, the inability to create temporary relief or phase-in mechanisms can discourage reinvestment and slow the Town's effort to attract new housing or commercial activity.

Moreover, because the Town operates with limited staff, any incentive must be easily administered without significant ongoing overhead. The absence of a statutorily authorized program for local property tax rebates has prevented Romney from implementing such a tool, even when it could be a fiscally neutral or positive policy.

Proposed Solution:
The Town proposes to adopt an ordinance under W. Va. Code § 8-1-5a, which establishes a 5-year, graduated rebate on the municipal portion of property taxes for qualifying improvements. The program will apply to new buildings or substantial renovations (minimum $30,000 investment) that result in an increased assessed value. Importantly, the rebate applies only to the incremental assessed value—that is, the increase in taxable value above the pre-project base.

The rebate percentages are as follows:

- Year 1: 100% of the Town's tax on the increment rebated
- Year 2: 80%
- Year 3: 60%
- Year 4: 40%
- Year 5: 20%

After the fifth year, the full property tax applies.

An example of how this rebate will operate (taken directly from the ordinance) is as follows: If the Base Value of a residential property is $100,000 and the owner builds a new addition, raising the assessed value to $140,000, the Incremental Assessed Value is $40,000. Assuming the Town's municipal levy rate translates to $0.50 per $100 of assessed value (hypothetical rate), the Town's tax on the increment is $200 per year. In Year 1, 100% of that increment ($200) would be rebated; Year 2 rebate would be 80% ($160); Year 3 $120; Year 4 $80; Year 5 $40. These rebates would effectively reduce the owner's net tax cost attributable to the new improvement during the incentive period. (The owner continues to pay taxes on the Base Value normally throughout.)

This structure ensures:

- Equity: Owners receive relief based on actual new value, not arbitrary classifications.
- Sustainability: The Town continues to collect taxes on the base value throughout and benefits permanently from the improved assessment after five years.
- Clarity: The ordinance and associated agreement structure make the process administratively simple and budgetable.

This program is modeled in concept on residential improvement rebates in cities like Charleston, WV (PILOT phase-ins) and new construction abatement policies in Weirton's revitalization zones. However, to our knowledge, no other municipality in West Virginia has adopted a rebate system of this kind under Home Rule. Romney's ordinance is therefore both novel and scalable—a potential model for other towns seeking non-grant-based redevelopment tools.

Importantly, the ordinance provides protections against abuse, including revocation clauses, verification of investment thresholds, and a requirement that taxes be fully paid before any rebate is issued. The program is voluntary, taxpayer-neutral, and aligned with economic development goals outlined in Romney's comprehensive plan.

PROPOSAL # 2 WAS WITHDRAWN BY THE CITY on APRIL 29, 2026.

Attachments:

- Ordinance: "Romney Tax Rebate Ordinance – New Construction and Renovation"

3. Issue: Modernization of Business and Vendor License System

Issue Category: Administrative

Overview:

The Town of Romney seeks authority under W. Va. Code § 8-1-5a to modernize its business and vendor license fee structure by replacing its existing classification-based license system, which derives from various disparate sections of the West Virginia Code, with a simplified, flat-rate license schedule. The new framework enables greater clarity, fairness, and administrative efficiency, while preserving the

Town's ability to regulate all businesses operating within its limits. This reform, though estimated to produce slightly less revenue than the current system, will significantly reduce burdens on both licensees and Town staff and increase compliance among transient vendors and small operators.

Romney's current licensing system relies on a variable set of classifications with inconsistent fees, many of which are tied to outdated categories from W. Va. Code § 8-13-4 and § 8-13-7. These provisions were designed with larger municipalities in mind and include dozens of profession-specific categories with varying fees, such as $5 for attorneys, $200 for fortune tellers, and chair-based seating calculations for restaurants. Moreover, alcohol-related licenses require local mirroring of complex WVABCA classifications under W. Va. Code §§ 60-7-1 et seq., 60-8-1 et seq., and 11-16-1 et seq., which must be cross-referenced manually by applicants and Town staff alike.

Legal Barrier:
W. Va. Code § 8-13-4(a) and § 8-13-7 authorize municipalities to impose business and occupation license fees, but these statutes require cities to adhere to specific occupational categories and fee limitations, making it difficult to create a flexible, flat-fee model. Without Home Rule authority, a municipality cannot simplify or restructure its license schedule to consolidate categories, adopt a single uniform rate, or create alternative licensing processes for vendors.

Additionally, the statutory scheme offers no guidance on regulating short-term vendors separately from fixed-location businesses, leaving municipalities like Romney without the legal clarity or authority to issue daily or annual vendor permits tailored to event-based economic activity.

Problem Caused:
The current system results in inefficiency, confusion, and inconsistent application. Romney's staff must reference multiple sections of state code and manually interpret complex categories to determine applicable fees. This increases the likelihood of misclassification and imposes substantial staff time for even routine applications. Applicants, particularly those from small businesses or out-of-town vendors, find the system opaque and burdensome, leading to compliance issues and administrative delays.

Moreover, the rigid categories disadvantage new and non-traditional businesses, which do not easily align with the existing state-prescribed classifications. In practice, the Town has had to make case-by-case decisions, creating uneven application and lost time. Transient vendors have especially struggled to understand what type of local license is required and under what timeframe, resulting in last-minute filings and late payments.

Proposed Solution:
Romney proposes to adopt an ordinance under W. Va. Code § 8-1-5a that creates a simplified, Home Rule-authorized flat-rate license structure based on activity type and scope. Under this system, businesses fall into clearly defined categories—Standard Business, Contractor, Video Lottery, or Alcohol License Add-Ons—and pay a single rate per class. Vendors are separately categorized and issued either daily or annual permits, streamlining special event compliance.

Alcohol license classifications are clearly referenced using WVABCA definitions, which are cross-referenced in the ordinance and application form . This removes confusion about local and state overlap and reduces the need for staff interpretation.

The fee schedule—while slightly less revenue-generating than the legacy model—is transparent and predictable. As shown in the accompanying license fee revenue comparison, the new system is projected to generate $16,840 annually compared to $18,115.75 under the current structure, representing a projected reduction of $1,275.75. However, the savings in staff time, administrative oversight, and enforcement offset this marginal loss and allow the Town to better serve its licensees.

Additionally, the ordinance incorporates an appeal procedure, enforcement penalties, and forward-looking vendor provisions that clarify host and vendor responsibilities. These updates are modeled in part after similar business license reforms adopted by Wardensville under its 2019 Home Rule plan, and Fairmont's broader restructuring of license authority under its 2021 amendment.

PROPOSAL # 3 WAS AMENDED TO EXCLUDE WVABCA and WV LOTTERY LICENSEES AND THEN WAS APPROVED.

Attachments:

- Ordinance: "Romney Business and Vendor License Ordinance"
- Romney Business License Application
- Fee Comparison and Revenue Impact Statement

4. Issue: Insurance Proceeds Holdback for Fire-Damaged Properties

Issue Category: Administrative / Other – Insurance Regulation

Overview:

The Town of Romney seeks to improve its ability to address fire-damaged properties—both total and partial losses—by securing limited fire insurance proceeds for cleanup or demolition when an owner fails to act. The Town proposes to adopt an ordinance under its Home Rule authority enabling a municipal lien on a portion of fire insurance proceeds to fund abatement where property owners have not timely remediated fire-related damage. While state law allows limited claims on proceeds for total losses, the Town seeks broader and more practical enforcement tools through its Home Rule application.

Legal Barrier:

The legal basis for municipal liens on fire insurance proceeds is set forth in W. Va. Code § 33-17-9b and W. Va. Code §§ 38-10E-1 through 38-10E-2. These provisions limit municipal authority to instances where a fire results in a "total loss" of a structure. Furthermore, the statutes impose procedural requirements and monetary caps (10% of proceeds, up to $5,000) on the municipal lien. These statutes do not authorize municipalities to place liens on proceeds related to *partially damaged* structures—even when such properties are abandoned or left unrepaired for extended periods.

Problem Caused:

First, the limitations of W. Va. Code § 33-17-9b and § 38-10E-1 prevent the Town from taking proactive steps to ensure fire-damaged properties—particularly those not deemed a total loss—are timely remediated. This has led to numerous structures in Romney sitting vacant or in a state of disrepair for months or even years following minor fires. The Town currently lacks a mechanism to ensure that insurance funds are used for actual remediation, especially when an owner receives insurance proceeds but does not repair or demolish the property. These situations create health and safety risks, attract illegal activity, lower surrounding property values, and result in substantial Town expenditures.

Second, the requirement that an insurer notify the Town only in cases of total loss excludes the many incidents of partial damage where municipal interests are also significantly implicated. The absence of statutory authority to impose liens in such cases undermines public safety and frustrates municipal enforcement. Romney has seen several examples where property owners received substantial payouts yet made no repairs, and the Town was forced to initiate lengthy nuisance abatement proceedings at taxpayer expense.

Proposed Solution:
Under the Town's Home Rule authority (W. Va. Code § 8-1-5a), Romney proposes an ordinance that retains the procedural and monetary framework found in W. Va. Code § 38-10E-1 for total loss properties but expands it to include partially damaged structures that remain unremediated after a defined period (90 days). This approach is modeled in part after Fairmont and Clarksburg, which have enacted similar ordinances through Home Rule authorizations. The ordinance allows the Town to issue a Notice of Partial Loss Noncompliance if the structure is not repaired or secured within 90 days. The insurer is then required to withhold a portion of proceeds (up to the greater of $5,000 or 10%) until the Town issues a Certificate of Satisfactory Cleanup.

To ensure due process, the ordinance includes notice and appeal procedures. Owners may request a hearing before the Town Council within 15 days of receiving notice, and insurers must withhold proceeds until remediation is verified. The ordinance also permits direct disbursement of withheld proceeds to the Town if it incurs cleanup costs.

Furthermore, to address situations in which insurers fail to withhold funds in violation of the ordinance and state law, the ordinance includes an enforcement clause: if the insurer disburses funds prematurely and the property is not remediated, the insurer is civilly liable for the lien amount.

This framework provides a rational, balanced mechanism to ensure fire-damaged properties are cleaned up without expanding municipal powers beyond reasonable bounds. It incentivizes timely repairs by owners, secures public safety, and provides clarity for insurers.

Some Comparable Home Rule Precedents include the following:
Clarksburg adopted a Home Rule ordinance in 2017 creating an insurance proceeds holdback mechanism similar to the one proposed here, including for partially damaged structures; Fairmont used its Home Rule authority to establish an insurance lien process extending to situations where remediation is delayed; Moundsville adopted an ordinance under its Home Rule plan allowing lien enforcement against proceeds for both total and partial fire loss cases, streamlining its demolition funding process.

Attachments

- Ordinance: "Romney Fire Insurance Proceeds and Lien Enforcement Ordinance"

PROPOSAL #4, WITHDRAWN BY COUNSEL AND WAS NOT APPROVED.

TOWN OF ROMNEY

"First in West Virginia - Est. 1762"

340 E. Main Street
Romney, WV 26757

Main: 304-822-5118
Fax: 304-822-5793

Exhibit A – Affidavit of Mailing of Notice of Public Hearing (Mayor Beverly Keadle)

TOWN OF ROMNEY

"First in West Virginia - Est. 1762"

340 E. Main Street
Romney, WV 26757

Main: 304-822-5118
Fax: 304-822-5793

Affidavit of Mailing of Notice of Public Hearing

I, Beverly Keadle, being first duly sworn, state as follows:

1. I am the Mayor of the Town of Romney, West Virginia, and in that capacity am responsible for coordinating public notices and maintaining official records of the Town.
2. I am familiar with the requirements of W. Va. Code § 8-1-5a(g)(2) regarding notice of public hearing for municipal home rule plans and amendments.
3. On or about October 25, 2025 I caused a written Notice of Public Hearing regarding the Town of Romney's proposed 2025 Municipal Home Rule Amendment Application to be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, to:
   - The West Virginia Municipal Home Rule Board, and
   - The Cabinet Secretary of each executive department of state government, as listed on the notice attached hereto.
4. The Notice advised that the Romney Town Council would conduct a public hearing on the proposed Municipal Home Rule Amendment Application on December 2, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Council Chambers, 340 East Main Street, Romney, West Virginia, and that the proposed plan would be available for public inspection beginning November 1, 2025 in the Town offices and on the Town's website.
5. A true and correct copy of the Notice of Public Hearing that was mailed is attached hereto.
6. The foregoing statements are true to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief.

Beverly Keadle
Mayor, Town of Romney, West Virginia

NOTARY ACKNOWLEDGMENT

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA, COUNTY OF HAMPSHIRE, TO-WIT:

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this 5th day of December, 2025, by Beverly Keadle, Mayor of the Town of Romney, West Virginia.

Notary Public Destiny G. Hott

My commission expires: May 15, 2028

OFFICIAL SEAL
NOTARY PUBLIC
STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
Destiny G Hott
Town of Romney
340 E Main St. Romney, WV 26757
My Commission Expires May 15, 2028

TOWN OF ROMNEY
"First in West Virginia - Est. 1762"

340 E. Main Street
Romney, WV 26757

Main: 304-822-5118
Fax: 304-822-5793

Exhibit B – Certified-Mail Notice of Public Hearing to Municipal Home Rule Board and Cabinet Secretaries (with Department List and Cover Letter)

TOWN OF ROMNEY

"First in West Virginia - Est. 1762"

340 E. Main Street
Romney, WV 26757

Main: 304-822-5118
Fax: 304-822-5793

Date: _____, 2025
Certified Mail Notice of Public Hearing

To: West Virginia Municipal Home Rule Board
c/o Department of Revenue
State Capitol Complex, Building 1, Room W-100
Charleston, WV 25305

And to: Cabinet Secretary of Each State Department

Department	Cabinet Secretary	Mailing Address
Department of Administration	Eric Householder	1900 Kanawha Blvd. E., Building 1, Room E-119, Charleston, WV 25305
Department of Revenue	Eric Nelson	State Capitol, Building 1, Room W-300, Charleston, WV 25305
Department of Commerce	Matthew Herridge	State Capitol Complex, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. E., Charleston, WV 25305
Department of Transportation (Division of Highways)	Stephen Todd Rumbaugh	Building 5, 1900 Kanawha Blvd. E., Charleston, WV 25305)
Department of Tourism	Chelsea Ruby	1900 Kanawha Blvd. E., Charleston, WV 25305-0300
Department of Agriculture	Kent Leonhardt (Commissioner)	1900 Kanawha Blvd. E., State Capitol, Room E-28, Charleston, WV 25305-0170
Department of Environmental Protection	Harold D. Ward	601 57th Street SE, Charleston, WV 25304
Department of Veterans Assistance	Edward "Ryan" Kennedy)	1900 Kanawha Blvd., Building 5, Room 205, Charleston, WV 25301

Re: *Notice of Public Hearing on Amendment to Approved Municipal Home Rule Plan – Town of Romney*

Dear Secretaries and Members of the Board:

Pursuant to W. Va. Code § 8-1-5a(g)(2), the Town of Romney hereby provides certified-mail notice that the Town Council will conduct a public hearing to discuss the Town's proposed amendment to its previously approved Municipal Home Rule Plan.

The hearing, and final reading of an ordinance authorizing submission of the amendment to the Municipal Home Rule Board, will be held on December 2, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the Romney Town Hall, 340 East Main Street, Romney, West Virginia 26757.

A copy of the published Class II legal advertisement is enclosed. The proposed amendment is available for public inspection beginning November 1, 2025 at the Romney Town Hall during regular business hours.

Sincerely,

Beverly Keadle,
Mayor, Town of Romney
340 East Main Street Romney, WV 26757
Enclosure: Published Notice of Public Hearing

TOWN OF ROMNEY

"First in West Virginia - Est. 1762"

340 E. Main Street
Romney, WV 26757

Main: 304-822-5118
Fax: 304-822-5793

Exhibit C – Certificate of Publication and Class II Legal Advertisement – *Hampshire Review*

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
COUNTY OF HAMPSHIRE
TO WIT:

The Undersigned hereby certified that the Annexed notice was duly published in the HAMPSHIRE REVIEW, a weekly Newspaper published in said county, for 2 **consecutive weeks, commencing on the** 29th **day of** October, **20**25.

CORNWELL & AILES, INC.
PUBLISHERS

BY: Lana Bean

WORDS 390 **COST** $89.40

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
County of Hampshire, to wit:

I here certify that the said
Lana Bean
did prepare and sign in my presence this Certificate of Publication on this the 5th **day of** November, **20**25

My commission expires March 19, 2027.

Jennifer L See

Jennifer L. See

OFFICIAL SEAL
NOTARY PUBLIC
STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
Jennifer L. See
Hampshire Review
PO Box 1036
Romney, WV 26757
My Commission Expires March 19, 2027

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING & TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
TOWN OF ROMNEY MUNICIPAL HOME RULE PROGRAM – AMENDMENT TO APPROVED PLAN

Notice is hereby given by the Town Council of Romney, West Virginia, that it will conduct a public hearing to discuss the Town's proposed amendment to its previously approved Municipal Home Rule Plan.

Information from the hearing will be used by Council in preparation of its amendment submission to the West Virginia Municipal Home Rule Board, established under § 8-1-5a of the West Virginia Code, as amended.

The public hearing on the proposed amendment, and the final reading of an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to submit the amendment to the Municipal Home Rule Board, shall take place on December 2nd 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the Romney Town Hall, 340 East Main Street, Romney, West Virginia 26757.

Any interested party may appear before Council during the hearing to be heard with respect to the proposed amendment and ordinance.

The proposed Home Rule Plan Amendment for the Town of Romney will be available for public inspection beginning November 1st at Romney Town Hall during regularly posted business hours.

Written comments may be addressed to: Town of Romney, 340 East Main Street, Romney, WV 26757.

10/29-2c

TOWN OF ROMNEY

"First in West Virginia - Est. 1762"

340 E. Main Street
Romney, WV 26757

Main: 304-822-5118
Fax: 304-822-5793

Exhibit D – Notice of Public Hearing on Amendment to Approved Municipal Home Rule Plan (Clean Copy of Published Notice)

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING & TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
TOWN OF ROMNEY MUNICIPAL HOME RULE PROGRAM — AMENDMENT TO APPROVED PLAN

Notice is hereby given by the Town Council of Romney, West Virginia, that it will conduct a public hearing to discuss the Town's proposed amendment to its previously approved Municipal Home Rule Plan.

Information from the hearing will be used by Council in preparation of its amendment submission to the West Virginia Municipal Home Rule Board, established under § 8-1-5a of the West Virginia Code, as amended.

The public hearing on the proposed amendment, and the final reading of an ordinance authorizing the Mayor to submit the amendment to the Municipal Home Rule Board, shall take place on December 2nd 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the Romney Town Hall, 340 East Main Street, Romney, West Virginia 26757.

Any interested party may appear before Council during the hearing to be heard with respect to the proposed amendment and ordinance.

The proposed Home Rule Plan Amendment for the Town of Romney will be available for public inspection beginning November 1st at Romney Town Hall during regularly posted business hours.

Written comments may be addressed to: Town of Romney, 340 East Main Street, Romney, WV 26757.

TOWN OF ROMNEY

"First in West Virginia - Est. 1762"

340 E. Main Street
Romney, WV 26757

Main: 304-822-5118
Fax: 304-822-5793

Exhibit E – Minutes of December 2, 2025 Town Council Meeting and Municipal Home Rule Public Hearing

Town Council Meeting

Public Hearing

Tuesday, December 2, 2025

6:00 P.M.

Town Hall Council Chambers

340 East Main Street

You may join with internet or phone access. To join the meeting on your computer, use: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88640394769 Meeting ID: 886 4039 4769 To join by phone dial 1-301-7158592 Meeting ID: 886 4039 4769.

MINUTES

- Public hearing on Home Rule Application
  - Minutes: Hearing was called to Order by Mayor Keadle at 6:00 p.m.
- Public Comment:
  - (Comments limited to five (5) minutes. No deliberation or action by Council may occur or be taken.)
  - Minutes: There were no Public Comments.
- Meeting adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

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Exhibit F – "Home Rule Amendment Application Authorization Ordinance" (with Council Approval Page)

Ordinance No. 2025.##
Town of Romney
Home Rule Amendment Application Authorization Ordinance

An ORDINANCE pursuant to the provisions of W.Va. Code 8-1-5a, authorizing the Town of Romney to submit a written home rule proposal to the Municipal Home Rule Board in order to permit participation by Romney in the Municipal Home Rule Program.

Section 1: Authorization to Submit a Written Home Rule Proposal

WHEREAS, in 2007, the West Virginia Legislature enacted WV Code §8-1-5a, known as the Municipal Home Rule Pilot Program; and

WHEREAS, in 2022, the Town of Romney was accepted to participate in the Municipal Home Rule Program; and

WHEREAS, the continued participation in the Home Rule Program under an amended application by the Town of Romney, a Class IV municipality, would give the Town unique flexibility to apply local solutions to local problems, benefitting the greater community, including residents, visitors, and businesses.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED BY THE TOWN OF ROMNEY THAT
the Mayor is hereby authorized and directed to submit a home rule amendment proposal to the Municipal Home Rule Board on January 7, 2026, in accordance with WV Code §8-1-5a in order for the Town of Romney to be considered for amendment of its authorization under the Home Rule program.

Section 2: EFFECTIVE DATE
This ordinance shall become effective upon passage after second reading.

1st Reading: November 10, 2025
Public Hearing: December 2, 2025
2nd and Final Reading: December 2, 2025

Attested: Susan E. Alkire

Recorder, Susan E. Alkire

Upon the motion duly made and seconded, the regular rules were suspended by the Town of Romney Council members and the above ordinance having been read a first and second was passed to be effective from this date.

As adopted this date ____ Day of December 2, 2025, by the vote of the Town Council of Romney, WV.

Members	1st Reading	2nd and Final Reading
Roy D. Knight, Councilman		Yes
Duncan Hott, Councilman		
Stacie Land, Councilwoman		Yes
Paula O'Brien, Councilwoman		yes
Lisa Hileman, Councilwoman		yes
Robin Pancake, Councilman		yes
Mayor Beverly Keadle		Yes

Approval with majority vote only.

Signed: Beverly C Keadle
Beverly Keadle, Mayor

Signed: Paula O'Brien
Paula O'Brien, Councilwoman

Signed: Robin Pancake
Robin Pancake, Councilman

Signed: _____
Duncan Hott, Councilman

Signed: Roy D Knight
Roy Knight, Councilman

Signed: Stacie Land
Stacie Land, Councilwoman

Signed: Lisa Hileman
Lisa Hileman, Councilwoman

Date: December 2, 2025

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Exhibit G – Fee Comparison and Financial Impact Statement – Business License and Vendor Permit Ordinance

Town of Romney
Fee Comparison and Financial Impact Statement
(Business License and Vendor Permit Ordinance)

Purpose and Overview

The Town of Romney's updated Business License and Vendor Permit Ordinance simplifies and modernizes the Town's license fee structure. The revised system consolidates over twenty (more not shown on this table) disparate professional classifications into a clear, flat-rate structure that is easier for both businesses and the Town to administer. This modernization is expected to marginally reduce overall annual revenue while increasing compliance, transparency, and administrative efficiency.

Financial Impact Summary

Under the previous variable-rate licensing system, total estimated annual revenues averaged $18,115.75. The proposed flat-rate structure projects $16,840 in annual revenue, a reduction of $1,275.75 (7%). However, this modest revenue difference is offset by decreased staff time, reduced misclassification errors, and improved vendor compliance—creating a net administrative benefit.

The new framework aligns local business categories with WVABCA standards, distinguishes between permanent and transient vendors, and creates predictable cost structures for small enterprises. The Town anticipates improved compliance among event vendors and faster processing times for renewals, resulting in both operational and economic advantages.

Current Variable-Rate License Categories (FY24)

Category	Fee
Attorney	$5
Auctioneer	$15
Billiard Hall	$25 + $15/table
Contractor	$150
Dentist	$20
Engineer	$30
Fortune Teller	$200
Funeral Establishment	$75
Insurance Company	$50
Landscape Architect	$50
Land Surveyor	$20
Non-resident Junk Dealer	$150
Insurance Agency	$50
Physical Therapist	$35
Real Estate Broker	$50
Restaurant	$2 per 5 chairs
Video Lottery	$200
Other	$15
Beer Distributor	$150
Beer Dispenser	$100
Wine Distributor	$150
Wine Retailer	$150
Private Club (Fraternal)	$375
Private Club (Other)	$375
Retail Liquor A-B	$1000
Total	$18,115.75

Proposed Flat-Rate Licenses (FY26)

Category	Fee
Standard License	$45
Contractor License	$75
Video Lottery License	$200
Vendor (Annual)	$45
Vendor (Daily)	$15
Beer Distributor	$150
Beer Dispenser	$100
Wine Distributor	$150
Wine Retailer	$150
Private Club (Fraternal)	$375
Private Club (Other)	$375
Retail Liquor A-B	$1000
Estimated Revenue	**$16,840.00**
Difference from FY24	**($1,275.75)**

Administrative Efficiency

The previous system relied on outdated occupational classifications (e.g., attorneys, auctioneers, engineers) with inconsistent fees ranging from $5 to $200 and complex seat-based restaurant calculations. The new model replaces these categories with four primary license types and two vendor permits, reducing administrative interpretation and simplifying enforcement.

Fee Structure Comparison

The following tables compare the Town's current variable-rate business license categories (FY24) with the new flat-rate schedule (FY26). The revised structure eliminates more than twenty profession-specific categories in favor of five simplified license types, improving equity and efficiency.

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Exhibit H – West Virginia Tax Division Letter of Good Standing (Effective October 31, 2025)

Taxpayer Services Division
P.O. Box 3784
Charleston, WV 25337-3784

WEST VIRGINIA
TAX DIVISION

Matthew R. Irby, Tax Commissioner

Letter ID: L0443590048
Issued: 10/31/2025

TOWN OF ROMNEY
340 E MAIN ST
ROMNEY WV 26757-1822

West Virginia Tax Division

Letter of Good Standing

EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/31/2025

A review of tax accounts indicates that TOWN OF ROMNEY is in good standing as of the effective date of this document.

Please note, this Letter of Good Standing expires on **January 29, 2026.**

The issuance of this Letter of Good Standing shall not bar any audits, investigations, assessments, refund or credits with respect to the taxpayer named above and is based only on a review of the tax returns and not on a physical audit of records.

Sincerely,

Nicole Grant

Nicole Grant, Tax Unit Supervisor
Taxpayer Services Division

atL103 v.41

TOWN OF ROMNEY

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Exhibit I – Affidavit of No Outstanding State Fees

TOWN OF ROMNEY

"First in West Virginia - Est. 1762"

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Romney, WV 26757

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Fax: 304-822-5793

Affidavit of No Outstanding State Fees

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
COUNTY OF HAMPSHIRE

I, Beverly Keadle, being first duly sworn, state as follows:

1. I am the Mayor of the Town of Romney, West Virginia. In that role, I am familiar with the Town's financial records and its payment history with respect to state taxes, fees, and assessments.
2. I have reviewed the Town's financial records and relevant correspondence from the West Virginia State Tax Department and other state agencies.
3. Based upon my review of Town records, and my knowledge of the Town's financial affairs, it is my opinion that, as of the date of this Affidavit, the Town of Romney does not owe any outstanding state fees, taxes, or other obligations to the State of West Virginia or its agencies.
4. I make this Affidavit in support of the Town of Romney's 2025 Municipal Home Rule Amendment Application and to satisfy the requirement that the applicant municipality verify that it has no outstanding state fees.
5. The foregoing statements are true to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief.

Beverly Keadle
Mayor, Town of Romney, West Virginia

NOTARY ACKNOWLEDGMENT

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA, COUNTY OF HAMPSHIRE, TO-WIT:

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this 5th day of December, 2025, by Beverly Keadle, Mayor of the Town of Romney, West Virginia.

Notary Public Destiny G. Holt

My commission expires: May 15, 2028

OFFICIAL SEAL
NOTARY PUBLIC
STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
Destiny G Holt
Town of Romney
340 E Main St. Romney, WV 26757
My Commission Expires May 15, 2028

TOWN OF ROMNEY

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Exhibit J – Affidavit and Fiscal Statement Regarding Home Rule Amendment Components

TOWN OF ROMNEY

"First in West Virginia - Est. 1762"

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Main: 304-822-5118
Fax: 304-822-5793

Affidavit and Fiscal Statement Regarding Home Rule Amendment Components

I, Beverly Keadle, being first duly sworn, state as follows:

1. I am the Mayor of the Town of Romney, West Virginia, and I am familiar with the Town's budget, staffing, and day-to-day operations.
2. I have reviewed the Town of Romney's 2025 Municipal Home Rule Amendment Application, including the four proposed ordinances:
   - Municipal Judge Enforcement and Lien/Judgment Authority Ordinance;
   - New Construction and Renovation Tax Rebate Ordinance;
   - Business License and Vendor Permit Ordinance; and
   - Fire Insurance Proceeds and Lien Enforcement Ordinance.
3. Based on my review, the Town reasonably expects that:
   a. The Municipal Judge ordinance will be implemented using the existing Municipal Court structure and current staff. It is intended to improve cost recovery for nuisance abatement and unpaid fines and to reduce the need for separate circuit-court actions.
   b. The Business License and Vendor Permit ordinance is projected to reduce annual license revenues modestly—from approximately $18,115.75 to $16,840.00, a decrease of about $1,275.75 (7%), as shown in the attached Fee Comparison and Financial Impact Statement, but will reduce staff time and administrative burden by simplifying classifications and improving vendor compliance.
   c. The New Construction and Renovation Tax Rebate ordinance will affect only the Town's municipal share of property taxes on the incremental assessed value of qualifying projects, on a declining five-year schedule. The Town expects any short-term reduction in incremental revenue to be offset by long-term growth of the tax base once the rebate period ends, and the program will be administered within existing staffing.
   d. The Fire Insurance Proceeds ordinance is designed to recover demolition and cleanup costs from insurance proceeds where owners fail to remediate fire-damaged properties, and is expected to reduce net expenditures related to nuisance abatement rather than increase them.
4. None of these components require an increase in the Town's general fund levy, the creation of new permanent staff positions, or the issuance of new long-term debt. They are intended to be cost-neutral or cost-saving in the aggregate and to improve the Town's ability to manage existing obligations.
5. Accordingly, it is my opinion that the Town of Romney has the ability to manage the costs and liabilities associated with the proposed Home Rule amendment components and can implement them within its current fiscal capacity.
6. The foregoing statements are true to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief.
   DATED this 5th day of December, 2025.

Beverly C Keadle

Beverly Keadle
Mayor, Town of Romney, West Virginia

NOTARY ACKNOWLEDGMENT
STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA, COUNTY OF HAMPSHIRE, TO-WIT:
The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this 5th day of December, 2025, by Beverly Keadle, Mayor of the Town of Romney, West Virginia.

Notary Public Destiny G. Holt

My commission expires: May 15, 2028

OFFICIAL SEAL
NOTARY PUBLIC
STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
Destiny G Holt
Town of Romney
340 E Main St. Romney, WV 26757
My Commission Expires May 15, 2028

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Exhibit K – Attorney Opinion Letter Regarding Compliance of the Town of Romney 2025 Home Rule Amendment (J. Logan Mantz)

CAPON BRIDGE LEGAL PLLC
PO Box 32 · Capon Bridge, WV

Attorney Opinion – Town of Romney Home Rule Amendment

December 1, 2025
West Virginia Municipal Home Rule Board
West Virginia Development Office
West Virginia Department of Commerce
Capitol Complex, Building 6, Room 525
Charleston, WV 25305-0311

Re: Application of the Town of Romney – 2025 Amendment to Home Rule Plan

Dear Home Rule Board Members,

I serve as the municipal attorney for the Town of Romney. At the request of the Town Council, I have reviewed the 2025 Home Rule Amendment Application in its entirety, including the four proposed ordinances regarding fire insurance lien authority, municipal court lien enforcement, consolidated business/vendor licensing, and targeted tax rebates for new construction / renovation.

I have further reviewed applicable sections of the West Virginia Code, including W. Va. Code § 8-1-5a and referenced provisions such as §§ 33-17-9b, 38-10E-1, and 8-13-4. The ordinances proposed by the Town are, in my legal opinion, consistent with Home Rule authority and properly structured to avoid conflict with general state law or constitutional provisions. The Town's proposed business and vendor license ordinance, in particular, resolves significant compliance burdens by replacing statutory cross-referencing with a defined local licensing schedule, while maintaining fee integrity and regulatory alignment.

Based on my review, I affirm that the Town of Romney's application meets all statutory requirements, has been lawfully adopted through ordinance and public hearing, and is appropriate for review and consideration by the Municipal Home Rule Board.

J. Logan Mantz
WV Bar ID 13901
lmantz@caponbridgelegal.com
Counsel for the Town of Romney

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Romney, WV 26757

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Exhibit L – Ordinance: "Ordinance Streamlining Judicial Enforcement and Remediation of Unsafe Structures and Nuisances, and Authorizing Municipal-Court Judgments and Liens"