

**SUBCHAPTER III. BUDGETS AND FISCAL CONTROL.**

Article 3.

The Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act.

Part 1. Budgets.

**§ 159-7. Short title; definitions; local acts superseded.**

- (a) This Article may be cited as "The Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act."
- (b) The words and phrases defined in this section have the meanings indicated when used in this Article, unless the context clearly requires another meaning.
  - (1) "Budget" is a proposed plan for raising and spending money for specified programs, functions, activities or objectives during a fiscal year.
  - (2) "Budget ordinance" is the ordinance that levies taxes and appropriates revenues for specified purposes, functions, activities, or objectives during a fiscal year.
  - (3) "Budget year" is the fiscal year for which a budget is proposed or a budget ordinance is adopted.
  - (4) "Debt service" is the sum of money required to pay installments of principal and interest on bonds, notes, and other evidences of debt accruing within a fiscal year, to maintain sinking funds, and to pay installments on debt instruments issued pursuant to Chapter 159G of the General Statutes or Chapter 159I of the General Statutes accruing within a fiscal year.
  - (5), (6) Repealed by Session Laws 1975, c. 514, s. 2.
  - (7) "Fiscal year" is the annual period for the compilation of fiscal operations, as prescribed in G.S. 159-8(b).
  - (8) "Fund" is a fiscal and accounting entity with a self-balancing set of accounts recording cash and other resources, together with all related liabilities and residual equities or balances, and changes therein, for the purpose of carrying on specific activities or attaining certain objectives in accordance with special regulations, restrictions, or limitations.
  - (9) Repealed by Session Laws 1975, c. 514, s. 2.
  - (10) "Public authority" is a municipal corporation (other than a unit of local government) that is not subject to the State Budget Act (Chapter 143C of the General Statutes) or a local governmental authority, board, commission, council, or agency that (i) is not a municipal corporation, (ii) is not subject to the State Budget Act, and (iii) operates on an area, regional, or multi-unit basis, and the budgeting and accounting systems of which are not fully a part of the budgeting and accounting systems of a unit of local government.
  - (11) Repealed by Session Laws 1975, c. 514, s. 2.
  - (12) "Sinking fund" means a fund held for the retirement of term bonds.
  - (13) "Special district" is a unit of local government (other than a county, city, town, or incorporated village) that is created for the performance of limited governmental functions or for the operation of a particular utility or public service enterprises.
  - (14) "Taxes" do not include special assessments.
  - (15) "Unit," "unit of local government," or "local government" is a municipal corporation that is not subject to the State Budget Act (Chapter 143C of the General Statutes) and that has the power to levy taxes, including a consolidated

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city-county, as defined by G.S. 160B-2(1), and all boards, agencies, commissions, authorities, and institutions thereof that are not municipal corporations.

- (16) "Vending facilities" has the same meaning as it does in G.S. 111-42(d), but also means any mechanical or electronic device dispensing items or something of value or entertainment or services for a fee, regardless of the method of activation, and regardless of the means of payment, whether by coin, currency, tokens, or other means.

(c) It is the intent of the General Assembly by enactment of this Article to prescribe for local governments and public authorities a uniform system of budget adoption and administration and fiscal control. To this end and except as otherwise provided in this Article, all provisions of general laws, city charters, and local acts in effect as of July 1, 1973 and in conflict with the provisions of Part 1 or Part 3 of this Article are repealed. No general law, city charter, or local act enacted or taking effect after July 1, 1973, may be construed to modify, amend, or repeal any portion of Part 1 or Part 3 of this Article unless it expressly so provides by specific reference to the appropriate section.

(d) Except as expressly provided herein, this Article does not apply to school administrative units. The adoption and administration of budgets for the public school system and the management of the fiscal affairs of school administrative units are governed by the School Budget and Fiscal Control Act, Chapter 115, Article 9. However, this Article and the School Budget and Fiscal Control Act shall be construed together to the end that the administration of the fiscal affairs of counties and school administrative units may be most effectively and efficiently administered. (1927, c. 146, ss. 1, 2; 1955, c. 724; 1971, c. 780, s. 1; 1973, c. 474, ss. 3, 4; 1975, c. 437, s. 12; c. 514, s. 2; 1981, c. 685, s. 1; 1983 (Reg. Sess., 1984), c. 1034, s. 173; 1987, c. 282, ss. 30, 31; c. 796, s. 3(1); 1989, c. 756, s. 3; 1995, c. 461, s. 9; 2006-203, s. 125.)

### **§ 159-8. Annual balanced budget ordinance.**

(a) Each local government and public authority shall operate under an annual balanced budget ordinance adopted and administered in accordance with this Article. A budget ordinance is balanced when the sum of estimated net revenues and appropriated fund balances is equal to appropriations. Appropriated fund balance in any fund shall not exceed the sum of cash and investments minus the sum of liabilities, encumbrances, and deferred revenues arising from cash receipts, as those figures stand at the close of the fiscal year next preceding the budget year. It is the intent of this Article that, except for moneys expended pursuant to a project ordinance or accounted for in an intragovernmental service fund or a trust and agency fund excluded from the budget ordinance under G.S. 159-13(a), all moneys received and expended by a local government or public authority should be included in the budget ordinance. Therefore, notwithstanding any other provision of law, no local government or public authority may expend any moneys, regardless of their source (including moneys derived from bond proceeds, federal, state, or private grants or loans, or special assessments), except in accordance with a budget ordinance or project ordinance adopted under this Article or through an intragovernmental service fund or trust and agency fund properly excluded from the budget ordinance.

(b) The budget ordinance of a unit of local government shall cover a fiscal year beginning July 1 and ending June 30. The budget ordinance of a public authority shall cover a fiscal year beginning July 1 and ending June 30, except that the Local Government Commission, if it determines that a different fiscal year would facilitate the authority's financial operations, may

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enter an order permitting an authority to operate under a fiscal year other than from July 1 to June 30. If the Commission does permit an authority to operate under an altered fiscal year, the Commission's order shall also modify the budget calendar set forth in G.S. 159-10 through 159-13 so as to provide a new budget calendar for the altered fiscal year that will clearly enable the authority to comply with the intent of this Part. (1971, c. 780, s. 1; 1973, c. 474, s. 5; 1975, c. 514, s. 3; 1979, c. 402, s. 1; 1981, c. 685, s. 2.)

### **§ 159-9. Budget officer.**

Each local government and public authority shall appoint a budget officer to serve at the will of the governing board. In counties or cities having the manager form of government, the county or city manager shall be the budget officer. Counties not having the manager form of government may impose the duties of budget officer upon the county finance officer or any other county officer or employee except the sheriff, or in counties having a population of more than 7,500, the register of deeds. Cities not having the manager form of government may impose the duties of budget officer on any city officer or employee, including the mayor if he agrees to undertake them. A public authority or special district may impose the duties of budget officer on the chairman or any member of its governing board or any other officer or employee. (1971, c. 780, s. 1; 1973, c. 474, s. 6.)

### **§ 159-10. Budget requests.**

Before April 30 of each fiscal year (or an earlier date fixed by the budget officer), each department head shall transmit to the budget officer the budget requests and revenue estimates for his department for the budget year. The budget request shall be an estimate of the financial requirements of the department for the budget year, and shall be made in such form and detail, with such supporting information and justifications, as the budget officer may prescribe. The revenue estimate shall be an estimate of all revenues to be realized by department operations during the budget year. At the same time, the finance officer or department heads shall transmit to the budget officer a complete statement of the amount expended for each category of expenditure in the budget ordinance of the immediately preceding fiscal year, a complete statement of the amount estimated to be expended for each category of expenditure in the current year's budget ordinance by the end of the current fiscal year, the amount realized from each source of revenue during the immediately preceding fiscal year, and the amount estimated to be realized from each source of revenue by the end of the current fiscal year, and such other information and data on the fiscal operations of the local government or public authority as the budget officer may request. (1927, c. 146, s. 5; 1955, cc. 698, 724; 1971, c. 780, s. 1.)

### **§ 159-11. Preparation and submission of budget and budget message.**

(a) Upon receipt of the budget requests and revenue estimates and the financial information supplied by the finance officer and department heads, the budget officer shall prepare a budget for consideration by the governing board in such form and detail as may have been prescribed by the budget officer or the governing board. The budget shall comply in all respects with the limitations imposed by G.S. 159-13(b), and unless the governing board shall have authorized or requested submission of an unbalanced budget as provided in subsection (c) of this section, the budget shall be balanced.

(b) The budget, together with a budget message, shall be submitted to the governing board not later than June 1. The budget and budget message should, but need not, be submitted at a

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formal meeting of the board. The budget message should contain a concise explanation of the governmental goals fixed by the budget for the budget year, should explain important features of the activities anticipated in the budget, should set forth the reasons for stated changes from the previous year in program goals, programs, and appropriation levels, and should explain any major changes in fiscal policy.

(c) The governing board may authorize or request the budget officer to submit a budget containing recommended appropriations in excess of estimated revenues. If this is done, the budget officer shall present the appropriations recommendations in a manner that will reveal for the governing board the nature of the activities supported by the expenditures that exceed estimated revenues.

(d) The budget officer shall include in the budget a proposed financial plan for each intragovernmental service fund, as required by G.S. 159-13.1, and information concerning capital projects and grant projects authorized or to be authorized by project ordinances, as required by G.S. 159-13.2.

(e) In each year in which a general reappraisal of real property has been conducted, the budget officer shall include in the budget, for comparison purposes, a statement of the revenue-neutral property tax rate for the budget. The revenue-neutral property tax rate is the rate that is estimated to produce revenue for the next fiscal year equal to the revenue that would have been produced for the next fiscal year by the current tax rate if no reappraisal had occurred. To calculate the revenue-neutral tax rate, the budget officer shall first determine a rate that would produce revenues equal to those produced for the current fiscal year and then increase the rate by a growth factor equal to the average annual percentage increase in the tax base due to improvements since the last general reappraisal. This growth factor represents the expected percentage increase in the value of the tax base due to improvements during the next fiscal year. The budget officer shall further adjust the rate to account for any annexation, deannexation, merger, or similar event. (1927, c. 146, s. 6; 1955, cc. 698, 724; 1969, c. 976, s. 1; 1971, c. 780, s. 1; 1975, c. 514, s. 4; 1979, c. 402, s. 2; 2003-264, s. 1.)

### **§ 159-12. Filing and publication of the budget; budget hearings.**

(a) On the same day that he submits the budget to the governing board, the budget officer shall file a copy of it in the office of the clerk to the board where it shall remain available for public inspection until the budget ordinance is adopted. The clerk shall make a copy of the budget available to all news media in the county. He shall also publish a statement that the budget has been submitted to the governing board, and is available for public inspection in the office of the clerk to the board. The statement shall also give notice of the time and place of the budget hearing required by subsection (b) of this section.

(b) Before adopting the budget ordinance, the board shall hold a public hearing at which time any persons who wish to be heard on the budget may appear. (1927, c. 146, s. 7; 1955, cc. 698, 724; 1971, c. 780, s. 1.)

### **§ 159-13. The budget ordinance; form, adoption, limitations, tax levy, filing.**

(a) Not earlier than 10 days after the day the budget is presented to the board and not later than July 1, the governing board shall adopt a budget ordinance making appropriations and levying taxes for the budget year in such sums as the board may consider sufficient and proper, whether greater or less than the sums recommended in the

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budget. The budget ordinance shall authorize all financial transactions of the local government or public authority except

- (1) Those authorized by a project ordinance,
- (2) Those accounted for in an intragovernmental service fund for which a financial plan is prepared and approved, and
- (3) Those accounted for in a trust or agency fund established to account for moneys held by the local government or public authority as an agent or common-law trustee or to account for a retirement, pension, or similar employee benefit system.

The budget ordinance may be in any form that the board considers most efficient in enabling it to make the fiscal policy decisions embodied therein, but it shall make appropriations by department, function, or project and show revenues by major source.

(b) The following directions and limitations shall bind the governing board in adopting the budget ordinance:

- (1) The full amount estimated by the finance officer to be required for debt service during the budget year shall be appropriated.
- (2) The full amount of any deficit in each fund shall be appropriated.
- (3) A contingency appropriation shall not exceed five percent (5%) of the total of all other appropriations in the same fund, except there is no limit on contingency appropriations for public assistance programs required by Chapter 108A. Each expenditure to be charged against a contingency appropriation shall be authorized by resolution of the governing board, which resolution shall be deemed an amendment to the budget ordinance setting up an appropriation for the object of expenditure authorized. The governing board may authorize the budget officer to authorize expenditures from contingency appropriations subject to such limitations and procedures as it may prescribe. Any such expenditures shall be reported to the board at its next regular meeting and recorded in the minutes.
- (4) No appropriation may be made that would require the levy of a tax in excess of any constitutional or statutory limitation, or expenditures of revenues for purposes not permitted by law.
- (5) The total of all appropriations for purposes which require voter approval for expenditure of property tax funds under Article V, Sec. 2(5), of the Constitution shall not exceed the total of all estimated revenues other than the property tax (not including such revenues required by law to be spent for specific purposes) and property taxes levied for such purposes pursuant to a vote of the people.
- (6) The estimated percentage of collection of property taxes shall not be greater than the percentage of the levy actually realized in cash as of June 30 during the preceding fiscal year. For purposes of the calculation under this subdivision only, the levy for the registered motor vehicle tax under Article 22A of Chapter 105 of the General Statutes shall be based on the

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- nine-month period ending March 31 of the preceding fiscal year, and the collections realized in cash with respect to this levy shall be based on the 12-month period ending June 30 of the preceding fiscal year.
- (7) Estimated revenues shall include only those revenues reasonably expected to be realized in the budget year, including amounts to be realized from collections of taxes levied in prior fiscal years.
  - (8) Repealed by Session Laws 1975, c. 514, s. 6.
  - (9) Appropriations made to a school administrative unit by a county may not be reduced after the budget ordinance is adopted, unless the board of education of the administrative unit agrees by resolution to a reduction, or unless a general reduction in county expenditures is required because of prevailing economic conditions. Before a board of county commissioners may reduce appropriations to a school administrative unit as part of a general reduction in county expenditures required because of prevailing economic conditions, it must do all of the following:
    - a. Hold a public meeting at which the school board is given an opportunity to present information on the impact of the reduction.
    - b. Take a public vote on the decision to reduce appropriations to a school administrative unit.
  - (10) Appropriations made to another fund from a fund established to account for property taxes levied pursuant to a vote of the people may not exceed the amount of revenues other than the property tax available to the fund, except for appropriations from such a fund to an appropriate account in a capital reserve fund.
  - (11) Repealed by Session Laws 1975, c. 514, s. 6.
  - (12) Repealed by Session Laws 1981, c. 685, s. 4.
  - (13) No appropriation of the proceeds of a bond issue may be made from the capital project fund account established to account for the proceeds of the bond issue except (i) for the purpose for which the bonds were issued, (ii) to the appropriate debt service fund, or (iii) to an account within a capital reserve fund consistent with the purposes for which the bonds were issued. The total of other appropriations made to another fund from such a capital project fund account may not exceed the amount of revenues other than bond proceeds available to the account.
  - (14) No appropriation may be made from a utility or public service enterprise fund to any other fund than the appropriate debt service fund unless the total of all other appropriations in the fund equal or exceed the amount that will be required during the fiscal year, as shown by the budget ordinance, to meet operating expenses, capital outlay, and debt service on outstanding utility or enterprise bonds or notes. A county may, upon a finding that a fund balance in a utility or public service enterprise fund used for operation of a landfill exceeds the requirements for funding the

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operation of that fund, including closure and post-closure expenditures, transfer excess funds accruing due to imposition of a surcharge imposed on another local government located within the State for use of the disposal facility, as authorized by G.S. 153A-292(b), to support the other services supported by the county's general fund.

- (15) Sufficient funds to meet the amounts to be paid during the fiscal year under continuing contracts previously entered into shall be appropriated unless such contract reserves to the governing board the right to limit or not to make such appropriation.
- (16) The sum of estimated net revenues and appropriated fund balance in each fund shall be equal to appropriations in that fund. Appropriated fund balance in a fund shall not exceed the sum of cash and investments minus the sum of liabilities, encumbrances, and deferred revenues arising from cash receipts, as those figures stand at the close of the fiscal year next preceding the budget year.
- (17) No appropriations may be made from a county reappraisal reserve fund except for the purposes for which the fund was established.
- (18) No appropriation may be made from a service district fund to any other fund except (i) to the appropriate debt service fund or (ii) to an appropriate account in a capital reserve fund unless the district has been abolished.
- (19) No appropriation of the proceeds of a debt instrument may be made from the capital project fund account established to account for such proceeds except for the purpose for which such debt instrument was issued. The total of other appropriations made to another fund from such a capital project fund account may not exceed the amount of revenues other than debt instrument proceeds available to the account.

Notwithstanding subdivisions (9), (10), (12), (14), (17), or (18) of this subsection, any fund may contain an appropriation to another fund to cover the cost of (i) levying and collecting the taxes and other revenues allocated to the fund, and (ii) building maintenance and other general overhead and administrative expenses properly allocable to functions or activities financed from the fund.

(c) The budget ordinance of a local government shall levy taxes on property at rates that will produce the revenue necessary to balance appropriations and revenues, after taking into account the estimated percentage of the levy that will not be collected during the fiscal year. The budget ordinance of a public authority shall be balanced so that appropriations do not exceed revenues.

(d) The budget ordinance shall be entered in the minutes of the governing board and within five days after adoption copies thereof shall be filed with the finance officer, the budget officer, and the clerk to the governing board. (1927, c. 146, s. 8; 1955, cc. 698, 724; 1969, c. 976, s. 2; 1971, c. 780, s. 1; 1973, c. 474, ss. 7-9; c. 489, s. 3; 1975, c. 437, ss. 13, 14; c. 514, ss. 5, 6; 1981, c. 685, ss. 3-5, 10; 1987, c. 796, s. 3(2); 1989, c. 756, s. 2; 1999-261, s. 1; 2000-140, s. 80; 2002-126, s. 6.7(a); 2013-413, s. 59.4(b).)

**§ 159-13.1. Financial plan for intragovernmental service funds.**

(a) If a local government or public authority establishes and operates one or more intragovernmental service funds, it need not include such a fund in its budget ordinance. However, at the same time it adopts the budget ordinance, the governing board shall approve a balanced financial plan for each intragovernmental service fund. A financial plan is balanced when estimated expenditures do not exceed estimated revenues.

(b) The budget officer shall include in the budget he submits to the board, pursuant to G.S. 159-11, a proposed financial plan for each intragovernmental service fund to be operated during the budget year by the local government or public authority. The proposed financial plan shall be in such form and detail as prescribed by the budget officer or governing board.

(c) The approved financial plan shall be entered in the minutes of the governing board, as shall each amendment to the plan approved by the board. Within five days after approval, copies of the plan and copies of each amendment thereto shall be filed with the finance officer, the budget officer, and the clerk to the governing board.

(d) Any change in a financial plan must be approved by the governing board. (1975, c. 514, s. 7.)

**§ 159-13.2. Project ordinances.**

(a) Definitions. -

(1) In this section "capital project" means a project financed in whole or in part by the proceeds of bonds or notes or debt instruments or a project involving the construction or acquisition of a capital asset.

(2) "Grant project" means a project financed in whole or in part by revenues received from the federal and/or State government for operating or capital purposes as defined by the grant contract.

(b) Alternative Budget Methods. - A local government or public authority may, in its discretion, authorize and budget for a capital project or a grant project either in its annual budget ordinance or in a project ordinance adopted pursuant to this section. A project ordinance authorizes all appropriations necessary for the completion of the project and neither it nor any part of it need be readopted in any subsequent fiscal year. Neither a bond order nor an order authorizing any debt instrument constitutes a project ordinance.

(c) Adoption of Project Ordinances. - If a local government or public authority intends to authorize a capital project or a grant project by a project ordinance, it shall not begin the project until it has adopted a balanced project ordinance for the life of the project. A project ordinance is balanced when revenues estimated to be available for the project equal appropriations for the project. A project ordinance shall clearly identify the project and authorize its undertaking, identify the revenues that will finance the project, and make the appropriations necessary to complete the project.

(d) Project Ordinance Filed. - Each project ordinance shall be entered in the minutes of the governing board. Within five days after adoption, copies of the ordinance shall be filed with the finance officer, the budget officer, and the clerk to the governing board.

(e) Amendment. - A project ordinance may be amended in any manner so long as it continues to fulfill all requirements of this section.

(f) Inclusion of Project Information in Budget. - Each year the budget officer shall include in the budget information in such detail as he or the governing board may require concerning each



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grant project or capital project (i) expected to be authorized by project ordinance during the budget year and (ii) authorized by previously adopted project ordinances which will have appropriations available for expenditure during the budget year. (1975, c. 514, s. 8; 1979, c. 402, s. 3; 1987, c. 796, s. 3(3), 3(4).)

### **§ 159-14. Trust and agency funds; budgets of special districts.**

(a) Budgets of Special Districts. - If the tax-levying power of a special district is by law exercised on its behalf by a county or city, and if the county or city governing board is vested by law with discretion as to what rate of tax it will levy on behalf of the special district, the governing board of the special district shall transmit to the governing board of the county or city on or before June 1 a request to levy taxes on its behalf for the budget year at a stated rate. The county or city governing board shall then determine what rate of tax it will approve, and shall so notify the district governing board not later than June 15. Failure of the county or city governing board to act on the district's request on or before June 15 and to so notify the district governing board by that date shall be deemed approval of the full rate requested by the district governing board. Upon receiving notification from the county or city governing board as to what rate of tax will be approved or after June 15 if no such notification is received, the district governing board shall complete its budget deliberations and shall adopt its budget ordinance.

If the tax-levying power of a special district is by law exercised on its behalf by a county or city, and if the county or city governing board has no discretion as to what rate of tax it will levy on behalf of the special district, the governing board of the district shall notify the city or county by June 15 of the rate of tax it wishes to have levied. If the district does not notify the county or city governing board on or before June 15 of the rate of tax it wishes to have levied, the county or city is not required to levy a tax for the district for the fiscal year.

If the taxes of a special district are collected on its behalf by a county or city, and if the county or city governing board has no power to approve the district tax levy, the district governing board shall adopt its budget ordinance not later than July 1 and on or before July 15 shall notify the county or city collecting its taxes of the rate of tax it has levied. If the district does not notify the county or city governing board on or before July 15 of the rate of tax it has levied, the county or city is not required to collect the district's taxes for the fiscal year.

(b) Transfers from Certain Trust and Agency Funds. - Except for transfers to the appropriate special district or public authority, a unit of local government may not transfer moneys from a fund established to account for taxes collected on behalf of a special district or from a fund established to account for special assessments collected on behalf of a public authority unless the special district or public authority has ceased to function. (1971, c. 780, s. 1; 1973, c. 474, ss. 10, 11; 1975, c. 514, s. 9.)

### **§ 159-15. Amendments to the budget ordinance.**

Except as otherwise restricted by law, the governing board may amend the budget ordinance at any time after the ordinance's adoption in any manner, so long as the ordinance, as amended, continues to satisfy the requirements of G.S. 159-8 and 159-13. However, except as otherwise provided in this section, no amendment may increase or reduce a property tax levy or in any manner alter a property taxpayer's liability, unless the board is ordered to do so by a court of competent jurisdiction, or by a State agency having the power to compel the levy of taxes by the board.

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If after July 1 the local government receives revenues that are substantially more or less than the amount anticipated, the governing body may, before January 1 following adoption of the budget, amend the budget ordinance to reduce or increase the property tax levy to account for the unanticipated increase or reduction in revenues.

The governing board by appropriate resolution or ordinance may authorize the budget officer to transfer moneys from one appropriation to another within the same fund subject to such limitations and procedures as it may prescribe. Any such transfers shall be reported to the governing board at its next regular meeting and shall be entered in the minutes. (1927, c. 146, s. 13; 1955, cc. 698, 724; 1971, c. 780, s. 1; 1973, c. 474, s. 12; 2001-308, s. 3; 2002-126, s. 30A.2.)

### **§ 159-16. Interim budget.**

In case the adoption of the budget ordinance is delayed until after July 1, the governing board shall make interim appropriations for the purpose of paying salaries, debt service payments, and the usual ordinary expenses of the local government or public authority for the interval between the beginning of the budget year and the adoption of the budget ordinance. Interim appropriations so made shall be charged to the proper appropriations in the budget ordinance. (1927, c. 146, s. 14; 1955, cc. 698, 724; 1971, c. 780, s. 1.)

### **§ 159-17. Ordinance procedures not applicable to budget or project ordinance adoption.**

Notwithstanding the provisions of any city charter, general law, or local act:

- (1) Any action with respect to the adoption or amendment of the budget ordinance or any project ordinance may be taken at any regular or special meeting of the governing board by a simple majority of those present and voting, a quorum being present;
- (2) No action taken with respect to the adoption or amendment of the budget ordinance or any project ordinance need be published or is subject to any other procedural requirement governing the adoption of ordinances or resolutions by the governing board other than the procedures set out in this Article;
- (3) The adoption and amendment of the budget ordinance or any project ordinance and the levy of taxes in the budget ordinance are not subject to the provisions of any city charter or local act concerning initiative or referendum.

During the period beginning with the submission of the budget to the governing board and ending with the adoption of the budget ordinance, the governing board may hold any special meetings that may be necessary to complete its work on the budget ordinance. Except for the notice requirements of G.S. 143-318.12, which continue to apply, no provision of law concerning the call of special meetings applies during that period so long as (i) each member of the board has actual notice of each special meeting called for the purpose of considering the budget, and (ii) no business other than consideration of the budget is taken up. This section does not allow the holding of closed meetings or executive sessions by any governing board otherwise prohibited by law from holding such a meeting or session, and may not be construed to do so.

No general law, city charter, or local act enacted or taking effect after July 1, 1973, may be construed to modify, amend, or repeal any portion of this section unless it expressly so provides by specific reference to this section. (1971, c. 780, s. 1; 1973, c. 474, s. 13; 1979, c. 402, ss. 4, 5; c. 655, s. 2.)

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### **§ 159-17.1. Vending facilities.**

Moneys received by a public authority, special district, or unit of local government on account of operation of vending facilities shall be deposited, budgeted, appropriated, and expended in accordance with the provisions of this Article. (1983 (Reg. Sess., 1984), c. 1034, s. 174.)

### Part 2. Capital Reserve Funds.

### **§ 159-18. Capital reserve funds.**

Any local government or public authority may establish and maintain a capital reserve fund for any purposes for which it may issue bonds. A capital reserve fund shall be established by resolution or ordinance of the governing board which shall state (i) the purposes for which the fund is created, (ii) the approximate periods of time during which the moneys are to be accumulated for each purpose, (iii) the approximate amounts to be accumulated for each purpose, and (iv) the sources from which moneys for each purpose will be derived. (1943, c. 593, ss. 3, 5; 1957, c. 863, s. 1; 1967, c. 1189; 1971, c. 780, s. 1.)

### **§ 159-19. Amendments.**

The resolution or ordinance may be amended from time to time in the same manner in which it was adopted. Amendments may, among other provisions, authorize the use of moneys accumulated or to be accumulated in the fund for capital outlay purposes not originally stated. (1943, c. 593, s. 7; 1967, c. 1189; 1971, c. 780, s. 1; 1973, c. 474, s. 14.)

### **§ 159-20. Funding capital reserve funds.**

Capital reserve funds may be funded by appropriations from any other fund consistent with the limitations imposed in G.S. 159-13(b). When moneys or investment securities, the use of which is restricted by law, come into a capital reserve fund, the identity of such moneys or investment securities shall be maintained by appropriate accounting entries. (1943, c. 593, s. 4; 1945, c. 464, s. 2; 1957, c. 863, s. 1; 1967, c. 1189; 1971, c. 780, s. 1; 1973, c. 474, s. 15.)

### **§ 159-21. Investment.**

The cash balances, in whole or in part, of capital reserve funds may be deposited at interest or invested as provided by G.S. 159-30. (1957, c. 863, s. 1; 1967, c. 1189; 1971, c. 780, s. 1.)

### **§ 159-22. Withdrawals.**

Withdrawals from a capital reserve fund may be authorized by resolution or ordinance of the governing board of the local government or public authority. No withdrawal may be authorized for any purpose not specified in the resolution or ordinance establishing the fund or in a resolution or ordinance amending it. The withdrawal resolution or ordinance shall authorize an appropriation from the capital reserve fund to an appropriate appropriation in one of the funds maintained pursuant to G.S. 159-13(a). No withdrawal may be made which would result in an appropriation for purposes for which an adequate balance of eligible moneys or investment securities is not then available in the capital reserve fund. (1943, c. 593, ss. 11, 16; 1945, c. 464, s. 2; 1949, c. 196, s. 3; 1957, c. 863, s. 1; 1967, c. 1189; 1971, c. 780, s. 1; 1973, c. 474, s. 16.)

### **§ 159-23. Reserved for future codification purposes.**

Part 3. Fiscal Control.

**§ 159-24. Finance officer.**

Each local government and public authority shall, at all times, have a finance officer appointed by the local government, public authority, or designated official to hold office at the pleasure of the appointing board or official. The finance officer may be entitled "accountant," "treasurer," "finance director," "finance officer," or any other reasonably descriptive title. The duties of the finance officer may be imposed on the budget officer or any other officer or employee on whom the duties of budget officer may be imposed. (1971, c. 780, s. 1; 1973, c. 474, s. 17; 2019-19, s. 6.1.)

**§ 159-25. Duties of finance officer; dual signatures on checks; internal control procedures subject to Commission regulation.**

- (a) The finance officer shall have the following powers and duties:
- (1) Keep the accounts of the local government or public authority in accordance with generally accepted principles of governmental accounting and the rules and regulations of the Commission.
  - (2) Disburse all funds of the local government or public authority in strict compliance with this Chapter, the budget ordinance, and each project ordinance and shall preaudit obligations and disbursements as required by this Chapter.
  - (3) Prepare and file with the board a statement of the financial condition of the local government or public authority, as often as may be requested by the governing board or the manager.
  - (4) Receive and deposit all moneys accruing to the local government or public authority, or supervise the receipt and deposit of money by other duly authorized officers or employees.
  - (5) Maintain all records concerning the bonded debt and other obligations of the local government or public authority, determine the amount of money that will be required for debt service or the payment of other obligations during each fiscal year, and maintain all sinking funds.
  - (6) Supervise the investment of idle funds of the local government or public authority.
  - (7) Perform such other duties as may be assigned by law, by the manager, budget officer, or governing board, or by rules and regulations of the Commission.
  - (8) Attend any training required by the Local Government Commission under this section.
  - (9) Contract with outside entities, including certified public accountants in good standing with the North Carolina State Board of Certified Public Accountant Examiners, bookkeeping firms, councils of government, and other units of government, to ensure fulfillment of the duties enumerated

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in this subsection, excluding subdivision (6), except where specifically allowed by law, and subdivision (8). Regardless of the entity performing such duties, the authority, powers, and duties of the finance officer shall not be superseded, and the responsibility for accurate and timely fulfillment of duties lies solely with the finance officer.

All references in other portions of the General Statutes, local acts, or city charters to county, city, special district, or public authority accountants, treasurers, or other officials performing any of the duties conferred by this section on the finance officer shall be deemed to refer to the finance officer.

(b) Except as otherwise provided by law, all checks or drafts on an official depository shall be signed by the finance officer or a properly designated deputy finance officer and countersigned by another official of the local government or public authority designated for this purpose by the governing board. If the board makes no other designation, the chairman of the board or chief executive officer of the local government or public authority shall countersign these checks and drafts. The governing board of a unit or authority may waive the requirements of this subsection if the board determines that the internal control procedures of the unit or authority will be satisfactory in the absence of dual signatures.

(c) The Local Government Commission has authority to issue rules and regulations having the force of law governing procedures for the receipt, deposit, investment, transfer, and disbursement of money and other assets by units of local government and public authorities, may inquire into and investigate the internal control procedures of a local government or public authority, may require any modifications in internal control procedures which, in the opinion of the Commission, are necessary or desirable to prevent embezzlements or mishandling of public moneys, and may adopt rules establishing minimum qualifications for finance officers.

(d) The Local Government Commission has the authority to require any finance officer or any other employee who performs the duties of a finance officer to participate in training related to the powers, duties, and responsibilities of the finance officer under any of the following circumstances: (i) the Commission is exercising its authority under Article 10 of this Chapter with respect to the employing local government or public authority, (ii) the employing local government or public authority has received a unit letter from the Commission due to a deficiency in complying with this Chapter, (iii) the employing local government or public authority has an internal control material weakness or significant deficiency in the most recently completed financial audit, or (iv) the finance officer fails to annually meet or attest to the minimum qualifications of the position, as established by the Local Government Commission. The Commission may collaborate with the School of Government at the University of North Carolina, the North Carolina Community College System, and other educational institutions in the State to develop and deliver the training required by this subsection. When the Commission requires a finance officer or other employee to participate in training as authorized in this subsection, the Commission shall notify the finance officer or other employee and the employing local government or public authority of the required training. Upon completion of the required training by the finance

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officer or other employee, the employing local government or public authority shall submit, in writing, to the Commission proof that the training requirements have been satisfied.

(e) The Local Government Commission may require any local government or public authority to contract with outside entities in accordance with the terms of subdivision (9) of subsection (a) of this section if the local government or public authority has received a unit letter from the Commission due to a deficiency in complying with this Chapter or the local government or public authority has an internal control finding in the most recently completed financial audit. (1971, c. 780, s. 1; 1973, c. 474, ss. 18-20; 1975, c. 514, s. 10; 1987, c. 796, s. 3(5); 2016-84, s. 1; 2017-105, s. 1; 2019-19, s. 6.2.)

### **§ 159-26. Accounting system.**

(a) System Required. - Each local government or public authority shall establish and maintain an accounting system designed to show in detail its assets, liabilities, equities, revenues, and expenditures. The system shall also be designed to show appropriations and estimated revenues as established in the budget ordinance and each project ordinance as originally adopted and subsequently amended.

(b) Funds Required. - Each local government or public authority shall establish and maintain in its accounting system such of the following funds and ledgers as are applicable to it. The generic meaning of each type of fund or ledger listed below is that fixed by generally accepted accounting principles.

- (1) General fund.
- (2) Special Revenue Funds. - One or more separate funds shall be established for each of the following classes: (i) functions or activities financed in whole or in part by property taxes voted by the people, (ii) service districts established pursuant to the Municipal or County Service District Acts, and (iii) grant project ordinances. If more than one function is accounted for in a voted tax fund, or more than one district in a service district fund, or more than one grant project in a project fund, separate accounts shall be established in the appropriate fund for each function, district, or project.
- (3) Debt service funds.
- (4) A Fund for Each Utility or Enterprise Owned or Operated by the Unit or Public Authority. - If a water system and a sanitary sewerage system are operated as a consolidated system, one fund may be established and maintained for the consolidated system.
- (5) Internal service funds.
- (6) Capital Project Funds. - Such a fund shall be established to account for the proceeds of each bond order or order authorizing any debt instrument and for all other resources used for the capital projects financed by the bond or debt instrument proceeds. A unit or public authority may account for two or more bond orders or orders authorizing any debt instrument in one capital projects fund, but the proceeds of each such order and the other revenues associated with that order shall be separately accounted for in the fund.
- (7) Trust and agency funds, including a fund for each special district, public authority, or school administrative unit whose taxes or special assessments are collected by the unit.

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- (8) A ledger or group of accounts in which to record the details relating to the general fixed assets of the unit or public authority.
- (9) A ledger or group of accounts in which to record the details relating to the general obligation bonds and notes and other long-term obligations of the unit.

In addition, each unit or public authority shall establish and maintain any other funds required by other statutes or by State or federal regulations.

(c) **Basis of Accounting.** - Except as otherwise provided by regulation of the Commission, local governments and public authorities shall use the modified accrual basis of accounting in recording transactions.

(d) **Encumbrance Systems.** - Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, no local government or public authority is required to record or show encumbrances in its accounting system. Each city or town with a population over 10,000 and each county with a population over 50,000 shall maintain an accounting system that records and shows the encumbrances outstanding against each category of expenditure appropriated in its budget ordinance. Any other local government or any public authority may record and show encumbrances in its accounting system. In determining a unit's population, the most recent federal decennial census shall be used.

(e) **Commission Regulations.** - The Commission may prescribe rules and regulations having the force of law as to:

- (1) Features of accounting systems to be maintained by local governments and public authorities.
- (2) Bases of accounting, including identifying in detail the characteristics of a modified accrual basis, identifying what revenues are susceptible to accrual, and permitting or requiring use of a basis other than modified accrual in a fund that does not account for the receipt of a tax.
- (3) Definitions of terms not clearly defined in this Article.

The Commission may vary these rules and regulations according to any other criteria reasonably related to the purpose or complexity of the financial operations involved. (1971, c. 780, s. 1; 1975, c. 514, ss. 11, 16; 1979, c. 402, s. 6; 1981, c. 685, ss. 6, 7; 1987, c. 796, s. 3(6).)

### **§ 159-27. Distribution of tax collections among funds according to levy.**

(a) The finance officer shall distribute property tax collections among the appropriate funds, according to the budget ordinance, at least monthly.

(b) Taxes collected during the current fiscal year, that were levied in any one of the two immediately preceding fiscal years, shall be distributed to the appropriate funds according to the levy of the fiscal year in which they were levied. If any fund for which such taxes were levied is not being maintained in the current fiscal year, the proportionate share of the tax that would have been distributed to the discontinued fund shall be allocated (i) to the fund from which the activity or function for which the tax was levied is then being financed, or (ii) to the general fund if the activity or function for which the tax was levied is no longer being performed.

(c) Taxes collected during the current fiscal year, that were levied in any prior fiscal year other than one of the two immediately preceding fiscal years, may be distributed in the discretion of the governing board either (i) to the general fund, or (ii) in accordance with subsection (b) of this section. This subsection shall not repeal any portion of a local act or city charter inconsistent herewith and in effect on July 1, 1973.

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(d) This section applies to taxes levied by a unit of local government on behalf of another unit, including school administrative units. (1971, c. 780, s. 1; 1973, c. 474, s. 21; 1975, c. 437, s. 15.)

### **§ 159-27.1. Use of revenue bond project reimbursements; restrictions.**

The finance officer of a unit shall deposit any funds received by the unit as a reimbursement of a loan or advance made by the unit pursuant to G.S. 159-83(a)(8a) in the fund from which the unit originally derived the funds to make the loan or advance.

If the funds originally loaned or advanced were proceeds of a bond issue, any funds received as reimbursement shall be applied as required by this section. The funds shall be applied as provided in the instrument securing payment of the bond issue if the instrument contains applicable provisions. Otherwise, the funds shall be applied to either (i) the same general purposes as those for which the bond issue was authorized, or (ii) payment of debt service on the bond issue, including principal, interest, and premium, if any, upon redemption, or payment of the purchase price of bonds for retirement at not more than their face value and accrued interest. After all the bonds of the issue have been paid or satisfied in full, any funds received as reimbursement shall be deposited in the general fund of the unit and may be used for any general fund purpose. (1991, c. 508, s. 3, c. 761, s. 29.)

### **§ 159-28. Budgetary accounting for appropriations.**

(a) Incurring Obligations. - No obligation may be incurred in a program, function, or activity accounted for in a fund included in the budget ordinance unless the budget ordinance includes an appropriation authorizing the obligation and an unencumbered balance remains in the appropriation sufficient to pay in the current fiscal year the sums obligated by the transaction for the current fiscal year. No obligation may be incurred for a capital project or a grant project authorized by a project ordinance unless that project ordinance includes an appropriation authorizing the obligation and an unencumbered balance remains in the appropriation sufficient to pay the sums obligated by the transaction. Nothing in this section shall require a contract to be reduced to writing.

(a1) Preaudit Requirement. - If an obligation is reduced to a written contract or written agreement requiring the payment of money, or is evidenced by a written purchase order for supplies and materials, the written contract, agreement, or purchase order shall include on its face a certificate stating that the instrument has been preaudited to assure compliance with subsection (a) of this section. The certificate, which shall be signed by the finance officer, or any deputy finance officer approved for this purpose by the governing board, shall take substantially the following form:

"This instrument has been preaudited in the manner required by the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act.

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(Signature of finance officer)."

(a2) Failure to Preaudit. - An obligation incurred in violation of subsection (a) or (a1) of this section is invalid and may not be enforced. The finance officer shall establish procedures to assure compliance with this section, in accordance with any rules adopted by the Local Government Commission.



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(b) Disbursements. - When a bill, invoice, or other claim against a local government or public authority is presented, the finance officer shall either approve or disapprove the necessary disbursement. If the claim involves a program, function, or activity accounted for in a fund included in the budget ordinance or a capital project or a grant project authorized by a project ordinance, the finance officer may approve the claim only if both of the following apply:

- (1) The finance officer determines the amount to be payable.
- (2) The budget ordinance or a project ordinance includes an appropriation authorizing the expenditure and either (i) an encumbrance has been previously created for the transaction or (ii) an unencumbered balance remains in the appropriation sufficient to pay the amount to be disbursed.

The finance officer may approve a bill, invoice, or other claim requiring disbursement from an intragovernmental service fund or trust or agency fund not included in the budget ordinance, only if the amount claimed is determined to be payable. A bill, invoice, or other claim may not be paid unless it has been approved by the finance officer or, under subsection (c) of this section, by the governing board. The finance officer shall establish procedures to assure compliance with this subsection, in accordance with any rules adopted by the Local Government Commission.

(c) Governing Board Approval of Bills, Invoices, or Claims. - The governing board may, as permitted by this subsection, approve a bill, invoice, or other claim against the local government or public authority that has been disapproved by the finance officer. The governing board may not approve a claim for which no appropriation appears in the budget ordinance or in a project ordinance, or for which the appropriation contains no encumbrance and the unencumbered balance is less than the amount to be paid. The governing board shall approve payment by formal resolution stating the board's reasons for allowing the bill, invoice, or other claim. The resolution shall be entered in the minutes together with the names of those voting in the affirmative. The chairman of the board, or some other member designated for this purpose, shall sign the certificate on the check or draft given in payment of the bill, invoice, or other claim. If payment results in a violation of law, each member of the board voting to allow payment is jointly and severally liable for the full amount of the check or draft given in payment.

(d) Payment. - A local government or public authority may not pay a bill, invoice, salary, or other claim except by any of the following methods:

- (1) Check or draft on an official depository.
- (2) Bank wire transfer from an official depository.
- (3) Electronic payment or an electronic funds transfer originated by the local government or public authority through an official depository.
- (4) Cash, if the local government has adopted an ordinance authorizing the use of cash, and specifying the limits of the use of cash.

(d1) Except as provided in this section, each check or draft on an official depository shall bear on its face a certificate signed by the finance officer or a deputy finance officer approved for this purpose by the governing board (or signed by the chairman or some other

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member of the board pursuant to subsection (c) of this section). The certificate shall take substantially the following form:

"This disbursement has been approved as required by the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act.

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(Signature of finance officer)."

(d2) An electronic payment or electronic funds transfer shall be subject to the preaudit process in accordance with this section and any rules adopted by the Local Government Commission. The rules so adopted shall address execution of electronic payment or electronic funds transfer and how to indicate that the finance officer or duly appointed deputy finance officer has performed the preaudit process in accordance with this section. A finance officer or duly appointed deputy finance officer shall be presumed in compliance with this section if the finance officer or duly appointed deputy finance officer complies with the rules adopted by the Local Government Commission.

(e) Penalties. - If an officer or employee of a local government or public authority incurs an obligation or pays out or causes to be paid out any funds in violation of this section, that officer or employee, and the sureties on any official bond for that officer or employee, are liable for any sums so committed or disbursed. If the finance officer or any duly appointed deputy finance officer gives a false certificate to any contract, agreement, purchase order, check, draft, or other document, the finance officer or duly appointed deputy finance officer, and the sureties on any official bond, are liable for any sums illegally committed or disbursed thereby. The governing board shall determine, by resolution, if payment from the official bond shall be sought and if the governing body will seek a judgment from the finance officer or duly appointed deputy finance officer for any deficiencies in the amount.

(e1) Inclusion of the contract term in accordance with G.S. 143-133.3(b) shall be deemed in compliance with G.S. 143-133.3(a).

(f) The certifications required by subsections (a1) and (d1) of this section shall not apply to any of the following:

- (1) An obligation or a document related to the obligation has been approved by the Local Government Commission.
- (2) Payroll expenditures, including all benefits for employees of the local government.
- (3) Electronic payments, as specified in rules adopted by the Local Government Commission.

(g) As used in this section, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

- (1) Electronic funds transfer. - A transfer of funds initiated by using an electronic terminal, a telephone, a computer, or magnetic tape to instruct or authorize a financial institution or its agent to credit or debit an account.
- (2) Electronic payment. - Payment by charge card, credit card, debit card, gas card, procurement card, or electronic funds transfer. (1971, c. 780, s.

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1; 1973, c. 474, ss. 22, 23; 1975, c. 514, s. 12; 1979, c. 402, ss. 7, 8; 2010-99, s. 1; 2012-156, s. 1; 2015-246, s. 6(a); 2015-294, s. 2.)

### **§ 159-28.1. Facsimile signatures.**

The governing board of a local government or public authority may provide by appropriate resolution or ordinance for the use of facsimile signature machines, signature stamps, or similar devices in signing checks and drafts and in signing the preaudit certificate on contracts or purchase orders. The board shall charge the finance officer or some other bonded officer or employee with the custody of the necessary machines, stamps, plates, or other devices, and that person and the sureties on his official bond are liable for any illegal, improper, or unauthorized use of them. (1975, c. 514, s. 13.)

### **§ 159-29. Fidelity bonds.**

(a) The finance officer shall give a true accounting and faithful performance bond with sufficient sureties in an amount to be fixed by the governing board, not less than fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000). The premium on the bond shall be paid by the local government or public authority.

(b) Each officer, employee, or agent of a local government or public authority who handles or has in his custody more than one hundred dollars (\$100.00) of the unit's or public authority's funds at any time, or who handles or has access to the inventories of the unit or public authority, shall, before being entitled to assume his duties, give a faithful performance bond with sufficient sureties payable to the local government or public authority. The governing board shall determine the amount of the bond, and the unit or public authority may pay the premium on the bond. Each bond, when approved by the governing board, shall be deposited with the clerk to the board.

If another statute requires an officer, employee, or agent to be bonded, this subsection does not require an additional bond for that officer, employee, or agent.

(c) A local government or public authority may adopt a system of blanket faithful performance bonding as an alternative to individual bonds. If such a system is adopted, statutory requirements of individual bonds, except for elected officials and for finance officers and tax collectors by whatever title known, do not apply to an officer, employee, or agent covered by the blanket bond. However, although an individual bond is required for an elected official, a tax collector, or finance officer, such an officer or elected official may also be included within the coverage of a blanket bond if the blanket bond protects against risks not protected against by the individual bond. (1971, c. 780, s. 1; 1975, c. 514, s. 14; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 975, s. 32; 2005-238, s. 2.)

### **§ 159-30. Investment of idle funds.**

(a) A local government or public authority may deposit at interest or invest all or part of the cash balance of any fund. The finance officer shall manage investments subject to whatever restrictions and directions the governing board may impose. The finance officer shall have the power to purchase, sell, and exchange securities on behalf of the governing board. The investment program shall be so managed that investments and deposits can be converted into cash when needed.

(b) Moneys may be deposited at interest in any bank, savings and loan association, or trust company in this State in the form of certificates of deposit or such other forms of

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time deposit as the Commission may approve. Investment deposits, including investment deposits of a mutual fund for local government investment established under subdivision (c)(8) of this section, shall be secured as provided in G.S. 159-31(b).

(b1) In addition to deposits authorized by subsection (b) of this section, the finance officer may deposit any portion of idle funds in accordance with all of the following conditions:

- (1) The funds are initially deposited through a bank or savings and loan association that is an official depository and that is selected by the finance officer.
  - (2) The selected bank or savings and loan association arranges for the redeposit of funds in deposit accounts of the local government or public authority in one or more federally insured banks or savings and loan associations wherever located, provided that no funds shall be deposited in a bank or savings and loan association that at the time holds other deposits from the local government or public authority.
  - (3) The full amount of principal and any accrued interest of each deposit account are covered by federal deposit insurance.
  - (4) The selected bank or savings and loan association acts as custodian for the local government or public authority with respect to the deposit in the local government's or public authority's account.
  - (5) On the same date that the local government or public authority funds are redeposited, the selected bank or savings and loan association receives an amount of federally insured deposits from customers of other financial institutions wherever located equal to or greater than the amount of the funds invested by the local government or public authority through the selected bank or savings and loan association.
- (c) Moneys may be invested in the following classes of securities, and no others:
- (1) Obligations of the United States or obligations fully guaranteed both as to principal and interest by the United States.
  - (2) Obligations of the Federal Financing Bank, the Federal Farm Credit Bank, the Bank for Cooperatives, the Federal Intermediate Credit Bank, the Federal Land Banks, the Federal Home Loan Banks, the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation, Fannie Mae, the Government National Mortgage Association, the Federal Housing Administration, the Farmers Home Administration, the United States Postal Service.
  - (3) Obligations of the State of North Carolina.
  - (4) Bonds and notes of any North Carolina local government or public authority, subject to such restrictions as the secretary may impose.
  - (5) Savings certificates issued by any savings and loan association organized under the laws of the State of North Carolina or by any federal savings and loan association having its principal office in North Carolina; provided that any principal amount of such certificate in excess of the amount insured by the federal government or any agency thereof, or by a

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mutual deposit guaranty association authorized by the Commissioner of Banks of the Department of Commerce of the State of North Carolina, be fully collateralized.

- (6) Prime quality commercial paper bearing the highest rating of at least one nationally recognized rating service and not bearing a rating below the highest by any nationally recognized rating service which rates the particular obligation.
- (7) Bills of exchange or time drafts drawn on and accepted by a commercial bank and eligible for use as collateral by member banks in borrowing from a federal reserve bank, provided that the accepting bank or its holding company is either (i) incorporated in the State of North Carolina or (ii) has outstanding publicly held obligations bearing the highest rating of at least one nationally recognized rating service and not bearing a rating below the highest by any nationally recognized rating service which rates the particular obligations.
- (8) Participating shares in a mutual fund for local government investment; provided that the investments of the fund are limited to those qualifying for investment under this subsection (c) and that said fund is certified by the Local Government Commission. The Local Government Commission shall have the authority to issue rules and regulations concerning the establishment and qualifications of any mutual fund for local government investment.
- (9) A commingled investment pool established and administered by the State Treasurer pursuant to G.S. 147-69.3.
- (10) A commingled investment pool established by interlocal agreement by two or more units of local government pursuant to G.S. 160A-460 through G.S. 160A-464, if the investments of the pool are limited to those qualifying for investment under this subsection (c).
- (11) Evidences of ownership of, or fractional undivided interests in, future interest and principal payments on either direct obligations of the United States government or obligations the principal of and the interest on which are guaranteed by the United States, which obligations are held by a bank or trust company organized and existing under the laws of the United States or any state in the capacity of custodian.
- (12) Repurchase agreements with respect to either direct obligations of the United States or obligations the principal of and the interest on which are guaranteed by the United States if entered into with a broker or dealer, as defined by the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, which is a dealer recognized as a primary dealer by a Federal Reserve Bank, or any commercial bank, trust company or national banking association, the deposits of which are insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or any successor thereof if:

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- a. Such obligations that are subject to such repurchase agreement are delivered (in physical or in book entry form) to the local government or public authority, or any financial institution serving either as trustee for the local government or public authority or as fiscal agent for the local government or public authority or are supported by a safekeeping receipt issued by a depository satisfactory to the local government or public authority, provided that such repurchase agreement must provide that the value of the underlying obligations shall be maintained at a current market value, calculated at least daily, of not less than one hundred percent (100%) of the repurchase price, and, provided further, that the financial institution serving either as trustee or as fiscal agent for the local government or public authority holding the obligations subject to the repurchase agreement hereunder or the depository issuing the safekeeping receipt shall not be the provider of the repurchase agreement;
  - b. A valid and perfected first security interest in the obligations which are the subject of such repurchase agreement has been granted to the local government or public authority or its assignee or book entry procedures, conforming, to the extent practicable, with federal regulations and satisfactory to the local government or public authority have been established for the benefit of the local government or public authority or its assignee;
  - c. Such securities are free and clear of any adverse third party claims; and
  - d. Such repurchase agreement is in a form satisfactory to the local government or public authority.
- (13) In connection with funds held by or on behalf of a local government or public authority, which funds are subject to the arbitrage and rebate provisions of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, participating shares in tax-exempt mutual funds, to the extent such participation, in whole or in part, is not subject to such rebate provisions, and taxable mutual funds, to the extent such fund provides services in connection with the calculation of arbitrage rebate requirements under federal income tax law; provided, the investments of any such fund are limited to those bearing one of the two highest ratings of at least one nationally recognized rating service and not bearing a rating below one of the two highest ratings by any nationally recognized rating service which rates the particular fund.

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(d) Investment securities may be bought, sold, and traded by private negotiation, and local governments and public authorities may pay all incidental costs thereof and all reasonable costs of administering the investment and deposit program. Securities and deposit certificates shall be in the custody of the finance officer who shall be responsible for their safekeeping and for keeping accurate investment accounts and records.

(e) Interest earned on deposits and investments shall be credited to the fund whose cash is deposited or invested. Cash of several funds may be combined for deposit or investment if not otherwise prohibited by law; and when such joint deposits or investments are made, interest earned shall be prorated and credited to the various funds on the basis of the amounts thereof invested, figured according to an average periodic balance or some other sound accounting principle. Interest earned on the deposit or investment of bond funds shall be deemed a part of the bond proceeds.

(f) Registered securities acquired for investment may be released from registration and transferred by signature of the finance officer.

(g) A local government, public authority, an entity eligible to participate in the Local Government Employee's Retirement System, or a local school administrative unit may make contributions to a Local Government Other Post-Employment Benefits Trust established pursuant to G.S. 159-30.1.

(h) A unit of local government employing local law enforcement officers may make contributions to the Local Government Law Enforcement Special Separation Allowance Fund established in G.S. 147-69.5. (1957, c. 864, s. 1; 1967, c. 798, ss. 1, 2; 1969, c. 862; 1971, c. 780, s. 1; 1973, c. 474, ss. 24, 25; 1975, c. 481; 1977, c. 575; 1979, c. 717, s. 2; 1981, c. 445, ss. 1-3; 1983, c. 158, ss. 1, 2; 1987, c. 672, s. 1; 1989, c. 76, s. 31; c. 751, s. 7(46); 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 959, s. 77; c. 1007, s. 40; 1993, c. 553, s. 55; 2001-193, s. 16; 2001-487, s. 14(o); 2005-394, s. 2; 2007-384, ss. 4, 9; 2010-175, s. 1; 2013-305, s. 1.)

### **§ 159-30.1. Trust for other post-employment benefits.**

(a) Trust. - A local government, a public authority, an entity eligible to participate in the Local Government Employee's Retirement System, or a local school administrative unit may establish and fund an irrevocable trust for the purpose of paying post-employment benefits for which the entity is liable. The irrevocable trust must be established by resolution or ordinance of the entity's governing board. The resolution or ordinance must state the purposes for which the trust is created and the method of determining and selecting the Fund's trustees. The resolution or ordinance establishing the trust may be amended from time to time, but an amendment may not authorize the use of monies in the trust for a purpose not stated in the resolution or ordinance establishing the trust.

(b) Restrictions. - Monies in an irrevocable trust established under subsection (a) of this section may be appropriated only for the purposes for which the trust was established. Monies in the trust are not subject to the claims of creditors of the entity that established the trust. An entity that establishes a trust may not deposit money in the trust if the total amount held in trust would exceed the entity's actuarial liability, determined in accordance with the standards of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, for the purposes for

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which the trust was established. A trust established pursuant to subsection (a) of this section shall be referred to as a Local Government Other Post-Retirement Benefits Trust, and the assets of that trust may be invested as provided in G.S. 159-30(c) or deposited with the State Treasurer for investment pursuant to G.S. 147-69.2(b4). (2007-384, s. 5; 2010-175, s. 2.)

### **§ 159-30.2. Trust for law enforcement special separation allowance benefits.**

(a) Trust. - A unit of local government employing local law enforcement officers may establish and fund an irrevocable trust for the purpose of paying law enforcement special separation allowance benefits for which the unit of local government is liable. The irrevocable trust must be established by resolution or ordinance of the unit's governing board. The resolution or ordinance must state the purposes for which the trust is created and the method of determining and selecting the Fund's trustees. The resolution or ordinance establishing the trust may be amended from time to time, but an amendment may not authorize the use of monies in the trust for a purpose not stated in the resolution or ordinance establishing the trust.

(b) Restrictions. - Monies in an irrevocable trust established under subsection (a) of this section may be appropriated only for the purposes for which the trust was established. Monies in the trust are not subject to the claims of creditors of the entity that established the trust. A unit of local government that establishes a trust may not deposit money in the trust if the total amount held in trust would exceed the unit's actuarial liability, determined in accordance with the standards of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, for the purpose for which the trust was established. (2007-384, s. 10.)

### **§ 159-31. Selection of depository; deposits to be secured.**

(a) The governing board of each local government and public authority shall designate as its official depositories one or more banks, savings and loan associations, or trust companies in this State or, with the written permission of the secretary, a national bank located in another state. In addition, a unit or public authority, with the written permission of the secretary, may designate a state bank or trust company located in another state as an official depository for the purpose of acting as fiscal agent for the unit or public authority. The names and addresses of the depositories shall be reported to the secretary. It shall be unlawful for any public moneys to be deposited in any place, bank, or trust company other than an official depository, except as permitted by G.S. 159-30(b); however, public moneys may be deposited in official depositories in Negotiable Order of Withdrawal (NOW) accounts.

(b) The amount of funds on deposit in an official depository or deposited at interest pursuant to G.S. 159-30(b) shall be secured by deposit insurance, surety bonds, letters of credit issued by a Federal Home Loan Bank, or investment securities of such nature, in a sufficient amount to protect the local government or public authority on account of deposit of funds made therein, and in such manner, as may be prescribed by rule or regulation of the Local Government Commission. When deposits are secured in accordance with this subsection, no public officer or employee may be held liable for any losses sustained by a local government or public authority because of the default or insolvency of the depository. No security is required for the protection of funds remitted to and received by a bank, savings and loan association, or trust company acting as fiscal agent for the payment of principal and interest on bonds or notes, when the funds are remitted no more than 60 days prior to the maturity date. (1927, c. 146, s. 19; 1929, c. 37; 1931, c. 60, s. 32; c. 296, s. 7; 1935, c. 375, s. 1; 1939, c. 129, s. 1; c. 134; 1953, c. 675, s. 28; 1955, cc. 698, 724;



1971, c. 780, s. 1; 1973, c. 474, s. 26; 1979, c. 637, s. 1; 1981, c. 447, s. 2; 1983, c. 158, s. 3; 1999-74, s. 1.)

**§ 159-32. Daily deposits.**

Except as otherwise provided by law, all taxes and other moneys collected or received by an officer or employee of a local government or public authority shall be deposited in accordance with this section. Each officer and employee of a local government or public authority whose duty it is to collect or receive any taxes or other moneys shall, on a daily basis, deposit or submit to a properly licensed and recognized cash collection service all collections and receipts. However, if the governing board gives its approval, deposits or submissions to a properly licensed and recognized cash collection service shall be required only when the moneys on hand amount to five hundred dollars (\$500.00) or greater. Until deposited or officially submitted to a properly licensed and recognized cash collection service, all moneys must be maintained in a secure location. All deposits shall be made with the finance officer or in an official depository. Deposits in an official depository shall be immediately reported to the finance officer by means of a duplicate deposit ticket. The finance officer may at any time audit the accounts of any officer or employee collecting or receiving taxes or other moneys, and may prescribe the form and detail of these accounts. The accounts of such an officer or employee shall be audited at least annually. (1927, c. 146, s. 19; 1929, c. 37; 1939, c. 134; 1955, cc. 698, 724; 1971, c. 780, s. 1; 1973, c. 474, s. 27; 2017-204, s. 6.1(a).)

**§ 159-32.1. Electronic payment.**

A unit of local government, public hospital, or public authority may, in lieu of payment by cash or check, accept payment by electronic payment as defined in G.S. 147-86.20 for any tax, assessment, rate, fee, charge, rent, interest, penalty, or other receivable owed to it. A unit of local government, public hospital, or public authority may pay any negotiated discount, processing fee, transaction fee, or other charge imposed by a credit card, charge card, or debit card company, or by a third-party merchant bank, as a condition of contracting for the unit's or the authority's acceptance of electronic payment. A unit of local government, public hospital, or public authority may impose the fee or charge as a surcharge on the amount paid by the person using electronic payment. (1999-434, s. 5.)

**§ 159-33. Semiannual reports on status of deposits and investments.**

Each officer having custody of any funds of any local government or public authority shall report to the secretary of the Local Government Commission on January 1 and July 1 of each year (or such other dates as he may prescribe) the amounts of funds then in his custody, the amounts of deposits of such funds in depositories, and a list of all investment securities and time deposits held by the local government or public authority. In like manner, each bank or trust company acting as the official depository of any unit of local government or public authority may be required to report to the secretary a description of the surety bonds or investment securities securing such public deposits. If the secretary finds at any time that any funds of any unit or authority are not properly deposited or secured, or are invested in securities not eligible for investment, he shall notify the officer or depository in charge of the funds of the failure to comply with law or applicable regulations of the Commission. Upon such notification, the officer or depository shall comply with

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the law or regulations within 30 days, except as to the sale of securities not eligible for investment which shall be sold within nine months at a price to be approved by the secretary. The Commission may extend the time for sale of ineligible securities, but no one extension may cover a period of more than one year. (1931, c. 60, s. 33; 1971, c. 780, s. 1; 1979, c. 637, s. 2.)

### **§ 159-33.1. (Effective until June 30, 2019) Semiannual reports of financial information.**

The finance officer of each unit and public authority shall submit to the secretary on January 1 and July 1 of each year (or such other dates as the secretary may prescribe) a statement of financial information concerning the unit or public authority. The secretary may prescribe the information to be included in the statement and may prescribe the form of the statement. (1973, c. 474, s. 28; 2018-5, s. 21.1(a).)

### **§ 159-33.1. (Effective June 30, 2019) Semiannual reports of financial information.**

The finance officer of each unit and public authority shall submit to the secretary on January 1 and July 1 of each year (or such other dates as the secretary may prescribe) a statement of financial information concerning the unit or public authority. The secretary may prescribe the information to be included in the statement and may prescribe the form of the statement; provided, however, the secretary shall prescribe that the finance officer of each city and county shall include in the statement the total revenues received from building inspections, by type, and the total expenditures paid from all revenues received, by type. (1973, c. 474, s. 28; 2018-5, s. 21.1(a); 2018-29, s. 4.5(a).)

### **§ 159-34. Annual independent audit; rules and regulations.**

(a) Each unit of local government and public authority shall have its accounts audited as soon as possible after the close of each fiscal year by a certified public accountant or by an accountant certified by the Commission as qualified to audit local government accounts. When specified by the secretary, the audit shall evaluate the performance of a unit of local government or public authority with regard to compliance with all applicable federal and State agency regulations. This audit, combined with the audit of financial accounts, shall be deemed to be the single audit described by the "Federal Single Audit Act of 1984". The auditor shall be selected by and shall report directly to the governing board. The audit contract or agreement shall (i) be in writing, (ii) include the entire entity in the scope of the audit, except that an audit for purposes other than the annual audit required by this section should include an accurate description of the scope of the audit, (iii) require that a typewritten or printed report on the audit be prepared as set forth herein, (iv) include all of its terms and conditions, and (v) be submitted to the secretary for his approval as to form, terms, conditions, and compliance with the rules of the Commission. As a minimum, the required report shall include the financial statements prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, all disclosures in the public interest required by law, and the auditor's opinion and comments relating to financial statements. The audit shall be performed in conformity with generally accepted auditing standards. The finance officer shall file a copy of the audit report with the secretary, and shall submit all bills or claims for audit fees and costs to the secretary for his approval. Before giving his approval the secretary shall determine that the audit and audit report substantially conform to the requirements of this section. It shall be unlawful for any unit of local government or public authority to pay or permit the payment of such bills or

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claims without this approval. Each officer and employee of the local government or local public authority having custody of public money or responsibility for keeping records of public financial or fiscal affairs shall produce all books and records requested by the auditor and shall divulge such information relating to fiscal affairs as he may request. If any member of a governing board or any other public officer or employee shall conceal, falsify, or refuse to deliver or divulge any books, records, or information, with an attempt thereby to mislead the auditor or impede or interfere with the audit, he is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(b) The Local Government Commission has authority to issue rules and regulations for the purpose of improving the quality of auditing and the quality and comparability of reporting pursuant to this section or any similar section of the General Statutes. The rules and regulations may consider the needs of the public for adequate information and the performance that the auditor has demonstrated in the past, and may be varied according to the size, purpose or function of the unit, or any other criteria reasonably related to the purpose or substance of the rules or regulation.

(c) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, except for Article 5A of Chapter 147 of the General Statutes pertaining to the State Auditor, all State departments and agencies shall rely upon the single audit accepted by the secretary as the basis for compliance with applicable federal and State regulations. All State departments and agencies which provide funds to local governments and public authorities shall provide the Commission with documents that the Commission finds are in the prescribed format describing standards of compliance and suggested audit procedures sufficient to give adequate direction to independent auditors retained by local governments and public authorities to conduct a single audit as required by this section. The secretary shall be responsible for the annual distribution of all such standards of compliance and suggested audit procedures proposed by State departments and agencies and any amendments thereto. Further, the Commission with the cooperation of all affected State departments and agencies shall be responsible for the following:

- (1) Procedures for the timely distribution of compliance standards developed by State departments and agencies, reviewed and approved by the Commission to auditors retained by local governments and public authorities.
- (2) Procedures for the distribution of single audits for local governments and public authorities such that they are available to all State departments and agencies which provide funds to local units.
- (3) The acceptance of single audits on behalf of all State departments and agencies; provided that, the secretary may subsequently revoke such acceptance for cause, whereupon affected State departments and agencies shall no longer rely upon such audit as the basis for compliance with applicable federal and State regulations. (1971, c. 780, s. 1; 1975, c. 514, s. 15; 1979, c. 402, s. 9; 1981, c. 685, ss. 8, 9; 1987, c. 287; 1993, c. 257, s. 20; c. 539, s. 1081; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2001-160, s. 1.)

### **§ 159-35. Secretary of Local Government Commission to notify units of debt service obligations.**

(a) The secretary shall mail to each local government and public authority not later than May 1 of each year a statement of its debt service obligations for the coming fiscal year, including sums to be paid into sinking funds.

(b) The secretary shall mail to each local government and public authority not later than 30 days prior to the due date of each installment of principal or interest on outstanding debt, a

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statement of the amount of principal and interest so payable, the due date, the place to which the payments should be sent, and a summary of the legal penalties for failing to meet debt service obligations.

(c) The secretary shall mail to each unit of local government not later than 30 days prior to the due date of each payment due to the State under debt instruments issued pursuant to Chapter 159G of the General Statutes or Chapter 159I of the General Statutes a statement of the amount so payable, the due date, the amount of any moneys due to the unit of local government that will be withheld by the State and applied to the payment, the amount due to be paid by the unit of local government from local sources, the place to which payment should be sent, and a summary of the legal penalties for failing to honor the debt instrument according to its terms. Failure of the secretary timely to mail such statement or otherwise comply with the provisions of this subsection (c) shall not affect in any manner the obligation of a unit of local government to make payments to the State in accordance with any such debt instrument. (1931, c. 60, ss. 36, 37; 1971, c. 780, s. 1; 1987, c. 796, s. 3(7); 1989, c. 756, s. 4.)

### **§ 159-36. Failure of local government to levy debt service taxes or provide for payment of debt.**

(a) If any local government or public authority fails or refuses to levy taxes or allocate other revenues in an amount sufficient to meet all installments of principal and interest falling due on its debt during the budget year, or to adequately maintain its sinking funds, the Commission shall enter an order directing and commanding the governing board of the local government or public authority to enact a budget ordinance levying the necessary taxes or raising the necessary revenue by whatever means are legally available. If the governing board shall fail or refuse to comply with the Commission's order within 10 days, the order shall have the same legal force and effect as if the actions therein commanded had been taken by the governing board, and the appropriate officers and employees of the local government or public authority shall proceed to collect the tax levy or implement the plan for raising the revenue to the same extent as if such action had been authorized and directed by the governing board. Any officer, employee, or member of the governing board of any local government or public authority who willfully fails or refuses to implement an order of the Local Government Commission issued pursuant to this section forfeits his office or position.

(b) This section does not apply to contractual obligations undertaken by a unit of local government in a debt instrument issued pursuant to Chapter 159G of the General Statutes unless such debt instrument is secured by a pledge of the faith and credit of the unit of local government. (1971, c. 780, s. 1; 1987, c. 796, s. 3(8).)

### **§ 159-37. Reports on status of sinking funds.**

Each unit or public authority maintaining any sinking fund shall transmit to the secretary upon his request financial reports on the status of the fund and the means by which moneys are obtained for deposit therein. The secretary shall determine from this information whether the sinking funds are being properly maintained, and if he shall find that they are not, he shall order the unit to take such action as may be necessary to maintain the funds in accordance with law. (1931, c. 60, s. 31; 1971, c. 780, s. 1.)

### **§ 159-38. Local units authorized to accept their bonds in payment of certain claims and judgments.**

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Any unit of local government or public authority may accept its own bonds, at par, in settlement of any claim or judgment that it may have against any person, firm, corporation, or association due to funds held in an insolvent bank, trust company, or savings and loan association. (1933, c. 376; 1971, c. 780, s. 1.)