

House Bill 861 (AS PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE)

By: Representative Roberts of the 131<sup>st</sup>

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To provide a new charter for the City of Abbeville; to provide for incorporation, boundaries,  
2 and powers of the city; to provide for a governing authority of such city and the powers,  
3 duties, authority, election, terms, vacancies, compensation, expenses, qualifications,  
4 prohibitions, conflicts of interest, and suspension and removal from office relative to  
5 members of such governing authority; to provide for inquiries and investigations; to provide  
6 for oaths, organization, meetings, quorum, voting, rules, and procedures; to provide for  
7 ordinances and codes; to provide for a mayor, and mayor pro tempore and certain duties,  
8 powers, and other matters relative thereto; to provide for administrative affairs and  
9 responsibilities; to provide for boards, commissions, and authorities; to provide for a city  
10 attorney, a city clerk, and other personnel and matters relating thereto; to provide for rules  
11 and regulations; to provide for a municipal court and the judge or judges thereof and other  
12 matters relative to those judges; to provide for the court's jurisdiction, powers, practices, and  
13 procedures; to provide for the right of certiorari and appeal; to provide for elections; to  
14 provide for taxation, licenses, and fees; to provide for franchises, service charges, and  
15 assessments; to provide for bonded and other indebtedness; to provide for auditing,  
16 accounting, budgeting, and appropriations; to provide for city contracts and purchasing; to  
17 provide for the conveyance of property and interests therein; to provide for bonds for  
18 officials; to provide for prior ordinances and rules, pending matters, and existing personnel;  
19 to provide for penalties; to provide for definitions and construction; to provide for other  
20 matters relative to the foregoing; to repeal a specific Act; to provide for effective dates; to  
21 repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

22 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:



**SECTION 1.13.**

## Examples of powers.

(a) Animal Regulations. To regulate and license or to prohibit the keeping or running at-large of animals and fowl and to provide for the impoundment of same if in violation of any ordinance or lawful order; to provide for the disposition by sale, gift, or humane destruction of animals and fowl when not redeemed as provided by ordinance; and to provide punishment for violation of ordinances enacted hereunder.

(b) Appropriations and expenditures. To make appropriations for the support of the government of the city; to authorize the expenditure of money for any purposes authorized by this charter and for any purpose for which a municipality is authorized by the laws of the State of Georgia; and to provide for the payment of expenses of the city.

(c) Building regulation. To regulate and to license the erection and construction of buildings and all other structures; to adopt building, housing, plumbing, electric, gas, and heating and air conditioning codes; and to regulate all housing and building trades.

(d) Business regulation and taxation. To levy and to provide for the collection of regulatory fees and taxes on privileges, occupations, trades and professions as authorized by Title 48 of the O.C.G.A. or other such applicable laws as are or may hereafter be enacted; to permit and regulate the same; to provide for the manner and method of payment of such regulatory fees and taxes; and to revoke such permits after due process for failure to pay any city taxes or fees.

(e) Condemnation. To condemn property, inside and outside the corporate limits of the city, for present or future use and for any corporate purpose deemed necessary by the governing authority, utilizing procedures enumerated in Title 22 of the O.C.G.A. or such other applicable laws as are or may hereafter be enacted.

(f) Contracts. To enter into contracts and agreements with other governmental entities and with private persons, firms, and corporations.

(g) Emergencies. To establish procedures for determining and proclaiming that an emergency situation exists within or without the city and to make and carry out all reasonable provisions deemed necessary to deal with or meet such an emergency for the protection, safety, health, or well-being of the citizens of the city.

(h) Environmental protection. To protect and preserve the natural resources, environment, and vital areas of the state through the preservation and improvement of air quality, the restoration and maintenance of water resources, the control of erosion and sedimentation, the management of solid and hazardous waste, and other necessary actions for the protection of the environment.

- 1 (i) Fire regulations. To fix and establish fire limits and from time to time extend, enlarge,  
2 or restrict the same; to prescribe fire safety regulations not inconsistent with general law,  
3 relating to both fire prevention and detection and to fire fighting; and to prescribe penalties  
4 and punishment for violations thereof.
- 5 (j) Garbage fees. To levy, fix, assess, and collect a garbage, refuse, and trash collection and  
6 disposal and other sanitary service charge, tax, or fee for such services as may be necessary  
7 in the operation of the city from all individuals, firms, and corporations residing in or doing  
8 business therein benefiting from such services; to enforce the payment of such charges, taxes,  
9 or fees; and to provide for the manner and method of collecting such service charges.
- 10 (k) General health and welfare. To define, regulate, and prohibit any act, practice, conduct,  
11 or use of property which is detrimental to health, sanitation, cleanliness, welfare, and safety  
12 of the inhabitants of the city and to provide for the enforcement of such standards.
- 13 (l) Gifts. To accept or refuse gifts, donations, bequests, or grants from any source for any  
14 purpose related to powers and duties of the city and the general welfare of its citizens, on  
15 such terms and conditions as the donor or grantor may impose.
- 16 (m) Health and sanitation. To prescribe standards of health and sanitation and to provide  
17 for the enforcement of such standards.
- 18 (n) Jail sentences. To provide that persons given jail sentences in the city's court may work  
19 out such sentences in any public works or on the streets, roads, drains, and other public  
20 property in the city; to provide for commitment of such persons to any jail; or to provide for  
21 commitment of such persons to any county work camp or county jail by agreement with the  
22 appropriate county officials.
- 23 (o) Motor vehicles. To regulate the operation of motor vehicles and exercise control over  
24 all traffic, including parking upon or across the streets, roads, alleys, and walkways of the  
25 city.
- 26 (p) Municipal agencies and delegation of power. To create, alter, or abolish departments,  
27 boards, offices, commissions, and agencies of the city and to confer upon such agencies the  
28 necessary and appropriate authority for carrying out all the powers conferred upon or  
29 delegated to the same.
- 30 (q) Municipal debts. To appropriate and borrow money for the payment of debts of the city  
31 and to issue bonds for the purpose of raising revenue to carry out any project, program, or  
32 venture authorized by this charter or the laws of the State of Georgia.
- 33 (r) Municipal property ownership. To acquire, dispose of, lease, and hold in trust or  
34 otherwise, any real, personal, or mixed property, in fee simple or lesser interest, inside or  
35 outside the property limits of the city.

- 1 (s) Municipal property protection. To provide for the preservation and protection of  
2 property and equipment of the city and the administration and the use of same by the public;  
3 and to prescribe penalties and punishment for violations thereof.
- 4 (t) Municipal utilities. To acquire, lease, construct, operate, maintain, sell, and dispose of  
5 public utilities, including but not limited to a system of waterworks, sewers and drains,  
6 sewage disposal, gas works, electric light plants, cable television and other  
7 telecommunications, transportation facilities, public airports, and any other public utility; and  
8 to fix the taxes, charges, rates, fares, fees, assessments, regulations, and penalties and to  
9 provide for the withdrawal of service for refusal or failure to pay the same.
- 10 (u) Nuisance. To define a nuisance and provide for its abatement whether on public or  
11 private property.
- 12 (v) Penalties. To provide penalties for violation of any ordinances adopted pursuant to the  
13 authority of this charter and the laws of the State of Georgia.
- 14 (w) Planning and zoning. To provide comprehensive city planning for development by  
15 zoning and to provide subdivision regulation and the like as the city council deems necessary  
16 and reasonable to insure a safe, healthy, and aesthetically pleasing community.
- 17 (x) Police and fire protection. To exercise the power of arrest through duly appointed police  
18 officers and to establish, operate, or contract for a police and a fire-fighting agency.
- 19 (y) Public hazards; removal. To provide for the destruction and removal of any building  
20 or other structure which is or may become dangerous or detrimental to the public.
- 21 (z) Public improvements. To provide for the acquisition, construction, building, operation,  
22 and maintenance of public ways, parks and playgrounds, recreational facilities, cemeteries,  
23 markets and market houses, public buildings, libraries, public housing, airports, hospitals,  
24 terminals, docks, parking facilities, or charitable, cultural, educational, recreational,  
25 conservation, sport, curative, corrective, detention, penal, and medical institutions, agencies,  
26 and facilities; and to provide other public improvements inside or outside the corporate limits  
27 of the city; to regulate the use of public improvements; and for such purposes, property may  
28 be acquired by condemnation under Title 22 of the O.C.G.A. or such other applicable laws  
29 as are or may hereafter be enacted.
- 30 (aa) Public peace. To provide for the prevention and punishment of drunkenness, riots, and  
31 public disturbance.
- 32 (bb) Public transportation. To organize and operate such public transportation systems as  
33 are deemed beneficial.
- 34 (cc) Public utilities and services. To grant franchises or make contracts for or impose taxes  
35 on public utilities and public service companies and to prescribe the rates, fares, regulations,  
36 and standards and conditions of service applicable to the service to be provided by the

- 1 franchise grantee or contractor, insofar as not in conflict with regulations of the Public  
2 Service Commission.
- 3 (dd) Regulation of roadside areas. To prohibit or regulate and control the erection, removal,  
4 and maintenance of signs, billboards, trees, shrubs, fences, buildings, and any and all other  
5 structures or obstructions upon or adjacent to the rights of way of streets and roads or within  
6 view thereof, within or abutting the corporate limits of the city; and to prescribe penalties and  
7 punishment for violation of such ordinances.
- 8 (ee) Retirement. To provide and maintain a retirement plan for officers and employees of  
9 the city.
- 10 (ff) Roadways. To lay out, open, extend, widen, narrow, establish, or change the grade of,  
11 abandon or close, construct, pave, curb, gutter, adorn with shade trees, or otherwise improve,  
12 maintain, repair, clean, prevent erosion of, and light the roads, alleys, and walkways within  
13 the corporate limits of the city; and to grant franchises and rights of way throughout the  
14 streets and roads and over the bridges and viaducts for the use of public utilities; and to  
15 require real estate owners to repair and maintain in a safe condition the sidewalks adjoining  
16 their lots or lands to curb or street and to impose penalties for failure to do so.
- 17 (gg) Sewer fees. To levy a fee, charge, or sewer tax as necessary to assure the acquiring  
18 construction, equipping, operating, maintaining, and extending of a sewage disposal plant  
19 and sewerage system, and to levy on real estate owners to whom sewers and sewerage  
20 systems are made available a sewer service fee, charge, or sewer tax for the availability or  
21 use of the sewers; to provide for the manner and method of collecting such service charges  
22 and for enforcing payment of the same; and to charge, impose, and collect a sewer  
23 connection fee or fees to those connected with the system.
- 24 (hh) Solid waste disposal. To provide for the collection and disposal of garbage, rubbish,  
25 and refuse and to regulate the collection and disposal of garbage, rubbish, and refuse by  
26 others; and to provide for the separate collection of glass, tin, aluminum, cardboard, paper,  
27 and other recyclable materials and to provide for the sale of such items.
- 28 (ii) Special areas of public regulation. To regulate or prohibit junk dealers, pawn shops, the  
29 manufacture, sale, or transportation of any intoxicating liquors, and the use of firearms; to  
30 regulate the transportation, storage, and use of combustible, explosive, and inflammable  
31 materials, the use of lighting and heating equipment, and any other business or situation  
32 which may be dangerous to persons or property; to regulate and control the conduct of  
33 peddlers and itinerant traders, theatrical performances, exhibitions, and shows of any kind,  
34 by taxation or otherwise; and to license, tax, regulate, or prohibit professional fortunetelling,  
35 adult bookstores, and massage parlors.
- 36 (jj) Special assessments. To levy and provide for the collection of special assessments to  
37 cover the costs for any public improvements.

- 1 (kk) Taxes; ad valorem. To levy and provide for the assessment, valuation, revaluation, and  
 2 collection of taxes on all property subject to taxation.
- 3 (ll) Taxes; other. To levy and collect such other taxes as may be allowed now or in the  
 4 future by law.
- 5 (mm) Taxicabs. To regulate and license vehicles operated for hire in the city; to limit the  
 6 number of such vehicles; to require the operators thereof to be licensed; to require public  
 7 liability insurance on such vehicles in the amounts to be prescribed by ordinance; and to  
 8 regulate the parking of such vehicles.
- 9 (nn) Urban redevelopment. To organize and operate an urban redevelopment program.
- 10 (oo) Other powers. To exercise and enjoy all other powers, functions, rights, privileges, and  
 11 immunities necessary or desirable to promote or protect the safety, health, peace, security,  
 12 good order, comfort, convenience, or general welfare of the city and its inhabitants; and to  
 13 exercise all implied powers necessary or desirable to carry into execution all powers granted  
 14 in this charter as fully and completely as if such powers were fully stated herein; and to  
 15 exercise all powers now or in the future authorized to be exercised by other municipal  
 16 governments under other laws of the State of Georgia; and no listing of particular powers in  
 17 this charter shall be held to be exclusive of others, nor restrictive of general words and  
 18 phrases granting powers, but shall be held to be in addition to such powers unless expressly  
 19 prohibited to municipalities under the Constitution or applicable laws of the State of Georgia.

20 **SECTION 1.14.**

21 Exercise of powers.

22 All powers, functions, rights, privileges, and immunities of the city, its officers, agencies, or  
 23 employees shall be carried into execution as provided in this charter. If this charter makes  
 24 no provisions, such shall be carried into execution as provided by ordinance or as provided  
 25 by pertinent laws of the State of Georgia.

26 **ARTICLE II**

27 **GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE**

28 **SECTION 2.10.**

29 City council creation; number; election.

30 The legislative authority of the government of this city, except as otherwise specifically  
 31 provided in this charter, shall be vested in a city council to be composed of a mayor and six  
 32 councilmembers. The city council established shall in all respects be a successor to and

1 continuation of the governing authority under prior law. The mayor and councilmembers  
2 shall be elected in the manner provided by general law and this charter.

3 **SECTION 2.11.**

4 Mayor or city council terms and qualifications for office.

5 The mayor and members of the city council shall serve for terms of four years and until their  
6 respective successors are elected and qualified. No person shall be eligible to serve as mayor  
7 or councilmember unless that person shall have been a resident of the city for 12 months  
8 prior to the date of election of mayor or members of the council; each shall continue to reside  
9 therein during that member's period of service and to be registered and qualified to vote in  
10 municipal elections of this city.

11 **SECTION 2.12.**

12 Vacancy; filling of vacancies.

13 (a) Vacancies – The office of mayor or councilmember shall become vacant upon the  
14 occurrence of any event specified by the Constitution of the State of Georgia, Title 45 of the  
15 O.C.G.A., or such other applicable laws as are or may hereafter be enacted.

16 (b) Filling of vacancies – A vacancy in the office of mayor or councilmember shall be filled  
17 for the remainder of the unexpired term, if any, by appointment by council if less than 12  
18 months remains in the unexpired term, otherwise by an election, as provided for in Section  
19 5.14 of this charter and in accordance with Titles 21 and 45 of the O.C.G.A. or other such  
20 laws as or may hereafter be enacted.

21 **SECTION 2.13.**

22 Compensation and expenses.

23 The mayor and councilmembers shall receive compensation and expenses for their services  
24 as provided by ordinance.

25 **SECTION 2.14.**

26 Holding other office; voting when financially interested.

27 (a) Elected and appointed officers of the city are trustees and servants of the residents of the  
28 city and shall act in a fiduciary capacity for the benefit of such residents.

- 1 (b) Except as authorized by law, the mayor or any councilmember shall not hold any other  
2 city office or city employment during the term for which that person was elected.
- 3 (c) Neither the mayor nor any member of the city council shall vote upon, sign, or veto any  
4 ordinance, resolution, contract, or other matter in which that person is financially interested.

5 **SECTION 2.15.**

6 Inquiries and investigations.

7 Following the adoption of an authorizing resolution, the city council may make inquiries and  
8 investigations into the affairs of the city and the conduct of any department, office, or agency  
9 thereof, and for this purpose may subpoena witnesses, administer oaths, take testimony, and  
10 require the production of evidence. Any person who fails or refuses to obey a lawful order  
11 issued in the exercise of these powers by the city council shall be punished as provided by  
12 ordinance.

13 **SECTION 2.16.**

14 General power and authority of the city council.

15 Except as otherwise provided by law or this charter, the city council shall be vested with all  
16 the powers of government of this city.

17 **SECTION 2.17.**

18 Eminent domain.

19 The city council is hereby empowered to acquire, construct, operate, and maintain public  
20 ways, parks, public grounds, cemeteries, markets, market houses, public buildings, libraries,  
21 sewers, drains, sewage treatment, waterworks, electrical systems, gas systems, airports,  
22 hospitals, and charitable, educational, recreational, sport, curative, corrective, detention,  
23 penal, and medical institutions, agencies, cable systems, and facilities, and any other public  
24 improvements inside or outside the city, and to regulate the use thereof, and for such  
25 purposes, property may be condemned under procedures established under general law  
26 applicable now or as provided in the future.

**SECTION 2.18.**

## Organizational meetings.

The city council shall hold an organizational meeting on the first regular meeting in January following each municipal election. The city clerk shall call the meeting to order and the oath of office shall be administered to any newly elected member is as follows:

"I do solemnly (swear)(affirm) that I will faithfully perform the duties of (mayor)(councilmember) of this city and that I will support and defend the charter thereof as well as the Constitution and laws of the State of Georgia and the United States of America."

**SECTION 2.19.**

## Regular and special meetings.

(a) The city council shall hold regular meetings at such times and places as shall be prescribed by ordinance.

(b) Special meetings of the city council may be held on call of the mayor or three members of the city council. Notice of such special meetings shall be served on all other members personally, or by telephone personally, at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting. Such notice to councilmembers shall not be required if the mayor and all councilmembers are present when the special meeting is called. Such notice of any special meeting may be waived by a councilmember in writing before or after such a meeting and attendance at the meeting shall also constitute a waiver of notice on any business transacted in such councilmembers presence. Only the business stated in the call may be transacted at the special meeting.

(c) All meetings of the city council shall be public to the extent required by law and notice to the public of special meetings shall be made fully as is reasonably possible as provided by Code Section 50-14-1 of the O.C.G.A. or other such applicable laws as are or may hereafter be enacted.

**SECTION 2.20.**

## Rules of procedure.

(a) The city council shall adopt its rules of procedure and order of business consistent with the provisions of this charter and shall provide for keeping a journal of its proceedings, which shall be a public record.

1 (b) All committees and committee chairs and officers of the city council shall be appointed  
2 by the mayor and shall serve at the pleasure of the mayor. The mayor shall have the power  
3 to appoint new members to any committee at any time.

4 **SECTION 2.21.**

5 Quorum; voting.

6 Three councilmembers and the mayor or three councilmembers and the mayor pro tem who  
7 has assumed the duties of the mayor shall constitute a quorum and shall be authorized to  
8 transact business of the city council. Voting on the adoption of ordinances shall be by voice  
9 vote and the vote shall be recorded in the journal, but any member of the city council shall  
10 have the right to request a roll-call vote and such vote shall be recorded in the journal.  
11 Except as otherwise provided in this charter, the affirmative vote of a majority of the  
12 councilmembers shall be required for the adoption of any ordinance, resolution, or motion.  
13 An abstention shall not be counted as a vote.

14 **SECTION 2.22.**

15 Ordinance form; procedures.

16 (a) Every proposed ordinance should be introduced in writing. No ordinance shall contain  
17 a subject which is not expressed in its title. The enacting clause shall be "It is hereby  
18 ordained by the governing authority of the City of Abbeville" and every ordinance shall so  
19 begin.

20 (b) An ordinance may be introduced by any councilmember and be read at a regular or  
21 special meeting of the city council. Ordinances shall be considered and adopted or rejected  
22 by the city council in accordance with the rules which it shall establish, except for emergency  
23 ordinances provided in Section 2.24 of this charter. Upon introduction of any ordinance, the  
24 clerk shall within five working days distribute a copy to the mayor and to each  
25 councilmember and shall file a reasonable number of copies in the office of the clerk and at  
26 such other public places as the city council may designate.

27 **SECTION 2.23.**

28 Action requiring an ordinance.

29 Acts of the city council which have the force and effect of law shall be enacted by ordinance.



1 (b) The city clerk shall make available copies of any adopted code of technical regulations  
2 for inspection by the public.

3 **SECTION 2.26.**

4 Signing; authenticating; recording; codification; printing.

5 (a) The clerk shall authenticate by the clerk's signature and record in full a properly indexed  
6 book kept for that purpose all ordinances adopted by the council.

7 (b) The city council shall provide for the preparation of a general codification of all the  
8 ordinances of the city having the force and effect of law. The general codification shall be  
9 adopted by the city council by ordinance and shall be published promptly, together with all  
10 amendments thereto and such codes of technical regulations and other rules and regulations  
11 as the city council may specify. This compilation shall be known and cited officially as "The  
12 Code of the City of Abbeville, Georgia." Copies of the code shall be furnished to all officers,  
13 departments, and agencies of the city and made available for purchase by the public at a  
14 reasonable price as fixed by the city council.

15 (c) The city council shall cause each ordinance and each amendment to this charter to be  
16 printed promptly following its adoption, and the printed ordinances and charter amendments  
17 shall be made available for purchase by the public at reasonable prices to be fixed by the city  
18 council. Following publication of the first code under this charter and at all times thereafter,  
19 the ordinances and charter amendments shall be printed in substantially the same style as the  
20 code currently in effect and shall be printed for incorporation therein. The city council shall  
21 make such further arrangements as deemed desirable with reproduction and distribution of  
22 any current changes in additions to codes of technical regulations and other rules and  
23 regulations included in the code.

24 **SECTION 2.27.**

25 Election of mayor; forfeiture; compensation.

26 The mayor shall be elected and serve for a term of four years and until a successor is elected  
27 and qualified. The mayor shall be a qualified elector of this city and shall have been a  
28 resident of the city 12 months preceding the election. The mayor shall continue to reside in  
29 this city during the period of service. The mayor shall forfeit the office on the same grounds  
30 and under the same procedure as for councilmembers. The compensation of the mayor shall  
31 be established in the same manner as for councilmembers.

**SECTION 2.28.**

Chief executive officer.

The mayor shall be the chief executive of this city. The mayor shall possess all of the executive and administrative power granted to the city under the Constitution and laws of the State of Georgia, and all the executive and administrative powers contained in this charter.

**SECTION 2.29.**

Powers and duties of mayor.

As the chief executive of this city, the mayor shall:

- (1) See that all laws and ordinances of the city are faithfully executed;
- (2) Appoint and remove all officers, department heads, and employees of the city, except as otherwise provided in this charter;
- (3) Exercise supervision over all executive and administrative work of the city and provide for the coordination of administrative activities;
- (4) Prepare and submit to the city council a recommended operating budget and capital budget;
- (5) Submit to the city council at least once a year a statement covering the financial conditions of the city and from time to time such other information as the city council may request;
- (6) Recommend to the city council such measures relative to the affairs of the city, improvement of the government, and promotion of the welfare of its inhabitants as the mayor may deem expedient;
- (7) Call special meeting of the city council as provided for in subsection (b) of Section 2.19 of this charter;
- (8) Approve or disapprove ordinances as provided in Section 2.30 of this charter;
- (9) Provide for an annual audit of all accounts of the city;
- (10) Vote on matters before the city council only in the case of a tie vote;
- (11) Require any department or agency of the city to submit written reports whenever the mayor deems it expedient; and
- (12) Perform such other duties as may be required by law, this charter, or by ordinance.

**SECTION 2.30.**

Submission of ordinances to the mayor; veto power.

(a) The clerk shall promptly present every ordinance adopted by the city council to the mayor.

(b) The mayor, within ten calendar days of receipt of an ordinance, shall return it to the clerk with or without the mayor's approval or with the mayor's disapproval. If the ordinance has been approved by the mayor, it shall become law upon its return to the clerk; if the ordinance is neither approved nor disapproved, it shall become a law at 12:00 Noon on the tenth calendar day after its adoption; if the ordinance is disapproved, the mayor shall submit to the city council through the clerk a written statement of reasons for the veto. The clerk shall record upon the ordinance the date of its delivery to and receipt from the mayor.

(c) The clerk shall promptly present vetoed ordinances by the mayor to the city council at its next meeting. If the city council then or at its next meeting adopts the ordinance by an affirmative vote of four members, it shall become law.

(d) The mayor may disapprove or reduce any item or items of appropriation in any ordinance. The approved part or parts of any ordinance making appropriations shall become law, and the part or parts disapproved shall not become law unless subsequently passed by the city council over the mayor's veto as provided herein. The reduced part or parts shall be presented to the city council as though disapproved and shall not become law unless overridden by the council as provided in subsection (c) of this section.

**SECTION 2.31.**

Mayor pro tem; selection; duties.

By a majority vote, the city council shall elect a councilmember to serve as mayor pro tem each year. The mayor pro tem shall preside at all meetings of the city council and shall assume the duties and powers of the mayor upon the mayor's physical or mental disability or absence. The city council by a majority vote shall elect a new presiding officer from among its members for any period in which the mayor pro tem is disabled, absent, or acting as mayor. Any such absence or disability shall be declared by majority vote of all councilmembers.



1 (d) Except as otherwise provided by charter or by law, no member of any board,  
2 commission, or authority shall hold any elective office in the city.

3 (e) Any vacancy on a board, commission, or authority shall be filled for the unexpired term  
4 in the manner prescribed herein for original appointment, except as otherwise provided by  
5 this charter or by law.

6 (f) No member of a board, commission, or authority shall assume office until that person has  
7 executed and filed with the clerk of the city an oath obligating himself or herself to faithfully  
8 and impartially perform the duties of that member's office, such oath to be prescribed by  
9 ordinance and administered by the mayor.

10 (g) All board members serve at will and may be removed at any time by a vote of three  
11 members of the city council unless otherwise provided by law.

12 (h) Except as otherwise provided by this charter or by law, each board, commission, or  
13 authority of the city shall elect one of its members as chair and one member as vice chair,  
14 and may elect as its secretary one of its own members or may appoint as secretary an  
15 employee of the city. Each board, commission, or authority of the city government may  
16 establish such bylaws, rules, and regulations, not inconsistent with this charter, ordinances  
17 of the city, or law, as it deems appropriate and necessary for the fulfillment of its duties or  
18 the conduct of its affairs. Copies of such bylaws, rules, and regulations shall be filed with  
19 the clerk of the city.

20 **SECTION 3.12.**

21 City attorney.

22 The city council shall appoint each year a city attorney, together with such assistant city  
23 attorneys as may be authorized, and shall provide for the payment of such attorney or  
24 attorneys for services rendered to the city. The city attorney shall be responsible for  
25 providing for the representation and defense of the city in all litigation in which the city is  
26 a party; may be the prosecuting officer in the municipal court; shall attend the meetings of  
27 the council as directed; shall advise the city council, mayor, and other officers and employees  
28 of the city concerning legal aspects of the city's affairs; and shall perform such other duties  
29 as may be required by virtue of the person's position as city attorney.

30 **SECTION 3.13.**

31 City clerk.

32 The city council shall appoint each year a city clerk who shall not be a councilmember. The  
33 city clerk shall be custodian of the official city seal and city records; maintain city council

1 records required by this charter; and perform such other duties as may be required by the city  
2 council.

3 **SECTION 3.14.**

4 Position classification and pay plans.

5 The mayor shall be responsible for the preparation of a position classification and pay plan  
6 which shall be submitted to the city council for approval. Such plan shall apply to all  
7 employees of the city and any of its agencies, departments, boards, commissions, or  
8 authorities. When a pay plan has been adopted, the city council shall not increase or decrease  
9 the salary range applicable to any position except by amendment of such pay plan. For  
10 purposes of this section, all elected and appointed city official are not city employees.

11 **SECTION 3.15.**

12 Personnel policies.

13 All employees serve at will and may be removed from office at any time unless otherwise  
14 provided by ordinance.

15 **ARTICLE IV**

16 **JUDICIAL BRANCH**

17 **SECTION 4.10.**

18 Creation; name.

19 There shall be one municipal court in this city and it shall be known as "The Municipal Court  
20 of Abbeville."

21 **SECTION 4.11.**

22 Chief judge; associate judge.

23 (a) The municipal court shall be presided over by a chief judge and such part-time, full-time,  
24 or stand-by judges as provided by ordinance.

25 (b) No person shall be qualified or eligible to serve as a judge on the municipal court unless  
26 that person shall have attained the age of 21 years, shall possess a high school diploma or its  
27 equivalent, not have been convicted of any felony, and shall possess all other qualifications  
28 required by law. All judges shall be appointed by the city council and shall serve 12 month  
29 terms which shall expire January 15 of each year and until a successor is appointed and  
30 qualified.

1 (c) Compensation of the judges shall be fixed by ordinance and paid monthly from city  
2 funds.

3 (d) Before assuming office, each judge shall take an oath, given by the mayor, that such  
4 judge will honestly and faithfully discharge the duties of the judge's office to the best of the  
5 judge's ability and without fear, favor, or partiality. The oath shall be entered upon the  
6 minutes of the city council journal required in Section 2.20 of this charter.

7 **SECTION 4.12.**

8 Convening.

9 The municipal court shall be convened at least monthly and at such other times as provided  
10 by ordinance, and the judges thereof may schedule other sessions as needed for the prompt  
11 and official disposition of matters referred to the court.

12 **SECTION 4.13.**

13 Jurisdiction; powers.

14 (a) The municipal court shall try and punish violations of this charter, all city ordinances,  
15 and such other violations as provided by law.

16 (b) The municipal court shall have authority to punish those in its presence for contempt,  
17 provided that such punishment shall not exceed \$200.00 or ten days in jail, or both.

18 (c) The municipal court may fix punishment for offenses within its jurisdiction not  
19 exceeding a fine of \$1,000.00 or imprisonment for not more than 12 months or both such fine  
20 and imprisonment or may fix punishment by fine, imprisonment, or alternative sentencing,  
21 as now or hereafter provided by law. The fine limits shall be exclusive of add-ons or  
22 surcharges required to be imposed by general law or court rule or regulation.

23 (d) The municipal court shall have authority to establish a schedule of fees to defray the cost  
24 of operation and shall be entitled to reimbursement of the cost of meals, transportation, and  
25 caretaking of prisoners bound over to superior courts for violations of state law.

26 (e) The municipal court shall have authority to establish bail and recognizances to ensure  
27 the presence of those charged with violations before such court and shall have discretionary  
28 authority to accept cash or personal or real property as surety for the appearance of persons  
29 charged with violations. Whenever any person shall give bail for that person's appearance  
30 and shall fail to appear at the time fixed for trial, that person's bond shall be forfeited by the  
31 judge presiding at such time and an execution issued thereon by serving the defendant and  
32 the defendant's sureties with a rule nisi at least two days before a hearing on the rule nisi.  
33 In the event that cash or property is accepted in lieu of bond for security for the appearance  
34 of a defendant at trial, and if such defendant fails to appear at the time and place fixed for  
35 trial, the cash so deposited shall be on order of the judge declared forfeited to the city, or the

1 property so deposited shall have a lien against it for the value forfeited which lien shall be  
2 enforceable in the same manner and to the same extent as a lien for city property taxes.

3 (f) The municipal court shall have the same authority as superior courts to compel the  
4 production of evidence in the possession of any party; to enforce obedience to its orders,  
5 judgments, and sentences; and to administer such oaths as are necessary.

6 (g) The municipal court may compel the presence of all parties necessary to a proper  
7 disposal of each case by the issuance of summonses, subpoenas, and warrants which may be  
8 served as executed by any officer as authorized by this charter or by law.

9 (h) Each judge of the municipal court shall be authorized to issue warrants for the arrest of  
10 persons charged with offenses against any ordinance of the city, and each judge of the  
11 municipal court shall have the same authority as a magistrate of the state to issue warrants  
12 for offenses against state laws committed within the city.

13 (i) The municipal court is authorized to contract with a public or private misdemeanor  
14 probation service for oversight of offenders placed on probation by the court.

15 **SECTION 4.14.**

16 **Certiorari.**

17 The right of certiorari from the decision and judgment of the municipal court shall exist in  
18 all criminal cases and ordinance violation cases, and such certiorari shall be obtained under  
19 the sanction of a judge of the Superior Court of Wilcox County under the laws of the State  
20 of Georgia regulating the granting and issuance of writs of certiorari.

21 **SECTION 4.15.**

22 **Rules of the court.**

23 With the approval of the city council, the judge shall have full power and authority to make  
24 reasonable rules and regulations necessary and proper to secure the efficient and successful  
25 administration of the municipal court; provided, however, that the city council may adopt in  
26 part or in toto the rules and regulations applicable to municipal courts. The rules and  
27 regulations made or adopted shall be filed with the city clerk, shall be available for public  
28 inspection, and, upon request, a copy shall be furnished to all defendants in municipal court  
29 proceedings at least 48 hours prior to such proceedings.

**SECTION 4.16.**

Provision of facilities and supplies.

The city council shall provide suitable offices and courtrooms for the operation of the court and shall supply all fixtures, supplies, and equipment necessary for the proper functioning of the court.

**SECTION 4.17.**

Discipline, removal, and involuntary retirement.

Judges of the Municipal Court of Abbeville shall be subject to discipline, removal, and involuntary retirement by the Judicial Qualifications Commission.

**SECTION 4.18.**

Training requirements; payment of training costs.

All judges of the Municipal Court of Abbeville shall periodically satisfactorily complete training courses mandated by laws of Georgia in order to remain certified. The reasonable costs and expenses of such training shall be paid by the city government from city funds.

**ARTICLE V****ELECTIONS AND REMOVAL****SECTION 5.10.**

Applicability of general law.

All primaries and elections shall be held and conducted in accordance with Chapter 2 of Title 21 of the O.C.G.A., the "Georgia Election Code," as now or hereafter amended.

**SECTION 5.11.**

Election of the city council and mayor.

(a) There shall be a municipal general election biennially in odd-numbered years on the Tuesday next following the first Monday in November.

(b) The mayor and councilmembers in office on January 1, 2003, and any person elected or appointed to fill a vacancy in such office, shall continue to serve out their terms of office and until their respective successors are elected and qualified. Three councilmembers shall be elected at the municipal general election in 2003 and at every other municipal general

1 election thereafter. The mayor and the remaining three councilmembers shall be elected at  
2 the municipal general election in 2005 and at every other municipal general election  
3 thereafter so that a continuing body is created. Persons elected to the council shall serve for  
4 terms of four years, beginning at the first organizational meeting in January immediately  
5 following their election, and until their respective successors are elected and qualified.

6 **SECTION 5.12.**

7 Nonpartisan elections.

8 Political parties shall not conduct primaries for city offices and all names of candidates for  
9 city offices shall be listed without party designations.

10 **SECTION 5.13.**

11 Election by plurality.

12 The person receiving a plurality of the votes cast for the office of mayor shall be elected. The  
13 three candidates receiving the highest number of votes cast for the office of councilmember  
14 shall be elected. In the case of a tie for the third position of councilmember, a run-off  
15 election shall be held and the person receiving a plurality of the votes cast shall be elected.

16 **SECTION 5.14.**

17 Special elections; vacancies.

18 In the event that the office of mayor or councilmember shall become vacant as provided in  
19 Section 2.12 of this charter, the city council or those remaining shall order a special election  
20 to fill the balance of the unexpired term of such official; provided, however, if such vacancy  
21 occurs within 12 months of the expiration of the term of that office, the city council or those  
22 remaining shall appoint a successor for the remainder of the term. In all other respects, the  
23 special election shall be held and conducted in accordance with Chapter 2 of Title 21 of the  
24 O.C.G.A., the "Georgia Election Code," as now or hereafter amended.

25 **SECTION 5.15.**

26 Other provisions.

27 Except as otherwise provided in this charter, the city council shall, by ordinance, prescribe  
28 such rules and regulations as it deems appropriate to fulfill any option and duties under  
29 Chapter 2 of Title 21 of the O.C.G.A., the "Georgia Election Code."

**SECTION 5.16.**

## Removal of officers.

(a) The mayor, councilmembers, or other appointed officers provided for in this charter shall be removed from office for any one or more of the causes provided in Title 45 of the O.C.G.A. or such other applicable laws as are or may hereafter be enacted.

(b) Removal of an officer pursuant to subsection (a) of this section shall be accomplished by one of the following methods:

(1) Following a hearing at which an impartial panel, selected by the mayor and the city council, shall render a decision. In the event an elected officer is sought to be removed by the action of the city council, such officer shall be entitled to a written notice specifying the ground or grounds for removal and to a public hearing which shall be held not less than ten days after the service of such written notice. The city council shall provide by ordinance for the manner in which such hearings shall be held. Any elected officer sought to be removed from office as herein provided shall have the right of appeal from the decision of the city council to the Superior Court of Wilcox County. Such appeal shall be governed by the same rules as govern appeals to the superior court from the probate court; or

(2) By an order of the Superior Court of Wilcox County following a hearing on a complaint seeking such removal brought by any resident of the City of Abbeville.

**ARTICLE VI****FINANCE****SECTION 6.10.**

## Property tax.

The city council may assess, levy, and collect an ad valorem tax on all real and personal property within the corporate limits of the city that is subject to such taxation by the state and county. This tax is for the purpose of raising revenues to defray the cost of operating the city government, of providing governmental services, for the repayments of principal and interest on general obligations, and for any other public purpose as determined by the city council at its discretion.

**SECTION 6.11.**

## Millage rate; due dates; payment methods.

The city council by ordinance shall establish a millage rate for the city property tax, a due date, and time period within which these taxes must be paid. The city council by ordinance

1 may provide for the payment of these taxes by installments or in one lump sum, as well as  
2 authorize the voluntary payment of taxes prior to the time when due.

3 **SECTION 6.12.**

4 Occupation and business taxes.

5 The city council by ordinance shall have the power to levy such occupation or business taxes  
6 as not denied by law. The city council may classify businesses, occupations, or professions  
7 for the purpose of such taxation in any way which may be lawful and may compel the  
8 payment of such taxes as provided in Section 6.18 of this charter.

9 **SECTION 6.13.**

10 Regulatory fees; permits.

11 The city council by ordinance shall have the power to require businesses or practitioners  
12 doing business within this city to obtain a permit for such activity from the city and pay a  
13 reasonable fee for such permit as provided by general law. Such fees shall reflect the total  
14 cost to the city of regulating the activity, and if unpaid, shall be collected as provided in  
15 Section 6.18 of this charter.

16 **SECTION 6.14.**

17 Franchises.

18 (a) The city council shall have the power to grant franchises for the use of this city's streets  
19 and alleys for the purposes of railroads, street railways, telephone companies, electric  
20 companies, electric membership corporations, cable television and other telecommunications  
21 companies, gas companies, transportation companies, and other similar organizations. The  
22 city council shall determine the duration, terms, whether the same shall be exclusive or  
23 nonexclusive, and the consideration for such franchises; provided, however, no franchise  
24 shall be granted for a period in excess of 35 years and no franchise shall be granted unless  
25 the city receives just and adequate compensation therefore. The city council shall provide for  
26 the registration of all franchises with the city clerk in a registration book kept by the clerk.  
27 The city council may provide by ordinance for the registration within a reasonable time of  
28 all franchises previously granted.

29 (b) If no franchise agreement is in effect, the city council has the authority to impose a tax  
30 on gross receipts for the use of this city's streets and alleys for the purposes of railroads,  
31 street railways, telephone companies, electric companies, electric membership corporations,

1 cable television and other telecommunications companies, gas companies, transportation  
2 companies, and other similar organizations.

3 **SECTION 6.15.**

4 Service charges.

5 The city council by ordinance shall have the power to assess and collect fees, charges, and  
6 tolls for sewers, sanitary and health services, or any other services provided or made  
7 available within and without the corporate limits of the city for the total cost to the city of  
8 providing or making available such services. If unpaid, such charges shall be collected as  
9 provided in Section 6.18 of this charter.

10 **SECTION 6.16.**

11 Special assessments.

12 The city council by ordinance shall have the power to assess and collect the cost of  
13 constructing, reconstructing, widening, or improving any public way, street, sidewalk,  
14 curbing, gutters, sewers, or other utility mains and appurtenances from the abutting property  
15 owners under such terms and conditions as are reasonable. If unpaid, such charges shall be  
16 collected as provided in Section 6.18 of this charter.

17 **SECTION 6.17.**

18 Construction; other taxes and fees.

19 This city shall be empowered to levy any other tax of fee allowed now or hereafter by law,  
20 and the specific mention of any right, power, or authority in this article shall not be construed  
21 as limiting in any way the general powers of this city to govern its local affairs.

22 **SECTION 6.18.**

23 Collection of delinquent taxes and fees.

24 The city council by ordinance may provide generally for the collection of delinquent taxes,  
25 fees, or other revenue due the city under Sections 6.10 through 6.17 of this charter by  
26 whatever reasonable means as are not precluded by law. This shall include providing for the  
27 dates when the taxes or fees are due; late penalties or interest; issuance and execution of  
28 fi.fas.; creation and priority of liens; making delinquent taxes and fees personal debts of the

1 persons required to pay the taxes or fees imposed; revoking city permits for failure to pay any  
2 city taxes or fees; and providing for the assignment or transfer of tax executions.

3 **SECTION 6.19.**

4 General obligation bonds.

5 The city council shall have the power to issue bonds for the purpose of raising revenue to  
6 carry out any project program or venture authorized under this charter or the laws of the  
7 state. Such bonding authority shall be exercised in accordance with the laws governing bond  
8 issuance by municipalities in effect at the time said issue is undertaken.

9 **SECTION 6.20.**

10 Revenue bonds.

11 Revenue bonds may be issued by the city council as state law now or hereafter provides.  
12 Such bonds are to be paid out of any revenue produced by the project, program, or venture  
13 for which they were issued.

14 **SECTION 6.21.**

15 Short-term loans.

16 The city may obtain short-term loans and must repay such loans not later than December 31  
17 of each year, unless otherwise provided by law.

18 **SECTION 6.22.**

19 Lease-purchase contracts.

20 The city may enter into multiyear lease, purchase, or lease purchase contracts for the  
21 acquisitions of goods, materials, real and personal property, services, and supplies, provided  
22 the contract terminates without further obligation on the part of the municipality at the close  
23 of the calendar year in which it was executed and at the close of each succeeding calendar  
24 year for which it may be renewed. Contracts must be executed in accordance with the  
25 requirements of Code Section 36-60-13 of the O.C.G.A., or other such applicable laws as are  
26 or may hereafter be enacted.

**SECTION 6.23.**

Fiscal year.

The city council shall set the fiscal year by ordinance. This fiscal year shall constitute the budget year and the year for financial accounting and reporting of each and every office, department, agency, and activity of the city government.

**SECTION 6.24.**

Preparation of budgets.

The city council shall provide an ordinance on the procedures and requirements for the preparation and execution of an annual operating budget, a capital improvement plan, and a capital budget, including requirements as to the scope, content, and form of such budgets and plans.

**SECTION 6.25.**

Submission of operating budget to city council.

On or before a date fixed by the city council but not later than 60 days prior to the beginning of each fiscal year, the mayor shall submit to the city council a proposed operating budget for the ensuing fiscal year. The budget shall be accompanied by a message from the mayor containing a statement of the general fiscal policies of the city, the important features of the budget, explanations of major changes recommended for the next fiscal year, a general summary of the budget, and such other pertinent comments and information. The operating budget and the capital budget hereinafter provided for, the budget message, and all supporting documents shall be filed in the office of the city clerk and shall be open to public inspection.

**SECTION 6.26.**

Action by city council on budget.

(a) The city council may amend the operating budget proposed by the mayor, except that the budget as finally amended and adopted must provide for all expenditures required by state law or by other provisions of this charter and for all debt service requirements for the ensuing fiscal year, and the total appropriations from any fund shall not exceed the estimated fund balance, reserves, and revenues.

1 (b) The city council by ordinance shall adopt the final operating budget for the ensuing fiscal  
2 year not later than the last day of the current fiscal year. If the city council fails to adopt the  
3 budget by this date, the amounts appropriated for operation for the current fiscal year shall  
4 be deemed adopted for the ensuing year on a month-to-month basis, with all items prorated  
5 accordingly until such time as the city council adopts a budget for the ensuing fiscal year.  
6 Adoption of the budget shall take the form of an appropriations ordinance setting out the  
7 estimated revenues in detail by sources and making appropriations according to fund and by  
8 organizational unit, purpose, or activity as set out in the budget preparation ordinance  
9 adopted pursuant to Section 6.24 of this charter.

10 (c) The amount set out in the adopted operating budget for each organizational unit shall  
11 constitute the annual appropriation for such, and no expenditure shall be made or  
12 encumbrance created in excess of the otherwise encumbered balance of the appropriations  
13 or allotment thereof to which it is chargeable.

14 **SECTION 6.27.**

15 Tax levies.

16 The city council shall levy by ordinance such taxes as are necessary. The taxes and tax rates  
17 set by such ordinance shall be such that reasonable estimates of revenues from such levy  
18 shall at least be sufficient, together with other anticipated revenues, fund balances, and  
19 applicable reserves, to equal the total amount appropriated for each of the several funds set  
20 forth in the annual operating budget for defraying the expenses of the general government  
21 of this city.

22 **SECTION 6.28.**

23 Changes in appropriations.

24 The city council by ordinance may make changes in the appropriations contained in the  
25 current operating budget at any regular meeting, special or emergency meeting called for  
26 such purpose, but any additional appropriations may be made only from an existing  
27 unexpended surplus.

28 **SECTION 6.29.**

29 Capital budget.

30 (a) On or before the date fixed by the city council, but not later than 60 days prior to the  
31 beginning of each fiscal year, the mayor shall submit to the city council a proposed capital

1 improvements plan with a recommended capital budget containing the means of financing  
2 the improvements proposed for the ensuing fiscal year. The city council shall have power to  
3 accept, with or without amendments, or reject the proposed plan and proposed budget. The  
4 city council shall not authorize an expenditure for the construction of any building, structure,  
5 work, or improvement unless the appropriations for such project are included in the capital  
6 budget, except to meet a public emergency as provided in Section 2.24 of this charter.

7 (b) The city council shall adopt by ordinance the final capital budget for the ensuing fiscal  
8 year not later than the last day of the current fiscal year. No appropriation provided for in a  
9 prior capital budget shall lapse until the purpose for which the appropriation was made shall  
10 have been accomplished or abandoned; provided, however, the mayor may submit  
11 amendments to the capital budget at any time during the fiscal year, accompanied by  
12 recommendations. Any such amendments to the capital budget shall become effective only  
13 upon adoption by ordinance.

14 **SECTION 6.30.**

15 Independent audit.

16 There shall be an annual independent audit of all city accounts, funds, and financial  
17 transactions by a certified public accountant selected by the city council. The audit shall be  
18 conducted according to generally accepted auditing principles. Any audit of any funds by the  
19 state or federal governments may be accepted as satisfying the requirements of this charter.  
20 Copies of annual audit reports shall be available at printing costs to the public.

21 **SECTION 6.31.**

22 Contracting procedures.

23 No contract with the city shall be binding on the city unless:

- 24 (1) It is in writing;
- 25 (2) It is drawn by or submitted and reviewed by the city attorney and, as matter of  
26 course, is signed by the city attorney to indicate such drafting or review;
- 27 (3) It is made or authorized by the city council and such approval is entered in the city  
28 council journal of proceedings pursuant to Section 2.21 of this charter; and
- 29 (4) It is signed by the mayor or the mayor pro tem.



**SECTION 7.11.**

Existing ordinances, resolutions, rules, and regulations.

Existing ordinances, resolutions, rules, and regulations of this city not in conflict with this charter shall continue in force, unless repealed or amended, for two years from the effective date of this charter. During such two-year period, the city council shall review all such provisions and shall readopt, repeal, or amend each, so that a codification as provided by subsection (b) of Section 2.26 of this charter is accomplished.

**SECTION 7.12.**

Existing personnel and officers.

Except as specifically provided otherwise by this charter, all personnel and officers of the city and their rights, privileges, and powers shall continue beyond the time this charter takes effect for a period of 90 days before or during which the existing city council shall pass a transition ordinance detailing the changes in personnel and appointive officers required or desired and arranging such titles, rights, privileges, and powers as may be or desired to allow a reasonable transition.

**SECTION 7.13.**

Pending matters.

Except as specifically provided otherwise by this charter, all rights, claims, actions, orders, contracts, and legal or administrative proceedings shall continue and any such ongoing work or cases shall be completed by such city agencies, personnel, or offices as may be provided by the city council.

**SECTION 7.14.**

Construction.

(a) Section captions in this charter are informative only and are not to be considered as a part thereof.

(b) The word "shall" is mandatory and the word "may" is permissive.

(c) The singular shall include the plural, the masculine shall include the feminine, and vice versa.

**SECTION 7.15.**

## Severability.

3 If any article, section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, or part thereof of this charter shall be  
4 held to be invalid or unconstitutional, such invalidity or unconstitutionality shall not affect  
5 or impair other parts of this charter unless it clearly appears that such other parts are wholly  
6 and necessarily dependent upon the part held to be invalid or unconstitutional, it being the  
7 legislative intent in enacting this charter that each article, section, subsection, paragraph,  
8 sentence, or part thereof be enacted separately and independent of each other.

**SECTION 7.16.**

## Repealer.

11 An Act incorporating the City of Abbeville in the County of Wilcox, approved February 24,  
12 1955 (Ga. L. 1955, p. 2445), is hereby repealed in its entirety and all amendatory Acts  
13 thereto are likewise repealed in their entirety. All other laws and parts of laws in conflict  
14 with this Act are hereby repealed.

**SECTION 7.17.**

## Effective date.

17 This Act shall become effective on July 1, 2003.