House Bill 1778 (AS PASSED HOUSE AND SENATE)

By: Representative Stephens of the 123rd

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

To provide a new charter for the City of Pooler; to provide for incorporation, boundaries, and powers of the city; to provide for a governing authority of such city and the powers, duties, authority, election, terms, vacancies, compensation, expenses, qualifications, prohibitions, conflicts of interest, and suspension and removal from office relative to members of such governing authority; to provide for inquiries and investigations; to provide for oaths, organization, meetings, quorum, voting, rules, and procedures; to provide for ordinances and codes; to provide for a city manager, mayor, and mayor pro tempore and certain duties, powers, and other matters relative thereto; to provide for administrative affairs and responsibilities; to provide for boards, commissions, and authorities; to provide for a city attorney, a city clerk, and other personnel and matters relating thereto; to provide for rules and regulations; to provide for a municipal court and the judge or judges thereof and other matters relative to those judges; to provide for the court´s jurisdiction, powers, practices, and procedures; to provide for the right of certiorari; to provide for elections; to provide for taxation, licenses, and fees; to provide for franchises, service charges, and assessments; to provide for bonded and other indebtedness; to provide for auditing, accounting, budgeting, and appropriations; to provide for city contracts and purchasing; to provide for the conveyance of property and interests therein; to provide for bonds for officials; to provide for prior ordinances, rules, and pending matters; to provide for penalties; to provide for definitions and construction; to provide for other matters relative to the foregoing; to repeal specific Acts; to provide for effective dates; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

ARTICLE I

INCORPORATION AND POWERS

SECTION 1.10.

Incorporation.

The City of Pooler in Chatham County is reincorporated by the enactment of this charter and is constituted and declared a body politic and corporate under the name of the "City of Pooler." References in the charter to "the city" or "this city" refer to the City of Pooler. The city shall have perpetual existence.

SECTION 1.11.

Corporate boundaries.

(a) The boundaries of this city shall be those existing on the effective date of the adoption of this charter with such alterations as may be made from time to time by local law or in the manner provided by general state law. The boundaries of this city at all times shall be shown on a map, a written description, or any combination thereof, to be retained permanently in the office of the city clerk and to be designated, as the case may be: "Official Map or Description of the Corporate Limits of the City of Pooler, Georgia". Photographic, typed, or other copies of such map or description certified by the mayor shall be admitted as evidence in all courts and shall have the same force and effect as the original map or description.

(b) The city council may provide for the redrawing of any such map by ordinance to reflect lawful changes in the corporate boundaries. A redrawn map shall supersede for all purposes the entire map or maps which it is designated to replace.

SECTION 1.12.

Municipal powers.

(a) This city shall have all powers possible for a city to have under the present or future Constitution and laws of this state as fully and completely as though they were specifically enumerated in this charter. This city shall have all the powers of self-government not otherwise prohibited by this charter or by general law.

(b) The powers of this city shall be construed liberally in favor of the city. The specific mention or failure to mention particular powers shall not be construed as limiting in any way the powers of this city. Said powers shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

(1) 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 under this charter;

(2) 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 this city;

(3) Building regulations. To regulate and to license the erection and construction of buildings and all other structures not inconsistent with general law; to adopt building, housing, plumbing, electrical, gas, and heating and air-conditioning codes; and to regulate all housing and building trades except as otherwise prohibited by general law;

(4) Business regulation and taxation. To levy and to provide for the collection of license fees and taxes on privileges, occupations, trades, and professions; to license and regulate the same; to provide for the manner and method of payment of such licenses and taxes; and to revoke such licenses after due process for the failure to pay any city taxes or fees;

(5) Condemnation. To condemn property, inside or 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;

(6) Contracts. To enter into contracts and agreements with other governments and entities and with private persons, firms, and corporations;

(7) Emergencies. To establish procedures for determining and proclaiming that an emergency situation exists inside or outside 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;

(8) Environmental protection. To protect 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; or to comply with mandates enacted by the State of Georgia or any other governmental agency or authority;

(9) Fire regulations. To fix and establish fire limits and from time to time extend, enlarge, or restrict the same; to prescribe fire safety regulations not inconsistent with general law, relating to both fire prevention and detection and to fire fighting; and to prescribe penalties and punishment for violations thereof;

(10) Garbage fees. To levy, fix, assess, and collect a garbage, refuse, and trash collection and disposal and other sanitary service charge, tax, or fee for such services as may be necessary in the operation of the city from all individuals, firms, and corporations residing in or doing business within the city and benefiting from such services; to enforce the payment of such charges, taxes, or fees; and to provide for the manner and method of collecting such service charges;

(11) General health, safety, and welfare. To define, regulate, and prohibit any act, practice, conduct, or use of property which is detrimental to the health, sanitation, cleanliness, welfare, and safety of the inhabitants of the city and to provide for the enforcement of such standards;

(12) Gifts. To accept or refuse gifts, donations, bequests, or grants from any source for any purpose related to the powers and duties of the city and the general welfare of its citizens, on such terms and conditions as the donor or grantor may impose;

(13) Health and sanitation. To prescribe standards of health and sanitation within the city and to provide for the enforcement of such standards;

(14) Jail sentences. To provide that persons given jail sentences in the municipal court may work out such sentences in any public works or on the streets, roads, drains, and squares in the city; to provide for the commitment of such persons to any jail; or to provide for the commitment of such persons to any county work camp or county jail;

(15) Motor vehicles. To regulate the operation of motor vehicles and exercise control over all traffic, including parking, upon or across the streets, roads, alleys, and walkways of the city;

(16) Municipal agencies and delegation of power. To create, alter, or abolish departments, boards, offices, commissions, and agencies of the city and to confer upon such agencies the necessary and appropriate authority for carrying out all the powers conferred upon or delegated to the same;

(17) Municipal debts. To appropriate and borrow money for the payment of debts of the city and to issue bonds for the purpose of raising revenue to carry out any project, program, or venture authorized by this charter or the laws of the State of Georgia;

(18) Municipal property ownership. To acquire, dispose of, lease, and hold in trust or otherwise any real, personal, or mixed property, in fee simple or lesser interest, inside or outside the property limits of the city;

(19) Municipal property protection. To provide for the preservation and protection of property and equipment of the city and the administration and use of same by the public; and to prescribe penalties and punishment for violations thereof;

(20) Municipal utilities. To acquire, lease, construct, operate, maintain, sell, and dispose of public utilities, including, but not limited to, a system of waterworks, sewers and

drains, sewage disposal, gas works, electric plants, transportation facilities, public airports, and any other public utility; and to fix the taxes, charges, rates, fares, fees, assessments, regulations, and penalties therefor; and to provide for the withdrawal of service for refusal or failure to pay the same; to authorize the extension of water, sewerage, and electrical distribution systems, and all necessary appurtenances by which said utilities are distributed, inside and outside the corporate limits of the city; and to provide utility services to persons, firms, and corporations inside and outside the corporate limits of the city as provided by ordinance;

(21) Nuisances. To define a nuisance and provide for its abatement whether on public or private property;

(22) Penalties. To provide penalties for violation of any ordinances adopted pursuant to the authority of this charter and the laws of the State of Georgia;

(23) Planning and zoning. To provide comprehensive city planning for development by zoning and to provide subdivision regulation and the like as the city council deems necessary and reasonable to ensure a safe, healthy, and aesthetically pleasing community;

(24) Police and fire protection. To exercise the power of arrest through duly appointed police officers and to establish, operate, or contract for a police and a fire-fighting agency;

(25) Public hazards; removal. To provide for the destruction and removal of any building or other structure which is or may become dangerous or detrimental to the public;

(26) Public improvements. To provide for the acquisition, construction, building, operation, and maintenance of public ways, parks, playgrounds, recreational facilities, cemeteries, markets and market houses, public buildings, libraries, public housing, airports, hospitals, terminals, docks, parking facilities or charitable, cultural, educational, recreational, conservation, sport, curative, corrective, detentional, penal and medical institutions, agencies and facilities; to provide for other public improvements inside or outside the corporate limits of the city; to regulate the use of public improvements; and, for such purposes, property may be acquired by condemnation under Title 22 of the O.C.G.A. or such other applicable laws as are or may hereafter be enacted;

(27) Public peace. To provide for the prevention and punishment of drunkenness, riots, and public disturbances;

(28) Public transportation. To organize and operate or contract for such public transportation systems as are deemed beneficial or necessary;

(29) Public utilities and services. To grant franchises or make contracts for public utilities and public services and to prescribe the rates, fares, regulations, and the standards and conditions of service applicable to the service to be provided by the franchise grantee

or contractor, insofar as not in conflict with valid regulations of the Georgia Public Service Commission;

(30) Regulation of roadside areas. To prohibit or regulate and control the erection, removal, and maintenance of signs, billboards, trees, shrubs, fences, buildings, and any and all other structures or obstructions upon or adjacent to the rights of way of streets and roads or within view thereof, inside or abutting the corporate limits of the city, and to prescribe penalties and punishment for violation of such ordinances;

(31) Retirement. To provide and maintain a retirement plan for officers and employees of the city;

(32) Roadways. To lay out, open, extend, widen, narrow, establish or change the grade of, abandon or close, construct, pave, curb, gutter, adorn with shade trees or otherwise improve, maintain, repair, clean, prevent erosion of, and light the roads, alleys, and walkways within the corporate limits of the city; and to negotiate and execute leases over, through, under, or across any city property or the right of way of any street, road, alley, and walkway or portion thereof within the corporate limits of the city for bridges, passageways, or any other purpose or use between buildings on opposite sides of the street and for other bridges, overpasses, and underpasses for private use at such location and to charge a rental therefor in such manner as may be provided by ordinance; and to authorize and control the construction of bridges, overpasses, and underpasses within the corporate limits of the city; and to grant franchises and rights of way throughout the streets and roads and over the bridges and viaducts for the use of public utilities and for private use; and to require real estate owners to repair and maintain in a safe condition the sidewalks adjoining their lots or lands and to impose penalties for failure to do so;

(33) Sewer fees. To levy a fee, charge, or sewer tax as necessary to assure the acquiring, construction, equipping, operating, maintaining, and extending of a sewage disposal plant and sewerage system; to levy on those to whom sewers and sewerage systems are made available a sewer service fee, charge, or tax for the availability or use of the sewers; to provide for the manner and method of collecting such service charge; and to impose and collect a sewer connection fee or fees to those connected with the system;

(34) Solid waste disposal. To provide for the collection and disposal of garbage, rubbish, and refuse and to regulate the collection and disposal of garbage, rubbish, and refuse by others; and to provide for the separate holding of glass, tin, aluminum, cardboard, paper, and other recyclable materials and provide for the sale of such items;

(35) Special areas of public regulation. To regulate or prohibit junk dealers, pawn shops, the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors, and the use and sale of firearms; to regulate the transportation, storage, and use of combustible, explosive, and inflammable materials, the use of lighting and heating equipment, and any other business

or situation which may be dangerous to persons or property; to regulate and control peddlers and itinerant traders, theatrical performances, exhibitions, and shows of any kind, by taxing or otherwise; and to license, tax, regulate, or prohibit professional fortunetelling, palmistry, adult bookstores, massage parlors, and entertainment displaying nudity;

(36) Special assessments. To levy and provide for the collection of special assessments to cover the costs of any public improvement;

(37) Taxes: ad valorem. To levy and provide for the assessment, valuation, revaluation, and collection of taxes on all property subject to taxation;

(38) Taxes: other. To levy and collect such other taxes as may be allowed now or in the future by law;

(39) Taxicabs or similar conveyances. To regulate and license vehicles operated for hire in the city; to limit the number of such vehicles; to require the operators thereof to be licensed; to require public liability insurance on such vehicles in the amounts to be prescribed by ordinance; and to regulate the parking of such vehicles;

(40) Urban redevelopment. To organize and operate an urban redevelopment program; and

(41) Other powers. To exercise and enjoy all other powers, functions, rights, privileges, and immunities necessary or desirable to promote or protect the safety, health, peace, security, good order, comfort, convenience, or general welfare of the city and its inhabitants; to exercise all implied powers necessary to carry into execution all powers granted in this charter as fully and completely as if such powers were fully stated in this charter; and to exercise all powers now or in the future authorized to be exercised by other municipal governments under other laws of the State of Georgia; and no listing of particular powers in this charter shall be held to be exclusive of others, nor restrictive of general words and phrases granting powers, but shall be held to be in addition to such powers unless expressly prohibited to municipalities under the Constitution or applicable laws of the State of Georgia.

ARTICLE II

GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE, ELECTIONS, AND REMOVAL

SECTION 2.10.

City council creation; composition; number; election.

(a) The legislative authority of the government of this city, except as otherwise specifically provided in this charter, shall be vested in a city council to be composed of a mayor and six councilmembers.

(b) The mayor and councilmembers shall serve for terms of two years and until their respective successors are elected and qualified. No person shall be eligible to serve as mayor or councilmember unless he or she shall have been a resident of this city for 12 months immediately preceding the election of mayor or councilmembers; each such person shall continue to reside within the city during said period of service and shall be registered and qualified to vote in municipal elections of this city. No person´s name shall be listed as a candidate on the ballot for election for either mayor or councilmember unless such person shall file a written notice with the clerk of said city that he or she desires his or her name to be placed on said ballot as a candidate either for mayor or councilmember. No person shall be eligible for the office of mayor or councilmember unless such person shall file above said notice within the time provided for in Chapter 2 of Title 21 of the O.C.G.A., the "Georgia Election Code."

SECTION 2.11.

Elections.

(a) At any election, all persons qualified under the Constitution and laws of the State of Georgia to vote for members of the General Assembly of Georgia and who are bona fide residents of said city shall be eligible to qualify as voters in the election.

(b) 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." Except as otherwise provided by this charter, the city council shall, by ordinance, prescribe such rules and regulations it deems appropriate to fulfill any options and duties under the "Georgia Election Code."

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

(d) The mayor and councilmembers in office on the effective date of this Act and any person selected to fill a vacancy in such office shall serve until the regular expiration of the term of office to which they were elected, which shall expire December 31, 2005, and until their successors are elected and qualified. Successors to such mayor and councilmembers shall be elected at the municipal general election on the Tuesday next following the first Monday in November, 2005. All future successors to such mayor and councilmembers whose terms of office are to expire shall be elected at the time of the municipal general election immediately preceding the expiration of such terms and shall serve for terms of office of two years each and until the respective successors are elected and qualified.

(e) For the purpose of electing members of the council, the City of Pooler shall consist of one election district with six at-large seats.

SECTION 2.12.

Vacancies in office.

(a) The office of mayor or councilmember shall become vacant upon the incumbent´s death, incapacity, resignation, forfeiture of office, or removal from office in any manner authorized by this charter or the general laws of the State of Georgia.

(b) Upon the suspension from office of the mayor or councilmember in any manner authorized by the general laws of the State of Georgia, the city council or those remaining shall appoint a successor for the duration of the suspension. If the suspension becomes permanent, then the office shall become vacant and shall be filled as provided in subsection (c) of this section.

(c) In the event that the office of councilmember shall become vacant for any cause whatsoever, said vacancy in office shall be filled for the unexpired term by appointment by the remaining councilmembers and the mayor. Should the office of the mayor become vacant, the mayor pro tempore and council shall appoint from among its members a mayor. If the mayor pro tempore is chosen, the council will appoint another councilmember to hold the office of mayor pro tempore. The resulting vacancy on the council will be filled as provided for in this subsection.

SECTION 2.13.

Nonpartisan elections.

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

SECTION 2.14.

Election by plurality.

The candidates receiving a plurality of the votes cast for any city office shall be elected.

SECTION 2.15.

Compensation and expenses.

The mayor and councilmembers shall receive compensation and expenses for their services as provided by ordinance and in accordance with Chapter 35 of Title 36 of the O.C.G.A.

SECTION 2.16.

Prohibitions.

(a) No elected official, appointed officer, or employee of the city or any agency or political entity to which this charter applies shall knowingly:

(1) Engage in any business or transaction or have a financial or other personal interest, direct or indirect, which is incompatible with the proper discharge of his or her official duties or which would tend to impair the independence of his or her judgment or action in the performance of his or her official duties;

(2) Engage in or accept private employment or render services for private interests when such employment or service is incompatible with the proper discharge of his or her official duties or would tend to impair the independence of his or her judgment or action in the performance of his or her official duties;

(3) Disclose confidential information concerning the property, government, or affairs of the governmental body by which he or she is engaged without proper legal authorization or use such information to advance the financial or other private interest of himself or herself or others;

(4) Accept any valuable gift, whether in the form of service, loan, object or promise from any person, firm, or corporation which to his or her knowledge is interested, directly or indirectly, in any manner whatsoever, in business dealings with the governmental body by which he or she is engaged; provided, however, that an elected official who is a candidate for public office may accept campaign contributions and services in connection with any such campaign;

(5) Represent other private interests in any action or proceeding against this city or any portion of its government; or

(6) Vote or otherwise participate in the negotiation or in the making of any contract with any business or entity in which he or she has a financial interest.

(b) Any elected official, appointed officer, or employee who has any private financial interest, directly or indirectly, in any contract or matter pending before or within any department of the city shall disclose such private interest to the city council. The mayor or any councilmember who has a private financial interest in any matter pending before the city council shall disclose such private interest and such disclosure shall be entered on the records of the city council, and he or she shall disqualify himself or herself from participating in any decision or vote relating thereto. Any elected official, appointed officer, or employee of any agency or political entity to which this charter applies who shall have any private financial interest, directly or indirectly, in any contract or matter pending before or within such agency or entity shall disclose such private interest to the governing body of such agency or entity.

(c) No elected official, appointed officer, or employee of the city or any agency or entity to which this charter applies shall use property owned by such governmental entity for personal benefit, convenience, or profit, except in accordance with policies promulgated by the city council or the governing body of such agency or entity.

(d) Any violation of this section which occurs with the knowledge, express or implied, of a party to a contract or sale shall render said contract or sale voidable at the option of the city council.

(e) Except as authorized by law, no member of the council shall hold any other elective city office or other city employment during the term for which he or she was elected. The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to any person holding employment on the effective date of this Act.

SECTION 2.17.

Removal of officers.

(a) The mayor, a councilmember, or other appointed officers provided for in this charter shall be removed for any one or more of the following causes:

(1) Incompetence, misfeasance, or malfeasance in office;

(2) Upon indictment or presentation of charges for any felony, regardless of whether such charge relates to the performance of the activities of office;

(3) Upon conviction for any misdemeanor involving moral turpitude;

(4) Failure at any time to possess any qualifications of office as provided by this charter;

(5) Abandonment of office or neglect to perform the duties thereof. This shall include, but is not limited to, wilful failure to attend more than three city council meetings in succession without prior written notice of the absence that shall also include grounds for absence. This does not apply to absences approved by council or excused by operation of law; or

(6) Failure for any other cause to perform the duties of office as required by this charter or by state law.

(b) Removal of any officer pursuant to subsection (a) of this section shall be accomplished by a vote of four councilmembers after an investigative hearing. 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 service of such written notice. Any elected officer sought to be removed from office as provided in this section shall have the right to call and cross-examine witnesses and to put up a defense at this investigative hearing. Additionally, any elected officer sought to be removed from office as provided in this section

shall have the right to appeal from the decision of the city council to the Superior Court of Chatham County. Such appeal shall be governed by the same rules that govern appeals to the superior court from the probate court.

ARTICLE III
ORGANIZATION OF GOVERNMENT, GENERAL AUTHORITY, AND ORDINANCES

SECTION 3.10.
General power and authority.

Except as otherwise provided by this charter, the city council shall be vested with all the powers of government of this city as provided by Article I of this charter.

SECTION 3.11.
Organization.

(a) The city council shall hold an organizational meeting at the first regular meeting in January following an election. The meeting shall be called to order by the city clerk. The oath of office shall be administered to the newly elected members as follows:

"I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the laws of the State of Georgia;

I am qualified to hold the office of (mayor)(councilmember) for the City of Pooler according to the Constitution and laws of the State of Georgia;

I am not the holder of any office of trust under the government of the United States, any other state, or any foreign state which I am prohibited from holding by the laws of the State of Georgia;

I am not the holder of any unaccounted for public money due this state or any political subdivision or authority thereof; and

That I will well and truly perform the duties of (mayor)(councilmember) of the City of Pooler to the best of my skill and ability, without favor or affection, so help me God."

(b) The city council shall elect a mayor pro tempore. In the event this councilmember refuses to serve or resigns as mayor pro tempore or councilmember, the council shall elect by majority vote another councilmember as mayor pro tempore. During any disability or absence of the mayor, the mayor pro tempore shall preside at all meetings of the city council and shall assume the duties and powers of the mayor. Any such disability or absence shall be declared by a majority vote of the city council. The city council shall elect by majority vote a presiding officer from its number for any period in which the mayor pro tempore is

disabled, absent, or acting as mayor. Such absence or disability shall be declared by majority vote of the city council, in accordance with subsection (c) of Section 2.12 of this charter.

SECTION 3.12.

Inquiries and investigations.

The city council may make inquiries and investigations into the affairs of the city and the conduct of any department, office, or agency thereof and for this purpose may subpoena witnesses, administer oaths, take testimony, and require the production of evidence. Any person who fails or refuses to obey a lawful order issued in the exercise of those powers by the council shall be punished as provided by ordinance.

SECTION 3.13.

Meetings.

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

(b) Special meetings of the city council may be held on call of the mayor or four councilmembers. 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 councilmember´s 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 given as required by law.

SECTION 3.14.

Procedures.

(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.

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

SECTION 3.15.

Voting.

(a) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (b) of this section, four councilmembers shall constitute a quorum and shall be authorized to transact the business of the city council. Voting on the adoption of ordinances shall be by voice vote and the vote shall be recorded in the journal, but any member of the city council shall have the right to request a roll-call vote and such vote shall be recorded in the journal. Except as otherwise provided in this charter, the affirmative vote of four councilmembers shall be required for the adoption of any ordinance, resolution, or motion.

(b) In the event vacancies in office result in less than a quorum of councilmembers holding office, then the remaining councilmembers in office shall constitute a quorum and shall be authorized to transact business of the city council. A vote of a majority of the remaining councilmembers shall be required for the adoption of any ordinance, resolution, or motion.

SECTION 3.16.

Ordinances.

(a) Every proposed ordinance shall be introduced in writing and in the form required for final adoption. No ordinance shall contain a subject which is not expressed in its title. The enacting clause shall be "The City Council of the City of Pooler hereby ordains..." and every ordinance shall so begin.

(b) An ordinance may be introduced by any councilmember and read at a regular or special meeting of the city council. Ordinances shall be considered and adopted or rejected by the city council in accordance with the rules which it shall establish; provided, however, an ordinance shall not be adopted the same day it is introduced, except for emergency ordinances provided for in Section 3.18 of this charter. Upon introduction of any ordinance, the clerk shall, as soon as possible, distribute a copy to the mayor and to each councilmember and shall file a reasonable number of copies in the office of the clerk and at such other public places as the city council may designate.

SECTION 3.17.

Effect of ordinances.

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

SECTION 3.18.

Emergencies.

(a) To meet a public emergency affecting life, health, property, or public peace, the city council may convene on call of the mayor or four councilmembers and may promptly adopt an emergency ordinance, but such ordinance shall not levy taxes; grant, renew, or extend a franchise; regulate the rate charged by any public utility for its services; or authorize the borrowing of money except for loans to be repaid within 30 days. An emergency ordinance shall be introduced in the form prescribed for ordinances generally, except that it shall be plainly designated as an emergency ordinance and shall contain, after the enacting clause, a declaration stating that an emergency exists and describing the emergency in clear and specific terms. An emergency ordinance may be adopted, with or without amendment, or rejected at the meeting at which it is introduced, but the affirmative vote of at least four councilmembers shall be required for adoption. It shall become effective upon adoption or at such later time as it may specify. Every emergency ordinance shall automatically stand repealed 30 days following the date upon which it was adopted, but this shall not prevent reenactment of the ordinance in the manner specified in this section if the emergency continues to exist. An emergency ordinance may also be repealed by adoption of a repealing ordinance in the same manner specified in this section for adoption of emergency ordinances.
(b) Emergency meetings shall be open to the public to the extent required by law and notice to the public of emergency meetings shall be made as fully as is reasonably possible in accordance with Code Section 50-14-1 of the O.C.G.A., or such other applicable laws as are or may hereafter be enacted.

SECTION 3.19.

Codes.

(a) The city council may adopt any standard code of technical regulations by reference thereto in an adopting ordinance. The procedure and requirements governing such adopting ordinance shall be prescribed for ordinances generally except that:

(1) The requirements of subsection (b) of Section 3.16 of this charter for distribution and filing of copies of the ordinance shall be construed to include copies of any code of technical regulations, as well as the adopting ordinance; and

(2) A copy of each adopted code of technical regulations, as well as the adopting ordinance, shall be authenticated and recorded by the clerk pursuant to Section 3.20 of this charter.

(b) Copies of any adopted code of technical regulations shall be made available by the clerk for distribution or for purchase at a reasonable price.

SECTION 3.20.

Codification of ordinances.

(a) The clerk shall authenticate by his or her signature and record in full in a properly indexed book kept for that purpose all ordinances adopted by the council.

(b) The city council shall provide for the preparation of a general codification of all the ordinances of the city having the force and effect of law. The general codification shall be adopted by the city council by ordinance and shall be published promptly together with all amendments thereto and shall contain such codes of technical regulations and other rules and regulations as the city council may specify. This compilation shall be known and cited officially as "Code of Ordinances, City of Pooler, Georgia". Copies of the code shall be furnished to all officers, departments, and agencies of the city.

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

SECTION 3.21.

City manager; appointment; qualifications, compensation.

The city council shall appoint a city manager for an indefinite term and shall fix his or her compensation. The city manager shall be appointed solely on the basis of his or her

executive and administrative qualifications. Before assuming office, the city manager shall take an oath, given by the mayor, as provided in Section 3.11 of this charter.

SECTION 3.22.

Removal of city manager.

(a) The city council may remove the city manager from office in accordance with the following procedures:

(1) The city council shall adopt by affirmative vote of a majority of all its members a preliminary resolution which must state the reasons for removal and may suspend the city manager from duty for a period not to exceed 45 days. A copy of the resolution shall be delivered promptly to the city manager;

(2) Within five days after a copy of the resolution is delivered to the city manager, he or she may file with the city council a written request for a public hearing. This hearing shall be held within 30 days after the request is filed. The city manager may file with the city council a written reply not later than five days before the hearing; and

(3) If the city manager has not requested a public hearing within the time specified in paragraph (2) of this subsection, the city council may adopt a final resolution for removal, which may be made effective immediately, by an affirmative vote of a majority of all its members. If the city manager has requested a public hearing, the city council may adopt a final resolution for removal, which may be made effective immediately, by an affirmative vote of a majority of all its members at any time after the public hearing.

(b) The city manager shall continue to receive his or her salary until the effective date of a final resolution of removal.

(c) If the city manager is removed for cause, the city council may suspend the manager without pay notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (b) of this section. "Cause" shall be defined as those reasons or occurrences enumerated in subsection (a) of Section 2.17 of this charter.

SECTION 3.23.

Acting city manager.

By letter filed with the city clerk, the city manager shall designate, subject to approval of the city council, a qualified city administrative officer to exercise the powers and perform the duties of city manager during his or her temporary absence or disability. During such absence or disability, the city council may revoke such designation at any time and appoint

another officer of the city to serve until the city manager shall return or his or her disability shall cease.

SECTION 3.24.

Powers and duties of the city manager.

The city manager shall be the chief administrative officer of the city. He or she shall be responsible to the city council for the administration of all city affairs placed in his or her charge by or under this charter. He or she shall have the following powers and duties:

(1) He or she shall appoint and, when he or she deems it necessary for the good of the city, suspend or remove all city employees and administrative officers he or she appoints, except as otherwise provided by law or personnel ordinances adopted pursuant to this charter. He or she may authorize any administrative officer who is subject to his or her direction and supervision to exercise those powers with respect to subordinates in that officer´s department, office, or agency;

(2) He or she shall direct and supervise the administration of all department, offices, and agencies of the city, except as otherwise provided by this charter or by law;

(3) He or she shall attend all city council meetings and shall have the right to take part in discussion, but he or she may not vote;

(4) He or she shall see that all laws, provisions of this charter, and acts of the city council, subject to enforcement by him or her or by officers subject to his or her direction and supervision, are faithfully executed;

(5) He or she shall prepare and submit the annual operating budget and capital budget to the city council;

(6) He or she shall submit to the city council and make available to the public a complete report on the finances and administrative activities of the city as of the end of the fiscal year;

(7) He or she shall perform other such duties as are specified in this charter or as may be required by the city council;

(8) He or she shall act as negotiator for the city and on behalf of the city council, subject to the approval of the mayor and city council;

(9) He or she shall follow standard management practices and procedures in regards to city employees and their performance; and

(10) He or she shall make payment of approved budgeted purchases and bills incurred by the city up to $1,500.00 and shall recommend to the city council for approval and payment for all purchases and bills in excess of $1,500.00. Any unbudgeted purchases shall also be recommended to the council for approval and payments.

SECTION 3.25.

Chief executive officer; delegation of powers.

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

SECTION 3.26.

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) 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 deems expedient;

(3) Call special meetings of the city council as provided for in subsection (b) of Section 3.13 of this charter;

(4) See that all funds of the city are properly accounted for and that all revenues are properly and promptly collected;

(5) Provide for an annual audit of all accounts of the city;

(6) Hold and attend meetings, participate in negotiations on behalf of the city and city council with the advice and consent of the city council;

(7) Preside at meetings of the city council and conduct other such meetings as may be necessary;

(8) See that all meetings are conducted in a parliamentary manner and preserve order and decorum in such meetings;

(9) Appoint and be an ex officio member of all standing committees and special committees of the city council;

(10) See that all books and records of the city are properly and carefully kept and inspected;

(11) Bind the city by signing any contract, obligation, or other matter entered into and authorized by ordinance or resolution of the city council properly passed in accordance with the provisions of this charter;

(12) Perform such other duties as may be required by law, this charter or ordinance; and

(13) Vote on matters before the city council in cases where the vote of the city council is evenly divided; in such cases, the mayor shall be counted toward a quorum as any councilmember.

ARTICLE IV

ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS

SECTION 4.10.

Department heads.

(a) Except as otherwise provided in this charter, the city council by ordinance shall prescribe the functions or duties and establish, abolish, or alter all nonelective offices, positions of employment, departments, and agencies of the city as necessary for the proper administration of the affairs and government of this city.

(b) Except as otherwise provided by this charter or by law, the directors of departments and other appointed officers of the city shall be appointed solely on the basis of their respective administrative and professional qualifications.

(c) All appointed officers and directors of departments shall receive such compensation as prescribed by ordinance.

(d) All directors under the supervision of the city manager shall be nominated by the mayor with confirmation of appointment by the city council. The city manager may suspend or remove directors under his or her supervision. The director involved may appeal to the city council which, after a hearing, may override the city manager´s action by a vote of four councilmembers.

SECTION 4.11.

Boards.

(a) The city council shall create by ordinance such boards, commissions, and authorities to fulfill any investigative, quasi-judicial, or quasi-legislative function the city council deems necessary and shall by ordinance establish the composition, period of existence, duties, and powers thereof.

(b) All members of boards, commissions, and authorities of the city shall be appointed by the city council for such terms of office and in such manner as shall be provided by ordinance, except where other appointing authority, terms of office, or manner of appointment is prescribed by this charter or by law.

(c) The city council, by ordinance, may provide for the compensation and reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses of the members of any board, commission, or authority.

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

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

(f) No member of a board, commission, or authority shall assume office until he or she has executed and filed with the clerk of the city an oath obligating himself or herself to perform faithfully and impartially the duties of his or her office, such oath to be prescribed by ordinance and administered by the mayor.

(g) Any member of a board, commission, or authority may be removed from office for cause by a vote of four members of the city council.

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

SECTION 4.12.

City attorney.

The city council shall appoint a city attorney who shall be a member of the State Bar of Georgia and shall have actively practiced law for at least five years. The city attorney shall serve at the pleasure of the city council. The city attorney shall be responsible for representing and defending the city in all litigation in which the city is a party, may be the prosecuting officer in the municipal court, shall advise the city council, mayor, and other officers and employees of the city concerning legal aspects of the city´s affairs, and shall perform such duties as may be required of him or her by virtue of his or her position as city attorney. The city council shall provide for the compensation of the city attorney.

SECTION 4.13.

City clerk.

The city council shall appoint a city clerk who shall not be a councilmember. The city clerk shall be custodian of the official city seal, maintain city council records required by this charter, and perform such other duties as may be required by the city council. The city

council shall provide for the compensation of the city clerk. Before assuming office, the city clerk shall take an oath, given by the mayor, as provided in Section 3.11 of this charter.

SECTION 4.14.

City finance officer.

The city council shall appoint a city finance officer to collect all taxes, licenses, fees, and other moneys belonging to the city subject to the provisions of this charter and the ordinances of the city and to enforce all laws of Georgia relating to the collection of delinquent taxes and sale or foreclosure for nonpayment of taxes to the city. The finance officer shall also be responsible for the general duties of a treasurer and fiscal officer. The city council shall provide for the compensation of the city finance officer.

SECTION 4.15.

Rules and regulations.

The city council shall adopt rules and regulations consistent with this charter concerning:

(1) The method of employee selection and probationary periods of employment;

(2) The administration of a position classification and pay plan, methods of promotion and applications of service ratings thereto, and transfer of employees within the classification plan;

(3) Hours of work, vacation, sick leave, and other leaves of absence, overtime pay, and the order and manner in which layoffs shall be effected;

(4) Such dismissal hearings as due process may require; and

(5) Such other personnel notices as may be necessary to provide for adequate and systematic handling of personnel affairs.

SECTION 4.16.

Mayor and council interference with administration.

Except for the purpose of inquiries with administration under Section 3.12 of this charter, the mayor, city council, or its members shall deal with city officers and employees who are subject to the direction and supervision of the city manager solely through the city manager, and neither the mayor nor councilmembers shall give orders to any such officer or employee, either publicly or privately.

ARTICLE V

JUDICIAL BRANCH

SECTION 5.10.

Municipal court.

There shall be a court to be known as the Municipal Court of the City of Pooler.

SECTION 5.11.

Judges.

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

(b) No person shall be qualified or eligible to serve as a judge on the municipal court unless he or she shall have attained the age of 21 years and shall be a member of the State Bar of Georgia. All judges shall be appointed by the mayor with the approval of a majority of the city council.

(c) Compensation of the judge or judges shall be fixed by ordinance.

(d) Judges may be removed for cause by a vote of four members of the city council.

(e) Before assuming office, each judge shall take an oath, given by the mayor, as provided in Section 3.11 of this charter. The oath shall be entered upon the minutes of the city council journal required in Section 3.14 of this charter.

SECTION 5.12.

Convening of court.

The municipal court shall be convened at regular intervals as provided by ordinance.

SECTION 5.13.

Powers.

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

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

(c) The municipal court may fix punishment for offenses within its jurisdiction not exceeding a fine of $1,000.00 or imprisonment for not more than six months, or both such

fine and imprisonment, or may fix punishment by fine, imprisonment, or alternative sentencing as now or hereafter provided by law.

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

(e) The municipal court shall have authority to establish bail and recognizances to ensure the presence of those charged with violations before said court and shall have discretionary authority to accept cash or personal or real property as surety bond for the appearance of persons charged with violations. Whenever any person shall give bail for his or her appearance and shall fail to appear at the time fixed for trial, his or her bond shall be forfeited by the judge presiding at such time and an execution shall be issued thereon by serving the defendant and his or her sureties with a rule nisi at least two days before a hearing on the rule nisi.

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

(g) The municipal court shall have the authority to bind prisoners over to the appropriate court when it appears by probable cause that state law has been violated.

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

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

(j) The municipal court is specifically vested with all the jurisdiction and powers throughout the geographic area of this city granted by law to municipal courts and particularly by such laws as authorize the abatement of nuisances and prosecution of traffic violations.

SECTION 5.14.

Certiorari and appeal.

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

(b) The orders, verdicts, judgments, and sentences of the municipal court shall be subject to appellate review in accordance with state law.

SECTION 5.15.

Rules.

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

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 costs of operating the city government, of providing governmental services, for the repayment of principal and interest on general obligations, and for any other public purpose as determined by the city council in its discretion.

SECTION 6.11.

Millage.

The city council by ordinance shall establish a millage rate for the city property tax, a due date, and the time period within which these taxes must be paid. The city council by ordinance may provide for the payment of these taxes by installments or in one lump sum, as well as authorize the voluntary payment of taxes prior to the time when due.

SECTION 6.12.

Occupation taxes and business license fees.

The city council by ordinance shall have the power to levy such occupation or business taxes as are not denied by law. Such taxes may be levied on both individuals and corporations who transact business in this city or who practice or offer to practice any profession or calling within the city to the extent such persons have a constitutionally sufficient nexus to this city to be so taxed. The city council may classify businesses, occupations, professions, or callings for the purpose of such taxation in any way which may be lawful and may compel the payment of such taxes as provided in Section 6.18 of this charter.

SECTION 6.13.

Licenses.

The city council by ordinance shall have the power to require any individual or corporation who transacts business in this city or who practices or offers to practice any profession or calling within the city to obtain a license or permit for such activity from the city and pay a reasonable fee for such license or permit where such activities are not now regulated by general law in such a way as to preclude city regulations. Such fees may reflect the total cost to the city of regulating the activity and, if unpaid, shall be collected as provided in Section 6.18 of this charter. The city council by ordinance may establish reasonable requirements for obtaining or keeping such licenses as the public health, safety, and welfare necessitate.

SECTION 6.14.

Franchises.

(a) The city council shall have the power to grant franchises for the use of this city´s streets and alleys for the purposes of railroads, street railways, telephone companies, electric companies, cable television companies, gas companies, transportation companies, and other similar organizations. The city council shall determine the duration, terms, whether the same shall be exclusive or nonexclusive, and the consideration for such franchises; provided, however, that no franchises shall be granted for a period in excess of 35 years and no franchise shall be granted unless the city receives just and adequate compensation therefor. The city council shall provide for the registration of all franchises with the city clerk in a registration book kept for that purpose. The city council may provide by ordinance for the registration within a reasonable time of all franchises previously granted.

(b) If no franchise agreement is in effect, the city council has the authority to impose a tax on gross receipts for the use of the city´s streets and alleys for the purposes of railroads, street railways, telephone companies, electric companies, electric membership corporations, cable television and other telecommunications companies, gas companies, transportation companies, and other similar organizations.

SECTION 6.15.

Service fees.

The city council by ordinance shall have the power to assess and collect fees, charges, and tolls for sewers, sanitary and health services, or any other services provided or made available inside or outside the corporate limits of the city for the total cost to the city of providing or making available such services. If unpaid, such charges shall be collected as provided in Section 6.18 of this charter.

SECTION 6.16.

Special assessments.

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

SECTION 6.17.

Other taxes.

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

SECTION 6.18.

Collection of delinquent taxes.

The city council by ordinance may provide generally for the collection of delinquent taxes, fees, or other revenue due the city under Sections 6.10 through 6.17 of this charter by whatever reasonable means as are not precluded by law. This shall include providing for the

dates when the taxes or fees are due, late penalties or interest, issuance and execution of fi. fas., creation and priority of liens, making delinquent taxes and fees personal debts of the persons required to pay the taxes or fees imposed, revoking city licenses for failure to pay any city taxes or fees, and providing for the assignment or transfer of tax executions.

SECTION 6.19.

Borrowing.

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

SECTION 6.20.

Revenue bonds.

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

SECTION 6.21.

Short term loans and lease-purchase contracts.

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

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

SECTION 6.22.

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 6.23.

Budget ordinance.

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 program, and a capital budget, including requirements as to the scope, content, and form of such budgets and programs. The city council shall comply with the provisions of Chapter 81 of Title 36 of the O.C.G.A.

SECTION 6.24.

Operating budget.

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 city manager 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 city manager 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 comments and information as he or she may deem pertinent. The operating budget, the capital improvements budget, 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 6.25.

Adoption.

(a) The city council may amend the operating budget proposed by the city manager, 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. The total appropriations from any fund shall not exceed the estimated fund balance, reserves, and revenues.

(b) After the conducting of a budget hearing, the city council shall adopt the final operating budget for the ensuing fiscal year not later than December 31 of each year. If the city council fails to adopt the budget by said date, the amounts appropriated for operation for the then current fiscal year shall be deemed adopted for the ensuing fiscal year on a month-to-month basis, with all items prorated accordingly, until such time as the city council adopts a budget for the ensuing fiscal year. Adoption of the budget shall take the form of an appropriations ordinance setting out the estimated revenues in detail by sources and making appropriations according to fund and by organizational unit, purpose, or activity as set out in the budget preparation ordinance adopted pursuant to Section 6.23 of this charter.

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

SECTION 6.26.

Levy of taxes.

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

SECTION 6.27.

Changes in budget.

The city council by majority vote may make changes in the appropriations contained in the current operating budget at any regular meeting or special or emergency meeting called for such purposes.

SECTION 6.28.

Capital improvements.

(a) On or before the 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 capital improvements budget with his or her recommendations as to the means of financing the

improvements proposed for the ensuing year. The city council shall have the power to accept, with or without amendments, or reject the proposed program and proposed means of financing. The city council shall not authorize an expenditure for the construction of any building, structure, work, or improvement, unless the appropriations for such project are included in the capital improvements budget, except to meet a public emergency as provided in Section 3.18 of this charter.

(b) After the conducting of a public hearing, the city council shall adopt by ordinance the final capital improvements budget for the ensuing fiscal year not later than December 31 of each year. No appropriations provided for in a prior capital improvements budget shall lapse until the purpose for which the appropriations were made shall have been accomplished or abandoned; provided, however, the mayor may submit amendments to the capital improvements budget at any time during the fiscal year, accompanied by his or her recommendations. Any such amendments to the capital improvements budget shall become effective only upon adoption by majority vote of the city council.

SECTION 6.29.

Audits.

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

SECTION 6.30.

Procurement and property management.

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

(1) It is in writing;

(2) It is drawn or submitted and reviewed by the city attorney and, as a matter of course, is signed by him or her to indicate such drafting or review; and

(3) It is made or authorized by the city council and such approval is entered in the city council journal of proceedings pursuant to Section 3.14 of this charter.

SECTION 6.31.

Purchasing.

The city council shall by ordinance prescribe procedures for a system of centralized purchasing for the city.

SECTION 6.32.

Sale of property.

(a) The city council may sell and convey any real or personal property owned or held by the city for governmental or other purposes as now or hereafter provided by law.

(b) The city council may quitclaim any rights it may have in property not needed for public purposes upon request by the mayor and adoption of a resolution, both finding that the property is not needed for public or other purposes and that the interest of the city has no readily ascertainable monetary value.

(c) Whenever in opening, extending, or widening any street, avenue, alley, or public place of the city a small parcel or tract of land is cut off or separated by such work from a larger tract or boundary of land owned by the city, the city council may authorize the mayor to execute and deliver in the name of the city a deed conveying said cut-off or separated parcel or tract of land to an abutting or adjoining property owner or owners in exchange for rights of way of said street, avenue, alley, or public place and such other consideration as may be required by law when such exchange is deemed to be in the best interest of this city. All deeds and conveyances heretofore and hereafter so executed and delivered shall convey all title and interest the city has in such property, notwithstanding the fact that no public sale after advertisement was or is hereafter made.

ARTICLE VII

GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 7.10.

Bonds for officials.

The officers and employees of this city, both elected and appointed, shall execute such surety or fidelity bonds in such amounts and upon such terms and conditions as the city council shall from time to time require by ordinance or as may be provided by law.

SECTION 7.11.

Rules and regulations.

All ordinances, resolutions, rules, and regulations now in force in the city not inconsistent with this charter are declared valid and of full effect and force until amended or repealed by the city council.

SECTION 7.12.

Charter language on other general 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 7.13.

Definitions and construction.

(a) Section captions in this charter are informative only and shall not 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 7.14.

Eminent domain.

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

SECTION 7.15.

Effective date.

This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law without such approval.

SECTION 7.16.

Specific repealer.

An Act incorporating the City of Pooler in the County of Chatham, approved March 31, 1976 (Ga. L. 1976, p. 3419), is repealed in its entirety and all amendatory acts thereto are likewise repealed in their entirety.

SECTION 7.17.

General repealer.

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.