

PART I CHARTER¹

ARTICLE I. INCORPORATION AND POWERS

Sec. 1.10. Incorporation.

The City of Blue Ridge in Fannin 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 Blue Ridge." References in this Charter to "the city" or "this city" refer to the City of Blue Ridge. The city shall have perpetual existence.

Sec. 1.11. Corporate boundaries.

- (a) The corporate limits of the said City of Blue Ridge shall consist of the limits of Tract "A" and Tract "B" described as follows:

TRACT "A"

Being a rectangular parallelogram two miles long and one mile wide, and the beginning point of the survey is found by intersecting the present centerlines of the Louisville & Nashville railroad main track and the main hallway of Fannin County Courthouse, and measuring northeasterly along the centerline of said main track a distance of one mile to a point on said centerline of said main track; then beginning at the point so found, as described above, and turning a right angle from said main track centerline and running southeasterly a distance of one-half mile; thence southwesterly and parallel with said centerline of main track tangent north of the Louisville & Nashville railroad depot, a distance of two miles; thence northwesterly a distance of one mile; thence northeasterly a distance of two miles, and thence southeasterly a distance of one-half mile, to the beginning point, containing two square miles or one thousand two hundred eighty acres (1,280 acres).

TRACT "B"

¹Editor's note(s)—Printed herein is 1989 Ga. Laws (Act No. 1989), p. 3823, as approved by the General Assembly, on March 21, 1989. Amendments are indicated by parenthetical history notes following amended provisions. The absence of a history note indicates that the provision remains unchanged from the original. Obvious misspellings and punctuation errors have been corrected without notation. The style used for headings and catchlines has been made uniform, and the same system of capitalization and expression of numbers in text as appears in the Code of Ordinances has been used. Additions made for clarity such as consistent state statute citations and catchline modifications are indicated by brackets.

State law reference(s)—Home rule for municipalities, Ga. Const. art. IX, § II, ¶ II; creation, dissolution, merger, boundary changes, and deannexation of municipalities, O.C.G.A. § 36-35-2; municipal annexations, O.C.G.A. § 36-36-1 et seq.; home rule for municipalities and authority for amendment of local charter by ordinance, O.C.G.A. § 36-35-3; limitations on home rule for municipalities, O.C.G.A. § 36-35-6; requirement for filing and publication of charter, O.C.G.A. § 36-35-5; incorporation of municipal corporations, O.C.G.A. § 36-31-1 et seq.; terms city, town, and municipality declared synonymous, O.C.G.A. § 36-30-1.

Being a parcel of land described as follows: Beginning at the intersection of the northeasterly boundary of Tract "A" as described in section 1.11 and the southerly right-of-way line of old U.S. Highway 76; thence in an easterly direction with the southerly right-of-way line of said old U.S. Highway 76 to the intersection of the southerly right-of-way line of Old Morganton-Blue Ridge Road which leads to the boat dock property of the City of Blue Ridge; thence in a southeasterly direction with the southerly right-of-way line of said Old Morganton-Blue Ridge Road to the 17,00-foot contour line of Lake Blue Ridge; thence in a northeasterly direction with said 1,700-foot contour line to the northeast corner of the City of Blue Ridge boat dock property; thence in a northwesterly direction with the property line of said City of Blue Ridge boat dock property to the northerly right-of-way line of Old Morganton-Blue Ridge Road; thence in a northwesterly direction with the northerly right-of-way line of said old Morganton-Blue Ridge Road to the southerly right-of-way line of old U.S. Highway 76; thence due north to the northerly right-of-way line of said old U.S. Highway 76; thence in a westerly direction with the northerly right-of-way line of said old U.S. Highway 76 to the northeasterly boundary of Tract "A" as described in section 1.11; thence in a southeasterly direction with said northeasterly boundary of said Tract "A" to the point of beginning.

- (b) Alterations to said city limits may be made from time to time by local law or in the manner provided by a general 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 of the city and to be designated, as the case may be: "Official Map or Description of the Corporate Limits of the City of Blue Ridge, 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.

Sec. 1.11A. Additional corporate boundaries.

In addition to the corporate limits of said City of Blue Ridge provided for in section 1.11 of this act, the corporate limits of said city shall also include the following:

TRACT "C"

Being a strip of land 2,000 feet in width and lying 1,000 feet on each side of the following described centerline: Being the centerline of U.S. Highway 76, also known as Appalachian Highway, and beginning at the intersection of the said highway centerline and the northeasterly boundary of Tract "A" as described in section 1.11; thence in an easterly and then northeasterly direction to the centerline of Toccoa River. The side lines of the described strip shall be lengthened or shortened in a manner parallel with and 1,000 feet from the centerline of said U.S. Highway 76/Appalachian Highway so as to terminate at said northeasterly boundary of said Tract "A" and at the centerline of the said Toccoa River.

TRACT "D"

Being a strip of land 1,000 feet in width and lying 500 feet on each side of the following described centerline: Being the centerline of U.S. Highway 76/Georgia Highway 5, also known as Appalachian Highway, and beginning at the intersection of the said highway centerline and the southwestern boundary of Tract "A" as described in section 1.11; thence in a southerly direction to the Gilmer County line. The side lines of the described strip shall be lengthened or shortened in a manner parallel with and 500 feet from the centerline of said U.S. Highway 76/Georgia Highway 5/Appalachian Highway so as to terminate at said southwestern boundary of said Tract "A" and at the said Gilmer County line.

Sec. 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.

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- (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) *Air and water pollution.* To regulate the emission of smoke or other exhaust which pollutes the air and to prevent the pollution of natural streams which flow within the corporate limits of the city;
 - (2) *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 paragraph;
 - (3) *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;
 - (4) *Building regulations.* To regulate and to license the erection and construction of buildings and all other structures; to adopt building, housing, plumbing, electrical, gas, and heating and air conditioning codes; and to regulate all housing and building trades;
 - (5) *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;
 - (6) *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 O.C.G.A. title 22 or such other laws as are or may hereafter be enacted;
 - (7) *Contracts.* To enter into contracts and agreements with other governments and entities and with private persons, firms, and corporations;
 - (8) *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;
 - (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 firefighting; 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;

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- (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 city's 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 by agreement with the appropriate county officials;
 - (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, 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; and 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 firefighting 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 any 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 O.C.G.A. title 22 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;
- (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 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, constructing, 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 collection 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, pawnshops, 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 the conduct of 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, and massage parlors;

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- (36) *Special assessments.* To levy and provide for the collection of special assessments to cover the costs of any public improvement;
 - (37) *Ad valorem taxes.* To levy and provide for the assessment, valuation, revaluation, and collection of taxes on all property subject to taxation;
 - (38) *Other taxes.* To levy and collect such other taxes as may be allowed now or in the future by law;
 - (39) *Taxicabs.* 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.

Sec. 1.13. Exercise of powers.

All powers, functions, rights, privileges, and immunities of the city, its officers, agencies, or employees shall be carried into execution as provided by this Charter. If this Charter makes no provision, such shall be carried into execution as provided by ordinance or as provided by pertinent laws of the State of Georgia.

ARTICLE II. GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE, ELECTIONS, AND REMOVAL

Sec. 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 five councilmembers.
- (b) The mayor and councilmembers shall serve for staggered terms of four 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 councilmember. 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 the 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 such notice within the time provided by chapter 2 of title 21 of the O.C.G.A, the Georgia Election Code.

(House Bill 739, § 1, 5-3-2021)

Sec. 2.11. Elections.

- (a) At any election, all persons who are qualified under the constitution and laws 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 [state law]. 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 Municipal Election Code.
- (c) The mayor and councilmembers who are in office on the effective date of this act shall serve until the expiration of the term of office to which they were elected and until their successors are elected and qualified.
- (d) For the purpose of electing members of the council, the City of Blue Ridge shall consist of one election district with five numbered posts. Each person seeking election shall designate the post for which he seeks election.
- (e) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, the mayor and councilmembers shall serve terms of four years. Municipal general elections for the city shall be held on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November of odd-numbered years. The terms of office for mayor and councilmembers shall begin at the time such individual takes the oath of office provided for in section 3.11 of this Charter.
 - (2) The mayor and councilmembers for posts 2 and 4 elected at the municipal general election of 2021 shall serve a term of four years. The councilmembers for posts 1, 3, and 5 elected at the municipal general election of 2021 shall serve a term of two years.
 - (3) Nothing herein shall affect the term of office of the mayor and councilmembers serving on the effective date of this Act.

(House Bill 739, § 2, 5-3-2021)

Sec. 2.12. Vacancies in office.

- (a) (1) The office of mayor or councilmember shall become vacant upon the incumbent's death, resignation, forfeiture of office, or removal from office in any manner authorized by this Charter or the general laws of the State of Georgia.
 - (2) Upon the suspension from office of 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 (b) of this section.
- (b) In the event that the office of mayor or councilmember shall become vacant, the city council or those remaining shall order a special election to fill the balance of the unexpired term of such official; provided, however, if such vacancy occurs within six months of the expiration of the term of that office, the city council or those members remaining shall appoint a successor for the remainder of the term. In all other respects, the special election shall be held and conducted in accordance with Chapter 3 of Title 21 of the O.C.G.A., the "Georgia Municipal Election Code," as now or hereafter amended.

Sec. 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.

Sec. 2.14. Election by plurality.

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

Sec. 2.15. Compensation and expenses.

The mayor shall receive compensation of \$700.00 per month and each councilmember shall receive compensation of \$500.00 per month, and reimbursement for expenses actually and necessarily incurred by them in carrying out their official duties. The council shall be authorized to change their compensation and expenses for their services as provided by ordinance and in accordance with O.C.G.A. title 36, chapter 35.

(Ord. of 7-14-2009, § 1)

Sec. 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 official duties or which would tend to impair the independence of his judgment or action in the performance of his 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 official duties or would tend to impair the independence of his judgment or action in the performance of his official duties;
 - (3) Disclose confidential information concerning the property, government, or affairs of the governmental body by which he is engaged, without proper legal authorization or use such information, to advance the financial or other private interest of himself 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 knowledge is interested, directly or indirectly, in any manner whatsoever in business dealings with the governmental body by which he 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 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 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 shall disqualify himself 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 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 was elected. The provisions of this subsection shall not apply to any person holding employment on the effective date of this act.

Sec. 2.17. Removal of officers.

- (a) The mayor, a councilmember, or other appointed officers provided for in this Charter shall be removed from office for any one or more of the following causes:
 - (1) Incompetence, misfeasance, or malfeasance in office;
 - (2) Conviction of a crime involving moral turpitude;
 - (3) Failure at any time to possess any qualifications of office as provided by this Charter or by law;
 - (4) Knowingly violating section 2.16 or any other express prohibition of this Charter;
 - (5) Abandonment of office or neglect to perform the duties thereof; 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 one of the following methods:
 - (1) By the vote of three 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 the service of such written notice. Any elected officer sought to be removed from office as provided in this section shall have the right of appeal from the decision of the city council to the superior court of Fannin 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 Fannin County following a hearing on a complaint seeking such removal brought by any resident of the City of Blue Ridge.

ARTICLE III. ORGANIZATION OF GOVERNMENT, GENERAL AUTHORITY, AND ORDINANCES

Sec. 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.

Sec. 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 and the oath of the office shall be administered to the newly elected members 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 of the United States of America."

- (b) By a majority vote, the city council shall elect a councilmember to serve as mayor pro tempore. The mayor pro tempore shall preside at all meetings of the city council and shall assume the duties and powers of the mayor during any disability or absence of the mayor. Any such disability or absence shall be declared by a majority vote of the city council. The city council shall by majority vote elect 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.

Sec. 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 these powers by the council shall be punished as provided by ordinance.

Sec. 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 two members of the city council. Notice of such special meeting 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.

Sec. 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 chairmen 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.

Sec. 3.15. Voting.

- (a) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (b) of this section, three 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 three 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.

Sec. 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 Council of the City of Blue Ridge hereby ordains..." and every ordinance shall so begin.
- (b) An ordinance may be introduced by any councilmember and be 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. 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.

Sec. 3.17. Effect of ordinances.

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

Sec. 3.18. Emergencies.

To meet a public emergency affecting life, health, property, or public peace, the city council may convene on call of the mayor or two 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 three 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 shall also be repealed by adoption of a repealing ordinance in the same manner specified in this section for adoption of emergency ordinances.

Sec. 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 as 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.

Sec. 3.20. Codification of ordinances.

- (a) The clerk shall authenticate by his signature and record in full in a properly indexed book kept for that purpose all ordinances adopted by the council.
- (b) The city 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 "The Code of the City of Blue Ridge, Georgia." Copies of the code shall be furnished to all officers, departments, and agencies of the city and shall be made available for purchase by the public at a reasonable price as fixed by the city council.
- (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.

Sec. 3.21. Chief executive officer; delegation of powers.

The mayor shall be the chief executive of this city. The mayor shall possess all of the executive and administrative powers 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, except as otherwise specifically provided in this act. The mayor shall have the authority to delegate any one or more executive or administrative powers to a person or persons employed by the city and qualified in management and administration.

Sec. 3.22. 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, or cause, with confirmation of appointment or removal by the council, 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 council a recommended annual operating budget and recommended capital budget;
- (5) Submit to the 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) Preside over all meetings of the city council;
- (7) Call special meetings of the city council as provided for in section 3.13;
- (8) Participate in the discussion of all matters brought before the city council and vote on such matters only in the case of a tie vote;

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- (9) 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 he may deem expedient;
 - (10) Approve or disapprove ordinances as provided in section 3.23;
 - (11) Require any department or agency of the city to submit written reports whenever he deems it expedient;
 - (12) Sign, as a matter of course, all written contracts, ordinances, and other instruments executed by the city which, by law, are required to be in writing; and
 - (13) Perform such other duties as may be required by general state law, this Charter, or ordinance.

Sec. 3.23. Submission of ordinances to the mayor; veto power.

- (a) Every ordinance adopted by the city council shall be presented by the city clerk to the mayor within three days after its adoption.
- (b) The mayor shall, within ten days of receipt of an ordinance, return it to the city clerk with or without his approval, or with his disapproval. If the ordinance has been approved by the mayor, it shall become law upon its return to the city clerk; if the ordinance is neither approved nor disapproved, it shall become law on the 15th day after its adoption; if the ordinance is disapproved, the mayor shall submit to the city council through the city clerk a written statement of the reasons for the veto. The city clerk shall record upon the ordinance the date of its delivery to and receipt from the mayor.
- (c) Ordinances vetoed by the mayor shall be presented by the city clerk to the city council at its next meeting and, should the city council then or at its next general meeting adopt the ordinance by an affirmative vote of the entire council, 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 in this section. 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.

ARTICLE IV. ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS

Sec. 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 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) There shall be a director of each department or agency who shall be its principal officer. Each director shall, subject to the direction and supervision of the mayor, be responsible for the administration and direction of the affairs and operations of his department or agency.

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- (e) All directors under the supervision of the mayor shall be nominated by the mayor with confirmation of appointment by the city council. The mayor may suspend or remove directors under his supervision but such suspension or removal shall not be effective for ten calendar days following the mayor's giving written notice of such action and the reason therefor to the director involved and to the city council. The director involved may appeal to the city council which, after a hearing, may override the mayor's action by a vote of three councilmembers.

Sec. 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 [this] 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 has executed and filed with the clerk of the city an oath obligating himself to perform faithfully and impartially the duties of his 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 three 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 chairman and one member as vice-chairman, 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 clerk of the city.

Sec. 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 one year. 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 attend the meetings of the council as directed, 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 other duties as may be required of him by virtue of his position as city attorney. The city council shall provide for the compensation of the city attorney.

Sec. 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.

Sec. 4.14. Treasurer.

The city council shall appoint a city treasurer 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 city treasurer shall also be responsible for the general duties of a treasurer and fiscal officer.

Sec. 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.

ARTICLE V. JUDICIAL BRANCH

Sec. 5.10. Municipal court.

There shall be a court to be known as the municipal court of the City of Blue Ridge, Georgia.

Sec. 5.11. Judges.

- (a) The municipal court shall be presided over by a chief judge and such part-time, full-time, or standby 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 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 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 three members of the city council.
- (e) Before assuming office, each judge shall take an oath, given by the mayor, that he will honestly and faithfully discharge the duties of his office to the best of his ability and without fear, favor, or partiality. The oath shall be entered upon the minutes of the city council journal required in section 3.14 of this Charter.

Sec. 5.12. Convening of court.

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

Sec. 5.13. Powers.

- (a) The municipal court shall try and punish violations 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 or ten days in jail.
- (c) The municipal court may fix punishment for offenses within its jurisdiction not exceeding a fine of \$500.00 or imprisonment for 90 days 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 appearance and shall fail to appear at the time fixed for trial, his bond shall be forfeited by the judge presiding at such time and an execution shall be issued thereon by serving the defendant and his 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 are 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.

Sec. 5.14. Certiorari.

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 Fannin County, under the laws of the State of Georgia regulating the granting and issuance of writs of certiorari.

Sec. 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 courts; 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**Sec. 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.

Sec. 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.

Sec. 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.

Sec. 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.

Sec. 6.14. Franchises.

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, [the] terms, whether the same shall be exclusive or nonexclusive, and the consideration for such franchises; provided, however, that no franchise 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 by him. The city council may provide, by ordinance, for the registration within a reasonable time of all franchises previously granted.

Sec. 6.15. Sewer 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.

Sec. 6.16. Roads.

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.

Sec. 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.

Sec. 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.fa., 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.

Sec. 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.

Sec. 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.

Sec. 6.21. Loans.

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.

Sec. 6.22. Accounting and budgeting.

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.

Sec. 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.

Sec. 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 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 comments and information as he 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.

Sec. 6.25. Adoption.

- (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. The total appropriations from any fund shall not exceed the estimated fund balance, reserves, and revenues.
- (b) The city council shall adopt the final operating budget for the ensuing fiscal year not later than November 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.

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- (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.

Sec. 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.

Sec. 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.

Sec. 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 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) The city council shall adopt, by ordinance, the final capital improvements budget for the ensuing fiscal year not later than November 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 recommendations. Any such amendments to the capital improvements budget shall become effective only upon adoption by majority vote of the city council.

Sec. 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.

Sec. 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 to indicate such drafting or review; and

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- (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.

Sec. 6.31. Purchasing.

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

Sec. 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 when such exchange is deemed to be in the best interest of the 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

Sec. 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.

Sec. 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.

Sec. 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.

Sec. 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.

Sec. 7.14. Specific repealer.

An act amending, consolidating, and superseding the several acts incorporating the City of Blue Ridge, in the County of Fannin, State of Georgia, and creating a new Charter and municipal government for said municipal corporation, approved March 23, 1935 (Ga. L. 1935, p. 928), as amended, is repealed in its entirety.

Sec. 7.15. Annexation referendum.

Not less than 30 nor more than 90 days after the date of the approval of this act by the governor or after it otherwise becomes law and unless prohibited by the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended, it shall be the duty of the election superintendent of the City of Blue Ridge to issue the call for an election for the purpose of submitting section 1.11A of this act to the electors of the City of Blue Ridge for approval or rejection; and it shall be the duty of the election superintendent of Fannin County to issue the call for an election for the purpose of submitting section 1.11A of this act to the electors of the area proposed to be annexed for approval or rejection. Each superintendent shall set the date of such election for a day not less than 30 nor more than 60 days after the date of the issuance of the call. Each superintendent shall cause the date and purpose of the election to be published once a week for two weeks immediately preceding the date thereof in the official organ of the City of Blue Ridge or Fannin County, as appropriate. The ballot shall have written or printed thereon the following:

<input type="checkbox"/> YES	"Shall section 1.11A of the act be approved which annexes additional territory of Fannin County to the corporate limits of the City of Blue Ridge?"
<input type="checkbox"/> NO	

Those persons desiring to vote for approval of section 1.11A of this act shall vote "Yes," and those persons desiring to vote for rejection of section 1.11A of this act shall vote " No." If more than one-half of the votes cast on such question from the combined votes of the voters from the present corporate limits of the City of Blue Ridge and the area proposed to be annexed are for approval of section 1.11A of this act, section 1.11A shall become of full force and effect upon certification of the results of the election. Otherwise, it shall be void and of no force and effect and section 1.11A shall stand repealed in its entirety.

At least 30 days prior to said election, the election superintendent of the City of Blue Ridge shall prepare a separate list of voters residing in the area proposed to be annexed who are registered to vote in the county. Each of said voters shall be eligible to vote in the election. The election superintendent of Fannin County shall furnish any information which may be required in the preparation of such list of voters by the election superintendent of the City of Blue Ridge. The City of Blue Ridge shall pay to Fannin County the actual expenses of furnishing such information as is required.

The expense of such election shall be borne by the City of Blue Ridge. It shall be the duty of the election superintendent of the City of Blue Ridge to hold and conduct such election in the City of Blue Ridge, and it shall be the duty of the election superintendent of Fannin County to hold and conduct such election in the area proposed to be annexed. It shall be each superintendent's further duty to certify the results thereof to the secretary of state.

Sec. 7.16. Effective dates.

- (a) Except for section 1.11A of this act, this act shall become effective upon its approval by the governor or upon its becoming law without such approval.
- (b) The effective date of section 1.11A of this act, if it becomes effective, shall be determined as provided in section 7.15 of this act.

Sec. 7.17. General repealer.

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

**CHARTER COMPARATIVE TABLE
GEORGIA LAWS**

This table shows the location of the sections of the basic Charter and the Acts of the General Assembly amending the Charter.

Ga. Laws Year	Act No.	Page	Section	Section this Charter
1989	1989	3823	—	Char. (note)

**CHARTER COMPARATIVE TABLE
LEGISLATION**

This table shows the location of the sections of the basic Charter and any amendments thereto.

Legislation	Date	Section	Section this Charter
Ord. of 7-14-2009	7-14-2009	1	2.15
House Bill 739	5-3-2021	1	2.10
		2	2.11