

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

- (a) The finance officer shall have the following powers and duties:
- (1) Keep the accounts of the local government or public authority in accordance with generally accepted principles of governmental accounting and the rules and regulations of the Commission.
 - (2) Disburse all funds of the local government or public authority in strict compliance with this Chapter, the budget ordinance, and each project ordinance and shall preaudit obligations and disbursements as required by this Chapter.
 - (3) Prepare and file with the board a statement of the financial condition of the local government or public authority, as often as may be requested by the governing board or the manager.
 - (4) Receive and deposit all moneys accruing to the local government or public authority, or supervise the receipt and deposit of money by other duly authorized officers or employees.
 - (5) Maintain all records concerning the bonded debt and other obligations of the local government or public authority, determine the amount of money that will be required for debt service or the payment of other obligations during each fiscal year, and maintain all sinking funds.
 - (6) Supervise the investment of idle funds of the local government or public authority.
 - (7) Perform such other duties as may be assigned by law, by the manager, budget officer, or governing board, or by rules and regulations of the Commission.
 - (8) Attend any training required by the Local Government Commission under this section.
 - (9) Contract with outside entities, including certified public accountants in good standing with the North Carolina State Board of Certified Public Accountant Examiners, bookkeeping firms, councils of government, and other units of government, to ensure fulfillment of the duties enumerated in this subsection, excluding subdivision (6), except where specifically allowed by law, and subdivision (8). Regardless of the entity performing such duties, the authority, powers, and duties of the finance officer shall not be superseded, and the responsibility for accurate and timely fulfillment of duties lies solely with the finance officer.

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

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

(c) The Local Government Commission has authority to issue rules and regulations having the force of law governing procedures for the receipt, deposit, investment, transfer, and disbursement of money and other assets by units of local government and public authorities, may

inquire into and investigate the internal control procedures of a local government or public authority, may require any modifications in internal control procedures which, in the opinion of the Commission, are necessary or desirable to prevent embezzlements or mishandling of public moneys, and may adopt rules establishing minimum qualifications for finance officers.

(d) The Local Government Commission has the authority to require any finance officer or any other employee who performs the duties of a finance officer to participate in training related to the powers, duties, and responsibilities of the finance officer under any of the following circumstances: (i) the Commission is exercising its authority under Article 10 of this Chapter with respect to the employing local government or public authority, (ii) the employing local government or public authority has received a unit letter from the Commission due to a deficiency in complying with this Chapter, (iii) the employing local government or public authority has an internal control material weakness or significant deficiency in the most recently completed financial audit, or (iv) the finance officer fails to annually meet or attest to the minimum qualifications of the position, as established by the Commission. The training may be provided by the Commission, the School of Government at the University of North Carolina, the North Carolina Community College System, the North Carolina League of Municipalities, the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, or other qualified sources at the choice of the governing board and upon the prior approval of the Commission. When the Commission requires a finance officer or other employee to participate in training as authorized in this subsection, the Commission shall notify the finance officer or other employee and the employing local government or public authority of the required training. Upon completion of the required training by the finance officer or other employee, the employing local government or public authority shall submit, in writing, to the Commission proof that the training requirements have been satisfied.

(e) The Local Government Commission may require any local government or public authority to contract with outside entities in accordance with the terms of subdivision (9) of subsection (a) of this section if the local government or public authority has received a unit letter from the Commission due to a deficiency in complying with this Chapter or the local government or public authority has an internal control finding in the most recently completed financial audit. (1971, c. 780, s. 1; 1973, c. 474, ss. 18-20; 1975, c. 514, s. 10; 1987, c. 796, s. 3(5); 2016-84, s. 1; 2017-105, s. 1; 2019-19, s. 6.2; 2021-124, s. 4.)