

**CHARTER OF THE TOWN OF DECATUR, TENNESSEE<sup>1</sup>**

CHAPTER 58

HOUSE BILL NO. 2120

By Representative Newton

Substituted for: Senate Bill No. 2036

By Senator Miller

AN ACT to amend Chapter 83 of the Acts of 1905 as amended by Chapter 582 of the Private Acts of 1939, Chapter 309 of the Private Acts of 1943, Chapter 350 of the Private Acts of 1943, Chapter 149 of the Private Acts of 1961, and any other acts amendatory thereto, relative to the charter of the town of Decatur.

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<sup>1</sup>Priv. Acts 2003, ch. 58, is the current basic charter act for the Town of Decatur, Tennessee. The text of the basic charter act set out herein was last amended to reflect legislation passed in the 2011 session of the Tennessee General Assembly and is current with the laws from the 2024 Regular Session of the 113<sup>th</sup> Tennessee General Assembly. Sections of the charter which have been amended contain at the end of those sections the citation to the official act or acts constituting the amendment or amendments. No other changes have been made to the charter except the addition of a table of contents to facilitate its use. A list of all the acts including the basic charter appears at the end of the charter.

Acts which did not expressly or in effect amend any particular section or part of the basic charter, but which supplemented it, have been placed after the basic charter act as "Related Acts."

Acts of a temporary nature with no general or continuing application, such as bond authorization and validation acts have not been included in this compilation.

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BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Chapter 83 of the Acts of 1905, as amended by Chapter 582 of the Private Acts of 1939, Chapter 309 of the Private Acts of 1943, Chapter 350 of the Private Acts of 1943, Chapter 149 of the Private Acts of 1961, and any other acts amendatory thereto, is hereby amended in its entirety to read as follows:

ARTICLE I

CORPORATE CAPACITY

Section 1. Incorporation, name and general powers. The town of Decatur, in the county of Meigs and the inhabitants thereof within the boundaries hereinafter specified, be, and are hereby constituted a body politic and corporate by the style and the name of the town of Decatur.

In that name the corporation shall have perpetual succession, may sue and be sued, may contract and be contracted with, may plead and be impleaded and may grant, receive, purchase, lease and hold property, real, personal and mixed in and beyond the limits of the town for corporation purposes, and improve, sell, lease or dispose of and covey the same for the benefit of the town, may own or rent such property and do all other acts touching the same as natural persons.

Section 2. Boundaries. The boundaries of the town shall be as follows:

Beginning at Col. N. J. Lillard's spring, east of his residence, and running thence down said spring branch in a southern direction to Goodfield Creek; thence down said creek to the old boundary line of Decatur; thence with said line

in a southwestern direction to the Kincannon's Ferry Road; thence down said road in a southwestern direction to where J. B. Brandon's land line intersects the same; thence with J. B. Brandon's line, in a northern direction, to the old town line; thence with said town line to a point opposite the Methodist church; thence in a western direction, the shortest distance to a branch in Mrs. Buchanan's field; thence up said branch as it meanders in a northern direction to a spring, near the southeast corner of the "Guy Sharp" lot; thence in a straight line to Col. N. J. Lillard's spring, the beginning, and as further amended pursuant to any annexation accomplished by private act or general law.

## ARTICLE II

### POWERS

Section 1. Powers enumerated. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen shall have the power by ordinance to:

1. Assess, levy and collect taxes for all general and special purposes on all subjects or objects of taxation, and privileges taxable by law for state, county or municipal purposes;
2. Adopt classifications of the subjects and objects of taxation that are not contrary to law;
3. Make special assessments for local improvements;
4. Contract and be contracted with;
5. Incur debts by borrowing money or otherwise, and give any appropriate evidence thereof, in the manner hereinafter provided;
6. Issue and give, sell, pledge or in any manner dispose of, negotiable or nonnegotiable interest-bearing or noninterest-bearing bonds, warrants, promissory notes or orders of the municipality, upon the credit of the municipality or solely upon the credit of specific property owned by the municipality or solely upon the credit income derived from any property used in connection with any public utility owned or operated by the municipality, or solely upon the credit of the proceeds of special assessments for local improvements; or upon any two or more such credits;
7. Expend the money of the municipality for all lawful purposes;

8. Acquire or receive and hold, maintain, improve, sell, lease, mortgage, pledge or otherwise dispose of property, real or personal, and any estate or interest therein, within or without the municipality or state;

9. Condemn property, real or personal, or any easement, interest, or estate or use therein, either within or without the municipality, for present or future public use; the condemnation shall be effected in accordance with the terms and provisions of state law, or in any other manner provided by law;

10. Take and hold property within or without the municipality or state upon trust; and administer trusts for the public benefit;

11. Acquire, construct, own, operate, and maintain, or sell, lease, mortgage, pledge or otherwise dispose of public utilities or any estate or interest therein, or any other utility of service to the municipality, its inhabitants, or any part thereof, and further, may issue debt for these purposes under the general law;

12. Grant to any person, firm, association or corporation (including the municipality) franchises for public utilities and public services to be furnished the municipality and those therein. The power to grant franchises embraces the power to grant exclusive franchises. Whenever an exclusive franchise is granted, it shall be exclusive not only as against any other person, firm, association or corporation, but also against the municipality itself. Franchises may be granted for a period of twenty-five years or less, but not longer. The Board may prescribe in each grant of a franchise, the rate, fares, charges and regulations that may be made by the grantee of the franchise in accordance with state and federal law. Franchises may, by their terms, apply to the territory within the corporate limits of the municipality at the date of the franchises, and as the corporate limits may be enlarged, and to the existing streets, alleys and thoroughfares that thereafter may be opened;

13. Make contracts with any person, firm, association or corporation for public utilities, public services to be furnished the municipality and those therein. The power to make contracts embraces the power to make exclusive contracts. When an exclusive contract is entered into, it shall be exclusive against any other person, firm, association or corporation. These contracts may be entered into for a period of twenty-five years or less, but not longer. The Board may prescribe in each such contract entered into, the rates, fares, charges and regulations that may be made by the person, firm, association or corporation with whom the contract is made. Such contracts may, by their terms, apply to the territory within the corporate limits of the municipality at the date of the contract, and as the corporate limits may be enlarged, and to the

then existing streets, alleys and thoroughfares and to any other streets, alleys and other thoroughfares that thereafter may be opened;

14. Prescribe reasonable regulations regarding the construction, maintenance, equipment, operation and service of public utilities, compel reasonable extensions of facilities for these services, and assess fees for the use of or impact upon these services. Nothing herein shall be construed to permit the alteration or impairment of any of the terms or provisions of any exclusive franchise granted or of any exclusive contract entered into under subdivisions (12) and (13);

15. Establish, open, relocate, vacate, alter, widen, extend, grade, improve, repair, construct, reconstruct, maintain, light, sprinkle and clean public highways, streets, boulevards, parkways, sidewalks, alleys, parks, public grounds, public facilities, libraries and squares, wharves, bridges, viaducts, subways, tunnels, sewers and drains within or without the corporate limits, regulate their use within the corporate limits, assess fees for the use of or impact upon such property and facilities, and take and appropriate property therefor under the provisions of state law or any other manner provided by general laws;

16. Construct, improve, reconstruct and reimprove by opening, extending, widening, grading, curbing, guttering, paving, graveling, macadamizing, draining or otherwise improving any streets, highways, avenues, alleys or other public places within the corporate limits, and assess a portion of the cost of these improvements on the property abutting on or adjacent to these streets, highways or alleys under, and as provided by, general law or any other manner provided by general law;

17. Assess against abutting property within the corporate limits the cost of planting shade trees, removing from sidewalks all accumulations of snow, ice, and earth, cutting and removing obnoxious weeds and rubbish, street lighting, street sweeping, street sprinkling, street flushing, and street oiling, the cleaning and rendering sanitary or removal, abolishing, and prohibiting of closets and privies, in such manner as they may be provided by general law or by ordinance of the Board;

18. Acquire, purchase, provide for, construct, regulate and maintain and do all things relating to all marketplaces, public buildings, bridges, sewers and other structures, works and improvements;

19. Collect and dispose of drainage, sewage, ashes, garbage, refuse or other waste, or license and regulate their collection and disposal, and the cost

of collection, regulation, or disposal may be funded by taxation, special assessment to the property owner, user fees or other charges;

20. License and regulate all persons, firms, corporations, companies and associations engaged in any business, occupation, calling, profession or trade not prohibited by law;

21. Impose a license tax upon any animal, thing, business, vocation, pursuit, privilege or calling not prohibited by law;

22. Define, prohibit, abate, suppress, prevent and regulate all acts, practices, conduct, business, occupations, callings, trades, use of property and all other things whatsoever detrimental, or liable to be detrimental, to the health, morals, comfort, safety, convenience or welfare of the inhabitants of the municipality, and exercise general police powers;

23. Prescribe limits within which business occupations and practices liable to be nuisances or detrimental to the health, morals, security or general welfare of the people may lawfully be established, conducted or maintained;

24. Inspect, test, measure and weigh any article for consumption or use within the municipality, and charge reasonable fees therefor, and provide standards of weights, tests and measures;

25. Regulate the location, bulk, occupancy, area, lot, location, height, construction and materials of all buildings and structures, and inspect all buildings, lands and places as to their condition for health, cleanliness and safety, and when necessary, prevent their use and require any alteration or changes necessary to make them healthful, clean or safe;

26. Provide and maintain charitable, educational, recreative, curative, corrective, detentive or penal institutions, departments, functions, facilities, instrumentalities, conveniences and services;

27. Purchase or construct, maintain and establish a workhouse for the confinement and detention of any person convicted in the town court of offenses against the laws and ordinances of the municipality who fails to secure the fine imposed upon such person, or contract with the county to keep these persons in the workhouse of the county and provide by that contract and by ordinance for the commitment of these persons to the workhouse so provided until the fines are paid;



28.

(1) Enforce any ordinance, rule or regulation by fines, forfeitures, and penalties, and by other actions or proceedings in any court of competent jurisdiction.

(2) No fine, forfeiture or penalty may exceed fifty dollars or the maximum allowable under general state law, for any one violation of municipal ordinances;

(3) Provide by ordinance for court costs;

29. Establish schools, determine the necessary boards, officers and teachers required therefor, and fix their compensation, purchase or otherwise acquire land for or assess a fee for use of, or impact upon, schoolhouses, playgrounds and other purposes connected with the schools, purchase or erect all necessary buildings and do all other acts necessary to establish, maintain and operate a complete educational system within the municipality;

30. Regulate, tax, license or suppress the keeping or going at large of animals within the municipality, impound them, and in default of redemption, sell or kill them;

31. Call elections as herein provided; and

32. Have and exercise all powers that now or hereafter it would be competent for this charter specifically to enumerate, as fully and completely as though these powers were specifically enumerated.

### ARTICLE III

#### ELECTIONS

Section 1. Date of general town election. A general town election shall be held on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November in each even numbered year. [As replaced by Priv. Acts 2011, ch. 2, § 1]

Section 2. General election laws apply. All elections shall be conducted by the Commissioners of Elections of Meigs County in accordance with the general election laws and this charter.

Section 3. Voter qualification requirements.<sup>1</sup> Persons who are residents of the town of Decatur in accordance with the residency requirements prescribed by the elections laws of the State of Tennessee and persons owning at least fifty percent fee simple interest in a parcel of real property of at least five thousand square feet within the town of Decatur for a period of six months prior to an election and who are otherwise qualified to vote in state elections in Meigs County shall be eligible to vote in town elections, provided the person is properly registered in accordance with the applicable laws of the State of Tennessee.

## ARTICLE IV

### BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

Section 1. Composition, eligibility, election, terms, and re-election.

a. Composition. There shall be a Board of Mayor and Aldermen composed of the Mayor and six Aldermen.

b. Eligibility. Only registered voters of the town who are bona fide citizens, and residents of the town, shall be eligible to seek and hold the office of Aldermen or Mayor.

(c) Election and Terms. The three (3) current Aldermen terms that are scheduled to expire in April 2011 shall be extended to November 2012 and the three (3) current Aldermen and Mayor terms that are scheduled to expire in April 2013 shall be extended to November 2014. In 2012, 2014 and thereafter, the elected official term shall commence at the first regular meeting of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen following the certification of the election by the Meigs County Election Commissioners.

The Mayor and any Aldermen shall be eligible for re-election. [As amended by Priv. Acts 2011, ch. 2, § 2]

Section 2. Compensation; expenses. Until otherwise established by ordinance by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, the salary of the Mayor and Aldermen shall be one hundred fifty dollars per month for the Mayor and fifty dollars per meeting for each alderman. Any ordinance establishing or increasing salaries must receive final approval ninety days prior to the next general town election and shall become effective for those officials elected at the next general town election and for the remaining officials elected two years

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<sup>1</sup>Ord. #194, December 10, 2013 provides: "Nonresident voters shall vote by absentee ballot only in Town elections."

later. Any aldermen failing to attend a regular meeting of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen shall not receive compensation for the meeting he fails to attend. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen may receive their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties of office, if authorized by ordinance.

Section 3. Mayor.

a. The Mayor:

1. Shall be the chief executive officer of the municipality and shall preside at meetings of the Board;

2. Shall communicate any information needed, and recommend measures the Mayor deems expedient to the Board;

3. Shall make temporary appointments of any officer or department head in case of absence, sickness or temporary disability. The Board may confirm the Mayor's appointment or otherwise appoint a person to fill the vacant office unless this duty has been delegated as authorized in this charter;

4.

(1) May call special meetings of the Board upon adequate notice to the Board and adequate public notice;

(2) Shall state the matters to be considered at the special meeting and the action of the Board shall be limited to those matters submitted;

5. Shall countersign checks and drafts drawn upon the treasury by the Treasurer and sign all contracts to which the municipality is a party;

6. As a member of a board, may make motions but shall vote only in case of a tie;

7. Shall make appointments to boards and commissions as authorized by law.

b. Unless otherwise designated by the Board by ordinance, the Mayor shall perform the following duties or may designate a department head or department heads to perform any of the following duties:

1. Those duties set forth in Article V, Section 1 of this charter, if the Board does not appoint a town administrator or if someone else is not designated by the Board to perform those duties;

2.

(1) Employ, promote, discipline, suspend and discharge all employees and department heads, in accordance with personnel policies and procedures, if any, adopted by the Board;

(2) Nothing in this charter shall be construed as granting a property interest to employees or department heads in their continued employment;

3. Act as purchasing agent for the municipality in the purchase of all materials, supplies and equipment for the proper conduct of the municipality's business; provided, that all purchases shall be made in accordance with policies, practices and procedures established by the Board, in accordance with the general law;

4. Prepare and submit the annual budget and capital program to the Board for its adoption by ordinance; and

5. Such other duties as may be designated or required by the Board.

#### Section 4. Vice-mayor.

a. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen at the first regular meeting following each regular town election shall elect an alderman to the office of Vice-mayor who shall serve as Mayor when the Mayor is absent or unable to discharge the duties of the Mayor's office, and in case of a vacancy in the office of Mayor, for the remainder of the unexpired term.

b. If the Vice-mayor fills a vacancy in the office of Mayor, the remaining members of the Board shall fill a vacancy in the office of Alderman for the unexpired term, and they shall elect from their membership a new Vice-mayor who shall serve until the first regular meeting of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen following the next regular town election.

c. In the absence of the Mayor and Vice-mayor, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen shall designate one of its number to preside at meetings, and who shall retain all of the voting rights of an alderman.

Section 5. Prohibitions. Holding Other Office. No member of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen shall hold any other town, county, state or federal office during the term for which he was elected to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. No member of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen shall hold any other town office or employment during the terms for which he was elected to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. No former member of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen shall hold any compensated appointive office or employment with the town until after the expiration of the term for which elected to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the Board of Mayor and Aldermen from selecting any current or former member of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to represent the town on the governing board of any regional or other intergovernmental agency.

Section 6. Vacancies; forfeiture of office; filling of vacancies.

a. Vacancies. The office of Mayor or Alderman shall become vacant upon the member's death, resignation, removal from office or forfeiture of office in any manner authorized by law.

b. Forfeiture of Office. The Mayor or Alderman shall forfeit that office if the Mayor or Alderman:

1. lacks, at any time during the term of office for which elected, any qualification for the office prescribed by this charter or by law,

2. violates any express prohibition of this charter,

3. is convicted of a state or federal felony, appeals notwithstanding,

4. fails to attend three consecutive regular meetings of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen without being excused by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, or

5. fails to maintain a bona fide residence within the town.

c. Filling of Vacancies. A vacancy in the office of Alderman shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term, by a majority vote

of all of the remaining members of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. If the Board of Mayor and Aldermen fails to do so within sixty days following the occurrence of the vacancy, the Mayor shall notify the Meigs County Election Commission, who shall call a special election to fill the vacancy for the unexpired term. A special election shall be held not sooner than seventy-five days and not later than eighty days thereafter, and shall be governed by the general election laws of the state, except that no special election shall be held within ninety days of the next regular election.

Section 7. Investigations. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen may make investigations into the affairs of the town and the conduct of any town department, office or agency and for this purpose may subpoena witnesses, administer oaths, take testimony and require the production of evidence. Failure or refusal to obey a lawful order issued in the exercise of these powers by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen shall be a misdemeanor, and when a violator is found guilty by a court of competent jurisdiction, shall be punishable by a fine or imprisonment as provided by law.

Section 8. Time and place of meetings. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen shall, by ordinance, fix the time and place at which the regular meetings of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen shall be held. Until otherwise provided by ordinance, the regular meeting of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen shall be held at 7:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month. When such day falls on a legal holiday, the meeting shall be on the next following day unless otherwise prescribed by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

Whenever in the opinion of the Mayor, the Vice-mayor when acting as Mayor, or of any four Aldermen, the welfare of the town demands it, the Recorder shall call a special meeting of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, by publishing or broadcasting a notice at least twenty-four hours before the meeting. The notice shall state the matters to be considered at the special meeting and the action of the Board shall be limited to those matters.

Section 9. Oath of office. The Mayor and Aldermen, before entering upon their duties, shall take and subscribe and file with the Recorder an oath or affirmation to support the Constitution of the United States and the State of Tennessee and the charter and ordinances of the town of Decatur, and that he will faithfully discharge the duties of his office.

Section 10. Quorum. Four members of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, but any smaller number may adjourn from day to day. The affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen present and constituting a

quorum, will be necessary to adopt any motion, resolution or ordinance, or to pass any measure.

Section 11. Procedure for adopting ordinances. All ordinances shall begin with the clause, "Be it ordained by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen of the town of Decatur, Tennessee." An ordinance may be introduced by the Mayor or any of the six Aldermen. The body of ordinances may be omitted from the minutes on first passage, but reference therein shall be made to the ordinance by title and subject matter. Every ordinance shall be passed on two different days, at regular, special or adjourned meetings, with at least one passage occurring at a regular meeting. Copies of the text of every ordinance must be made available to the public during every meeting in which the ordinance is subject to passage. Every ordinance must receive at least, a majority vote on each passage as defined in Section 10 of this Article. Every ordinance shall be effective upon final passage unless by its terms the effective date is deferred. Every ordinance upon final passage shall be signed by the Mayor, and shall be immediately taken charge of by the Recorder and numbered, copied in an ordinance book and there authenticated by the signature of the Recorder, and filed and preserved in the Recorder's office.

Section 12. Legislative action which must be exercised by ordinance. Except as otherwise provided by general law or this charter, legislative action of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen shall be by ordinance when granting, renewing or extending public franchises; creating, abolishing or combining departments or offices; authorizing the borrowing of money; regulating the rate charged for its services by a public utility; fixing fees, service charges and utility rates; levying taxes; providing a fine or other penalty or establishing a rule or regulation for violation of which a fine or other penalty is imposed; or amending or repealing an existing ordinance.

## ARTICLE V

### TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Section 1. Duties of Town Administrator.

a. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen may appoint a Town Administrator who shall serve at the will and pleasure of the Board. The Town Administrator shall report and be responsible to the Board. The Town Administrator need not be a resident of the town at the time of his appointment, but must become a resident within ninety days after taking office.

b. The Board shall, by ordinance, require the Town Administrator to perform all of the following duties:

1. Exercise each and all of the powers enumerated in Article IV, Section 3(b);
2. Prepare and submit the annual budget and capital program to the Board for its adoption by ordinance;
3. Administer the business of the town;
4. Make recommendations to the Board for improving the quality and quantity of public services to be rendered by the officers and employees to the inhabitants of the town;
5. Keep the Board fully advised as to the conditions and needs of the town;
6. Report to the Board the condition of all property, real and personal, owned by the town and recommend repairs or replacements as needed;
7. Recommend to the Board and suggest the priority of programs or projects involving public works or public improvements that should be undertaken by the town;
8. Recommend specific personnel positions, as may be required for the needs and operations of the town, and may propose personnel policies and procedures for approval of the Board; and
9. Perform such other duties as may from time to time be designated or required by the Board.

Section 2. Vacancy in the office of Town Administrator. During a vacancy in the office of town administrator, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen may appoint an acting town administrator, may designate a department head as acting town administrator or may assign the duties of the Town Administrator to the Mayor.

Section 3.

a. Appointments and Removals. No member of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen shall, in any manner, dictate the appointment or



removal of any town administrative officer or employee whom the Town Administrator or any subordinate of the Town Administrator is empowered to appoint, but members of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen may express their views and fully and freely discuss with the Town Administrator anything pertaining to appointment and removal of such officers and employees.

b. Interference with Administration. Except for the purpose of inquiries and investigations under Article IV, Section 7, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen or its members shall deal with town officers and employees who are subject to the direction and supervision of the Town Administrator solely through the Town Administrator, and neither the Board of Mayor and Aldermen nor its members shall give orders to any such officer or employee, either publicly or privately.

## ARTICLE VI

### TOWN ATTORNEY

Section 1. Qualifications. The Town Attorney shall be an attorney-at-law entitled to practice in the courts of the State of Tennessee.

Section 2. Appointment, duties, and compensation. The Town Attorney shall be appointed by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen and shall direct the management of all litigation in which the town is a party, including the function of prosecuting attorney in the town court; represent the town in all legal matters and proceedings in which the town is, a party or interested, or in which any of its officers are officially interested; attend all regular Board of Mayor and Aldermen meetings and any other meetings when requested by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen; advise the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, and committees or members thereof, the Town Administrator, and the heads of all departments and divisions as to all legal questions affecting the town's interests; and approve as to form all contracts, deeds, bonds, ordinances, resolutions and other documents to be signed in the name of or made by or with the town. His compensation shall be as fixed by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, and he shall serve at the will of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

## ARTICLE VII

### RECORDER

Section 1. Appointment, compensation, and specific requirements, powers and duties of office. The Recorder shall be appointed by the Town Administrator, and he shall unless otherwise provided by ordinance be the Head

of the Department of Finance. He shall receive a salary to be fixed by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen and give such bond to the town for not less than fifty thousand dollars, or as may be provided by ordinance. The cost of such bond shall be an expense of the town. When required he shall by his signature and the town seal, attest instruments signed in the name of the town and official acts of the Mayor. He shall have power to administer oaths. He shall serve at the will and pleasure of the Board.

Section 2. Shall keep minutes. It shall be the duty of the Recorder to be present at all meetings of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen and to keep a full and accurate record of all business transacted by the same, to be preserved in permanent book form.

Section 3. Shall be custodian of public records, bonds, etc. The Recorder shall have custody of and preserve in his office, the town seal, the public records, ordinance books, minutes of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, contracts, bonds, title deeds, certificates and papers, all official indemnity or security bonds (except his own bond, which shall be in the custody of the Mayor), and all other bonds, oaths and affirmations, and all other records, papers and documents not required by this charter or by ordinance to be deposited elsewhere, and register them by numbers, dates and contents, and keep an accurate and modern index thereof.

Section 4. Shall provide and certify copies of records, papers, etc. The Recorder shall provide, and when required by any officer or person, certify copies of records, papers and documents in his office and charge therefor, for the use of the town, such fees as may be provided by ordinance and cause copies of ordinances to be printed, as may be directed by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, and kept in his office for distribution.

Section 5. Shall generally supervise and keep records of fiscal affairs. The Recorder as Head of the Department of Finance, shall exercise a general supervision over the fiscal affairs of the town, and general accounting supervision over all the town's property, assets and claims. He shall be the General Accountant and Auditor of the town and shall have custody of all papers, records and vouchers relating to the fiscal affairs of the town, and the records in his office shall show the financial operations and condition, property, assets, claims and liability of the town, all expenditures authorized and all contracts in which the town is interested.

Section 6. Shall be Treasurer. The Recorder shall be the Treasurer of the town; as such it shall be his duty to collect, receive and receipt for the taxes and all other revenues and bonds of the town, and the proceeds of its bond issues, and to disburse the same.

Section 7. Shall perform any other duties imposed. The Recorder shall also perform any other duties imposed upon him by this charter or by ordinance.

## ARTICLE VIII

### ADMINISTRATION

Section 1. Departments, offices, and agencies generally. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen may establish town departments, offices or agencies in addition to those created by this charter, and may prescribe the functions of all departments, offices and agencies not inconsistent with this charter. Departments, offices and agencies created by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen may be abolished or combined.

Section 2. Personnel rules. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen shall adopt personnel rules which may include but not be limited to:

1. A job classification plan;
2. A pay plan; and
3. The hours of work, attendance regulations and provisions for sick leave and vacation leave.

Section 3. Officers, employees, etc., who handle money shall be bonded. Every officer, agent and employee having duties embracing the receipt, disbursement, custody, or handling of money shall, before entering upon his duties, execute a surety bond with some surety company authorized to do business in the State of Tennessee, as surety, in such amount as shall be prescribed by ordinance or this charter. All such bonds and sureties shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, and the Board of Mayor and Aldermen may provide for blanket bonds. The cost of all bonds shall be an expense of the town.

## ARTICLE IX

### FINANCE

Section 1. Fiscal year. The fiscal year of the town shall begin on the first day of July and end on the last day of June.

Section 2. Annual department budgets required. The adoption of an annual budget for all departments shall be a prerequisite to the appropriation of money for municipal purposes and the levy of property taxes.

Section 3. Town required to prepare and submit annual budget and explanatory message. At least sixty days before the beginning of the fiscal year, there shall be prepared and submitted to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen a budget for the ensuing fiscal year and an accompanying message. The message shall explain the budget both in fiscal terms and in terms of work programs. It shall outline the proposed financial policies of the town for the ensuing fiscal year, describe the important features of the budget, indicate any major changes from the current year in financial policies, expenditures, and revenues together with the reasons for such changes, summarize the town's debt position and include such other materials as deemed desirable.

Section 4. Required content and organization of budget. The budget shall provide a complete financial plan of all town funds and activities for the ensuing fiscal year, and, except as required by law or this charter, shall be in such form as deemed desirable by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

Section 5. Amendments budget, when budget must be adopted, and effect of adoption. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen shall adopt the budget by resolution. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen may amend the budget by resolution, but no amendment shall decrease expenditures required by law for debt service. The budget shall be adopted for the ensuing fiscal year before the end of the current fiscal year. Adoption of the budget shall constitute appropriations of the amounts specified therein as expenditures from the funds indicated. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen shall also adopt an ordinance establishing a property tax levy.

Section 6. Supplemental appropriations. If during the fiscal year the Head of the Department of Finance certifies that there are available for appropriation revenues in excess of those estimated in the budget, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, by resolution, may make supplemental appropriations for the year up to the amount of such excess.

Section 7. Deficits. If at any time during the fiscal year it appears probable to the Head of the Department of Finance that the revenues available will be insufficient to meet the amount appropriated, he shall report to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen without delay, indicating the estimated amount of the deficit, any remedial action taken by him and his recommendations as to any other steps to be taken. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen shall then take such further action as it deems necessary to prevent or minimize any deficit, and for that purpose it may, by resolution, reduce appropriations.

Section 8. Transfer of unencumbered appropriations. At any time during the fiscal year, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen may transfer part or all of any unencumbered appropriation balance among programs within a department,

office or agency, and the Board of Mayor and Aldermen may, by resolution, transfer part or all of any unencumbered appropriation balance from one department, office, or agency to another.

Section 9. Lapsing of appropriations. Every appropriation shall lapse at the end of the fiscal year to the extent that it has not been expended or encumbered.

Section 10. Incurrence and discharge of obligations. No payment shall be made or obligation incurred against any appropriation unless the Head of the Department of Finance or an officer designated by him first certifies that an appropriation has been made for that purpose and that there is unexpended and unencumbered in the appropriation for that purpose an amount sufficient to meet the obligation or to make the expenditure. However, except where prohibited by law, nothing herein shall be construed to prevent the making or authorizing of payments or making of contracts for capital improvements to be financed wholly or partly by the issuance of bonds or to prevent the making of any contract or lease providing for payments beyond the end of the fiscal year.

Section 11. Accounting records and audits. There shall be installed and maintained adequate accounting records in accordance with generally accepted principles of municipal accounting. The same account titles shall be used throughout the accounting records, the budget and financial statements. Constant and comprehensive budgetary control shall be maintained. An audit of the financial affairs of the town shall be required by action of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen and same be made after the end of the fiscal year by a public accountant skilled in such work. Any taxpayer may file a bill in chancery court to compel the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to have the audit made if such accountant has not been employed within one month after the end of the fiscal year.

## ARTICLE X

### TAXATION

Section 1. Assessment and levy. All property within the town not exempt by general law shall be assessed for taxation upon the same principles established in regard to state and county taxation.

Section 2. Due and delinquent dates; penalties and interest. Property taxes shall be payable on and after October 1 in the year for which assessed and shall become delinquent on March 1 following.

Unless otherwise provided by ordinance, an interest and penalty of one and one-half of one percent per month of the amount of the delinquent taxes shall also be added on the first day of March, in which the taxes become delinquent, and one and one-half of one percent shall be added on the first day of each month thereafter.

Section 3. Collection of delinquent taxes. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen may provide by ordinance for the collection of delinquent real property taxes by the Recorder as provided by general law, or by the Town Attorney acting in accordance with general laws providing for the collection of delinquent town or county taxes. If not otherwise collected, the Town Attorney, or other attorney designated by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, shall file suit for collection of all delinquent taxes not later than eighteen months following the date of delinquency.

Section 4. County may collect taxes. The town may contract with the county for the collection of town taxes in accordance with general law.

## ARTICLE XI

### TOWN COURT

Section 1. Town court established. A town court is hereby established and granted jurisdiction over all infractions of municipal ordinances of the town of Decatur.

Section 2. Appointment, qualifications, oath, compensation, and restrictions on office of Town Judge. The Town Judge shall be appointed by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen at the first regular meeting in May following the regular town election in April of each odd numbered year and shall serve until the first regular meeting in May following the next general town election or until his successor is appointed and has taken his oath of office. Qualifications for the Town Judge shall be established by ordinance by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

The Town Judge shall be eligible for re-appointment. He shall take the same oath required of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen shall establish the compensation of the Town Judge by ordinance. The Town Judge shall not be eligible to hold elective offices for the town of Decatur.

Section 3. Duties and powers of the Town Judge. The Town Judge shall try all persons charged with violation of the ordinances of the town. He shall have the power to levy fines, penalties and forfeitures in accordance with such

offense and to impose such costs as the Board of Mayor and Aldermen may by ordinance provide, to issue all necessary process, to administer oaths, and to punish for contempt.

Section 4. Court policies and procedures. The policies and procedures governing the day-to-day operations of the Court shall be provided by ordinance.

Section 5. Town Judge to be exclusive judge of law and facts. The Town Judge shall be the exclusive judge of the law and facts in every case before him, and no official or employee of the town shall attempt to influence his decision except through pertinent facts presented in court.

## ARTICLE XII

### MISCELLANEOUS AND TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

Section 1. Corporate existence, existing ordinances and resolutions. The corporate existence of the town of Decatur is continued. All existing ordinances, resolutions or other actions of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen not inconsistent with the charter shall remain in full force and effect until amended or repealed in the manner here provided.

Section 2. Expiration of terms of elected officers. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen in office when this act is ratified shall continue in office as the Board of Mayor and Aldermen until their successors are elected and qualified.

Section 3. Legal effect of this act. This act is declared to be a Private Act, and may be read in evidence in all courts of law and equity. All ordinances and resolutions and proceedings of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen created by this charter may be proven by the seal of the Corporation, attested by the Recorder, and when printed and published by the authority of the Corporation and certified by the Recorder, shall be received in evidence in all courts and places without further proof.

Section 4. Severability. If any provision of this charter or the application thereof to any person or circumstances is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the charter which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to that end, the provisions of this charter are declared to be severable.

Section 5. Gender. Wherever, in this charter, "man, men, him, his" or their related pronouns may appear, either as words or as parts of words, they have been used for literary purposes and are meant in their generic sense (i.e., to include all humankind--both female and male sexes).

SECTION 2. This act shall have no effect unless it is approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the legislative body of the town of Decatur. Its approval or nonapproval shall be proclaimed by the presiding officer of the town of Decatur and certified to the secretary of state.

SECTION 3. For the purpose of approving or rejecting the provisions of this act, it shall be effective upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it. For all other purposes, it shall become effective as provided in Section 2.

PASSED: May 29, 2003

s/Jimmy Naifeh  
Jimmy Naifeh, Speaker  
House of Representatives

s/John Wilder  
Speaker of the Senate

APPROVED this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of June 2003

s/Phil Bredesen  
Phil Bredesen, Governor



RELATED ACTS

Levy of privilege tax upon certain motor-driven vehicles . . . . . C-26

CHAPTER NO. 120

HOUSE BILL NO. 3590

By Representatives McDaniel, Rinks

Substituted for: Senate Bill No. 3505

By Senator Herron

AN ACT to levy a privilege tax upon certain motor-driven vehicles in Decatur County; to provide for the collection of the tax and the costs of administration of the tax; and to provide penalties for violation of any of the provisions of this act.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. For the privilege of using the public roads and highways in Decatur County, Tennessee, there is levied upon motor-driven vehicles, and upon the privilege of the operation thereof, except motorcycles, motor-driven bicycles and scooters, farm tractors, self-propelled farm machines not usually used for operation upon public highways or roads, and motor-driven vehicles owned by any governmental agency or governmental instrumentality, and except for other exemptions provided by general law, a special privilege tax for the benefit of such county, which tax shall be in the amount of thirty dollars (\$30.00) for each such motor-driven vehicle, the owner of which resides within the county. This tax applies to, is a levy upon, and shall be paid on each motor-driven vehicle, the owner of which resides within the county.

SECTION 2. The tax herein levied shall be paid to and collected by the county clerk of Decatur County, who is authorized by Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 67-4-103, to collect such privilege taxes. The county clerk shall collect this tax at the same time the clerk collects the state privilege tax levied upon the operation of a motor-driven vehicle over the public highways of this state. The county clerk shall deduct a fee of five percent (5%), or such higher or lower fee as may from time to time be authorized under Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 8-21-701(55), for receiving and paying over county revenue, from the amount of taxes collected and paid over to the county trustee.

SECTION 3. Payment of the privilege tax imposed hereunder shall be evidenced by a receipt, issued in duplicate by the county clerk, the original of which shall be kept by the owner of the motor-driven vehicle and, if required by the county legislative body by resolution pursuant to Tennessee Code

Annotated, Section 55-4-103, by a decal or emblem also issued by the county clerk, which shall be displayed in the manner required by resolution of the county legislative body. The design of the decal or emblem shall be determined by the county clerk. The expense incident to the purchase of such decals herein required, as well as the expense of obtaining proper receipts and other records necessary for the performance of the duties herein incumbent upon the county clerk, shall be paid from the general fund of the county.

SECTION 4. The privilege tax or wheel tax herein levied, when paid, together with full, complete and explicit performance of and compliance with all provisions of this act by the owner, shall entitle the owner of the motor-driven vehicle for which the tax was paid and on which any required decal or emblem has been affixed, as herein provided, to operate or allow to be operated the vehicle over the streets, roads and highways of the county for a period of one (1) year which shall run concurrently with the period established by Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 55-4-104, for state registration fees.

In the event a wheel tax decal or emblem is sold by the clerk for a period of more or less than twelve months, the tax imposed shall be proportionate to the annual tax fixed for the vehicle and modified in no other manner, except that the proportional tax shall be rounded off to the nearest quarter of a dollar.

SECTION 5. In the event any motor-driven vehicle for which the wheel tax has been paid and any required decal or emblem issued and placed thereon become unusable or is destroyed or damaged to the extent that it can no longer be operated over the public roads, streets or highways of the county, or in the event that the owner transfers the title to such vehicle, or completely removes therefrom and destroys the decal or emblem issued for and placed thereon, and the owner makes proper application to the clerk for the issuance of a duplicate decal or emblem to be used by the applicant on another vehicle for the unexpired term for which the original decal or emblem was issued, and the clerk is satisfied that the applicant is entitled to the issuance of a duplicate decal or emblem and the applicant pays into the hands of the clerk the sum of five dollars (\$5.00), the clerk will then issue to such applicant a duplicate receipt, canceling the original receipt previously delivered to him by the applicant, and will deliver to the applicant a duplicate decal or emblem, which shall be affixed to the motor-driven vehicle for which it is issued, as herein provided, and such duplicate decal or emblem shall entitle the applicant to operate or allow to be operated the vehicle upon the streets, roads and highways of the county for the remainder of the period for which the original decal or emblem was issued. Likewise, in the event a decal or emblem becomes obliterated, erased or defaced, or is destroyed under the provisions of this act, and is therefore illegible and unusable by the owner, upon proper application made by the owner and filed with the clerk, showing such circumstances and facts to be true, then the clerk,

upon receipt from the owner of five dollars (\$5.00), may issue and deliver to the applicant a duplicate decal or emblem.

SECTION 6. Pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated, Sections 5-8-102, and 55-4-105, a person violating the provisions of this act commits a misdemeanor and shall, upon conviction, be subject to the penalties provided for in those general law provisions.

SECTION 7. If any provision of this act or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the act which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to that end, the provisions of this act are declared to be severable.

SECTION 8. This act shall have no effect unless it is approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the county legislative body of Decatur County. Its approval or non-approval shall be proclaimed by the presiding officer of the county legislative body and certified by him or her to the secretary of state.

SECTION 9. For the purpose of approving or rejecting the provisions of this act, it shall be effective upon becoming law, the public welfare requiring it. For all other purposes, it shall become effective upon approval as provided in Section 8.

PASSED: May 10, 2004

s/Jimmy Naifeh  
Jimmy Naifeh, Speaker  
House of Representatives

s/John S. Wilder  
John S. Wilder  
Speaker of the Senate

APPROVED this 24<sup>th</sup> day of May 2004

s/Phil Bredesen  
Phil Bredesen, Governor

ACTS COMPRISING THE CHARTER OF THE TOWN OF  
DECATUR, TENNESSEE

YEAR	CHAPTER	SUBJECT
2003	58	Basic charter act.
2004	120	Levied privilege tax on certain motor-driven vehicles.
2011	2	Set town election date, art. III, § 1; and set election dates and terms for aldermen, art. IV, § 1, subsection (c).