

Article 7.

Local ABC Boards.

§ 18B-700. Appointment and organization of local ABC boards.

(a) Membership. – A local ABC board shall consist of three or five members appointed for three-year terms unless the board is a board for a merged ABC system under G.S. 18B-703 and a different size membership has been provided for as part of the negotiated merger. If the board is a three-member board, one member of the initial board of a newly created ABC system shall be appointed for a three-year term, one member for a two-year term, and one member for a one-year term. If the board is a five-member board, one member of the initial board of a newly created ABC system shall be appointed for a three-year term, two members for two-year terms, and two members for one-year terms. As the terms of initial board members expire, their successors shall each be appointed for three-year terms. If a board is initially a three-member board and the appointing authority determines a five-member board is preferable, the terms of the two new members shall be for three years. If a local board has five members and the appointing authority determines a three-member board is preferable, the appointing authority shall not reduce the size of the board except upon the expiration of a member's term and only with the approval of the Commission. The appointing authority shall designate one member of the local board as chairman.

(a1) Mission. – The mission of local ABC boards and their employees shall be to serve their localities responsibly by controlling the sale of spirituous liquor and promoting customer-friendly, modern, and efficient stores.

(b) City Boards. – City ABC board members shall be appointed by the city governing body, unless a different method of appointment is provided in a local act enacted before the effective date of this Chapter.

(c) County Boards. – County ABC board members shall be appointed by the board of county commissioners, unless a different method of appointment is provided in a local act enacted before the effective date of this Chapter.

(c1) Limit on Creation of New Boards. – Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, no new local board may be created in any county where a local board operates an ABC store. If a jurisdiction holds an ABC store election under G.S. 18B-602(g), the establishment of ABC stores is approved, and the jurisdiction is located in a county where a local board is already in operation, the jurisdiction that held the election shall enter into an agreement with an existing local board to create a merged local board in accordance with G.S. 18B-703. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed as prohibiting a local board from serving multiple cities, counties, or cities and counties.

(d) Qualifications. – The appointing authority shall appoint members of a local board on the basis of the appointees' interest in public affairs, good judgment, knowledge, ability, and good moral character.

(e) Vacancy. – A vacancy on a local board shall be filled by the appointing authority for the remainder of the unexpired term. If the chairman's seat becomes vacant, the appointing authority may designate either the new member or an existing member of the local board to complete the chairman's term.

(f) Removal. – A member of a local board may be removed for cause at any time by the appointing authority. Local board members are subject to the removal provisions of G.S. 18B-202.

(g) Compensation of Board Members. – A local board member shall receive compensation in an amount not to exceed one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00) per board meeting unless a different level of monetary compensation is approved by the appointing authority. If a different level is approved by the appointing authority, the appointing authority shall notify the

Commission of the approved level of compensation in writing. Any change in compensation approved by the appointing authority shall be reported to the Commission in writing within 30 days of the effective date of the change. No local board member shall receive any nonmonetary compensation or benefits unless specifically authorized by this section.

(g1) **(See Editor's note for applicability)** Compensation of General Managers of Local Boards. – The salary authorized for the general manager, as defined in G.S. 18B-101, of a local board shall not exceed the salary authorized by the General Assembly for the clerk of superior court of the county in which the appointing authority was originally incorporated unless such compensation is otherwise approved by the appointing authority. The local board shall provide the appointing authority's written confirmation of such approval to the Commission. Any change in compensation approved by the appointing authority shall be reported to the Commission in writing within 30 days of the effective date of the change. The general manager of a local board may receive any other benefits to which all employees of the local board are entitled. The salary authorized for other employees of a local board may not exceed that of the general manager.

(g2) Travel Allowance and Per Diem Rates. – Approved travel on official business by the members and employees of local boards shall be reimbursed pursuant to G.S. 138-6 unless the local board adopts a travel policy that conforms to the travel policy of the appointing authority and such policy is approved by the appointing authority. The local board shall annually provide the appointing authority's written confirmation of such approval to the Commission and a copy of the travel policy authorized by the appointing authority. Any excess expenses not covered by the local board's travel policy shall only be paid with the written authorization of the appointing authority's finance officer. A copy of the written authorization for excess expenses shall be submitted to the Commission by the local board within 30 days of approval.

(h) Conflict of Interest. – The provisions of G.S. 18B-201 shall apply to local board members and employees.

(i) Bond. – Each local board member and the employees designated as the general manager and finance officer of the local board shall be bonded in an amount not less than fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) secured by a corporate surety, for the faithful performance of his duties. A public employees' blanket position bond in the required amount satisfies the requirements of this subsection. The bond shall be payable to the local board and shall be approved by the appointing authority for the local board. The appointing authority may increase the amount of the bond required for any member or employee who handles board funds.

(j) Limited Liability. – A person serving as a member of a local ABC board shall be immune individually from civil liability for monetary damages, except to the extent covered by insurance, for any act or failure to act arising out of this service, except where the person:

- (1) Was not acting within the scope of his official duties;
- (2) Was not acting in good faith;
- (3) Committed gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct that resulted in the damage or injury;
- (4) Derived an improper personal financial benefit from the transaction; or
- (5) Incurred the liability from the operation of a motor vehicle.

The immunity in this subsection is personal to the members of local ABC boards, and does not immunize the local ABC board for liability for the acts or omissions of the members of the local ABC board.

(k) **(See Editor's note for applicability)** Nepotism. – Members of an immediate family shall not be employed within the local board if such employment will result in one member of the immediate family supervising another member of the immediate family, or if one member of the immediate family will occupy a position which has influence over another member's employment, promotion, salary administration, or other related management or personnel considerations. This subsection applies to local board members and employees.

For the purpose of this subsection, the term "immediate family" includes wife, husband, mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter, grandmother, grandfather, grandson, and granddaughter. Also included are the step-, half-, and in-law relationships. It also includes other people living in the same household, who share a relationship comparable to immediate family members, if either occupies a position which requires influence over the other's employment, promotion, salary administration, or other related management or personnel considerations.

(l) Local Acts. – Notwithstanding the provisions of any local act, this section applies to all local boards. (1981, c. 412, s. 2; c. 747, s. 50; 1981 (Reg. Sess., 1982), c. 1262, s. 10; 1989, c. 800, s. 19; 2010-122, ss. 9-16; 2019-182, s. 16(b).)