

**Chapter 161.**  
**Register of Deeds.**

Article 1.

The Office.

**§ 161-1. Election and term of office.**

In each county there shall be elected biennially by the qualified voters thereof, as provided for the election of members of the General Assembly, a register of deeds. (Const., art. 7, s. 1; Rev., s. 2650; C.S., s. 3543; 1981, c. 504, s. 9.)

**§ 161-2. Four-year term for registers of deeds.**

A register of deeds shall be elected in each county of the State by the qualified voters of the county. The register of deeds shall serve for a term of four years beginning on the first Monday in December after the election and until a successor register of deeds is elected and qualified. (1935, cc. 362, 392, 462; 1937, c. 271; 1939, cc. 11, 99; 1941, c. 192; 1949, cc. 756, 830; 1957, c. 1022, s. 2; 1973, c. 215, s. 1; 1991, c. 60, s. 2.)

**§ 161-3. Oath of office.**

The register of deeds shall take the oath of office on the first Monday of December next after his election, before a person authorized to administer oaths as defined in G.S. 11-7.1. (1868, c. 35, s. 2; 1876-7, c. 276, s. 5; Code, s. 3647; Rev., s. 2652; C.S., s. 3544; 1987, c. 620, s. 4.)

**§ 161-4. Bond required.**

(a) Every register of deeds shall give bond with sufficient surety, to be approved by the board of county commissioners, in a sum of not less than ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) nor more than fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000), payable to the State, and conditioned for the safekeeping of the books and records, and for the faithful discharge of the duties of his office.

(b) The bond and surety required under subsection (a) shall further be conditioned for the safekeeping of the books and records, and for the faithful discharge of the duties of office of the register of deeds by any incumbent assistant and deputy register of deeds appointed prior to the vacancy pursuant to G.S. 161-6 and holding over after vacancy in the office of register of deeds for the interim, as provided in G.S. 161-5(b). (1868, c. 35, s. 3; 1876-7, c. 276, s. 5; Code, s. 3648; 1899, c. 54, s. 52; Rev., s. 301; C.S., s. 3545; 1963, c. 204; 1965, c. 900; 1969, c. 636.)

**§ 161-4.1. Salary in counties where fees formerly allowed.**

In any county where during the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1980, and ending June 30, 1981, the register of deeds received fees in addition to salary, and retained them personally as allowed by local act, the salary of the register of deeds in such county in any future fiscal year shall not be less than the sum of the salary plus fees received in the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1980 and ending June 30, 1981. (1981, c. 968, s. 4.)

**§ 161-4.2. Liability insurance for register of deeds.**

To the same extent that the county provides liability insurance to other county officers or employees, pursuant to G.S. 153A-97 and 160A-167, or 58-32-10, or Article 23 of Chapter 58 of the General Statutes, the county shall provide insurance to the register of deeds. If the county does not provide insurance to any officers or employees, then the county shall notify the register of deeds, in writing, prior to the first Monday in December of each year, of its intent not to provide insurance coverage to the register of deeds. This required notification shall be in the form of a letter signed by the chairman of the board of county commissioners, attested by the clerk of the board of county commissioners. If the county fails to provide the required notice, then the county shall be liable for damages that would have been paid had the county purchased the insurance pursuant to the General Statutes sections cited above. (1991, c. 470, s. 1.)

**§ 161-5. Vacancy in office.**

(a) Repealed by Session Laws 1991, c. 60, s. 1.

(a1) When a vacancy occurs from any cause in the office of register of deeds, the board of county commissioners shall fill such vacancy by the appointment of a successor for the unexpired term, who shall qualify and give bond as required by law. If the register of deeds was elected as the nominee of a political party, the board of county commissioners shall consult the county executive committee of that political party before filling the vacancy and shall appoint the person recommended by that committee, if the party makes a recommendation within 30 days of the occurrence of the vacancy.

(b) In the interim between a vacancy in the office of register of deeds and the appointment and qualification of a successor register of deeds, under the provisions of subsection (a), any incumbent assistant or deputy register of deeds appointed under G.S. 161-6 prior to the vacancy shall continue to hold office as assistant or deputy registers of deeds until discharged or otherwise lawfully relieved of office by the lawful successor to the office of register of deeds. (1868, c. 35, s. 4; Code, s. 3649; Rev., s. 2651; C.S., s. 3546; 1965, c. 900; 1975, c. 868, ss. 1, 2; 1977, c. 180; 1981, c. 763, ss. 8, 9, 14; c. 830; 1987, c. 196, s. 2; 1989, c. 497, s. 4; 1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 1056; 1991, c. 14, s. 1, c. 60, ss. 1, 4.)

**§ 161-6. Appointment of assistant and deputy registers of deeds; authority to sign in name of register of deeds; holdover assistants and deputies.**

(a) The registers of deeds of the several counties are hereby authorized to appoint one or more assistant registers of deeds and one or more deputy registers of deeds, whose acts as assistants or deputies shall be valid and for which the registers of deeds shall be officially responsible. The certificate of appointment of an assistant or deputy shall be filed by the appointing register of deeds in the office of the clerk of the superior court, who shall record the same.

(b) Each assistant and deputy register of deeds so appointed shall be authorized, in addition to his other powers and duties, to register and sign instruments and documents in the name and under the title of the appointing register of deeds, by himself as assistant or deputy, as appropriate. Such signing shall be substantially as follows:

John Doe, Register of Deeds

by Richard Roe, Assistant (or Deputy, as appropriate).

(c) Such registering and signing, when regular and sufficient in all other respects, shall be valid for all purposes, and of the same force and effect as if the instrument or document had been registered and signed by the register of deeds personally.

(d) Wherever in the General Statutes reference is made to "the register of deeds and (or) his assistant" or "the register of deeds and (or) his deputy" or words substantially to this effect, or reference is made only to "the assistant register of deeds" or "the deputy register of deeds," such reference to either assistant or deputy, unless the contrary intent is specifically stated in the text, shall also include the other, insofar as such reference pertains to the authority, powers, duties, rights, privileges, or qualifications for office of assistant or deputy register of deeds.

(e) Incumbent assistant and deputy registers of deeds holding over after a vacancy in the office of register of deeds, pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 161-5(b), shall continue to have and exercise all lawful power and authority of office until lawfully relieved of office, including, but not restricted to, all power and authority set forth in subsections (a), (b), (c) and (d), and in Chapter 161 generally, and their acts as assistant or deputy registers of deeds shall be official and valid, and the appointing register of deeds, or his estate, and the official bond under G.S. 161-4 shall be responsible for their acts as assistant or deputy registers of deeds, and such assistant or deputy register of deeds shall also be individually, personally and officially responsible for his own acts. (1909, c. 628, s. 1; C.S., s. 3547; 1949, c. 261; 1959, c. 279; 1963, c. 191; 1965, c. 900.)

#### **§ 161-7. Office at courthouse.**

The register shall keep his office at the courthouse unless the board of county commissioners shall deem it impracticable. (1868, c. 35, s. 5; Code, s. 3650; Rev., s. 2653; C.S., s. 3548.)

#### **§ 161-8. Attendance at office.**

The board of county commissioners may fix by order, to be entered on their records, what days of each week, and at what hours of each day, the register of deeds shall attend at his office in person or by deputy, and he shall give his attendance accordingly. (1868, c. 35, s. 6; Code, s. 3651; Rev., s. 2654; C.S., s. 3549.)

#### **§ 161-9. Official seal.**

The office of register of deeds for every county shall have and use an official seal or stamp, which shall be provided by the county commissioners. The official seal or stamp shall be round, and the size shall not exceed one and five-eighths inches in diameter. Contained thereon shall be the name of the register of deeds, the county and letters "N.C.," and the words "Register of Deeds." The ink used for the official stamp shall be of the reproducible type; provided, that any register of deeds using a nonconforming seal or stamp prior to July 1, 1969 may continue to use such seal or stamp. (1893, c. 119, s. 1; Rev., s. 2649; C.S., s. 3550; 1969, c. 1028.)

#### **§ 161-10. Uniform fees of registers of deeds.**

(a) Except as otherwise provided in this Article, all fees collected under this section shall be deposited into the county general fund. While performing the duties of the office, the register of deeds shall collect the following fees which shall be uniform throughout the State:

- (1) Instruments in General. – For registering or filing any instrument for which no other provision is made by this section, the fee shall be

twenty-six dollars (\$26.00) for the first 15 pages plus four dollars (\$4.00) for each additional page or fraction thereof.

For any instrument that assigns more than one security instrument as defined in G.S. 45-36.4(18) by reference to previously recorded instrument recording data that are required to be indexed pursuant to G.S. 161-14.1(b), the fee shall be an additional ten dollars (\$10.00) for each additional reference.

For an instrument that contains excessive recording data, the fee shall be an additional two dollars (\$2.00) for each party listed in the instrument in excess of 20. An instrument contains excessive recording data when there are more than 20 distinct parties listed in the instrument, including any attachments and exhibits, that require indexing pursuant to G.S. 147-54.3 or this Chapter.

When a document is presented for registration that consists of multiple instruments, the fee shall be an additional ten dollars (\$10.00) for each additional instrument. A document consists of multiple instruments when it contains two or more instruments with different legal consequences or intent, each of which is separately executed and acknowledged and could be recorded alone.

- (1a) Deeds of Trust, Mortgages, and Cancellation of Deeds of Trust and Mortgages. – For registering or filing any deed of trust or mortgage the fee shall be sixty-four dollars (\$64.00) for the first 35 pages plus four dollars (\$4.00) for each additional page or fraction thereof.

When a deed of trust or mortgage is presented for registration that contains one or more additional instruments, the fee shall be ten dollars (\$10.00) for each additional instrument. A deed of trust or mortgage contains one or more additional instruments if such additional instrument or instruments has or have different legal consequences or intent, each of which is separately executed and acknowledged and could be recorded alone.

For recording records of satisfaction, or the cancellation of record by any other means, of deeds of trust or mortgages, there shall be no fee. In all other cases, the fees provided in subdivision (1) of this subsection shall apply to the registration or filing of any subsequent instrument that relates to a previously recorded deed of trust or mortgage. For the purposes of this section, the term "subsequent instrument" has the same meaning as set forth in G.S. 161-14.1(a)(3).

- (2) Marriage Licenses. – For issuing a license sixty dollars (\$60.00); for issuing a delayed certificate with one certified copy twenty dollars (\$20.00); and for a proceeding for correction of an application, license or certificate, with one certified copy ten dollars (\$10.00).

- (3) Plats. – For each original or revised plat recorded twenty-one dollars (\$21.00) per sheet or page; for furnishing a certified copy of a plat five dollars (\$5.00).
- (4) Right-of-Way Plans. – For each original or amended plan and profile sheet recorded twenty-one dollars (\$21.00) for the first page and five dollars (\$5.00) per page for each additional page. This fee is to be collected from the Board of Transportation.
- (5) Registration of Birth Certificate One Year or More after Birth. – For preparation of necessary papers when birth to be registered in another county ten dollars (\$10.00); for registration when necessary papers prepared in another county, with one certified copy ten dollars (\$10.00); for preparation of necessary papers and registration in the same county, with one certified copy twenty dollars (\$20.00).
- (6) Amendment of Birth or Death Record. – For preparation of amendment and affecting correction ten dollars (\$10.00).
- (7) Legitimations. – For preparation of all documents concerned with legitimations ten dollars (\$10.00).
- (8) Certified Copies of Birth and Death Certificates and Marriage Licenses. – For furnishing a certified copy of a death or birth certificate or marriage license ten dollars (\$10.00). Provided however, a register of deeds, in accordance with G.S. 130A-93, may issue without charge a certified birth certificate to any person over the age of 62 years. Provided, however, upon verification of voter registration, a register of deeds, in accordance with G.S. 130A-93, shall issue without charge a certified copy of a birth certificate or a certified copy of a marriage license to any registered voter who declares the registered voter is registered to vote in this State and does not have a certified copy of that registered voter's birth certificate or marriage license necessary to obtain photo identification acceptable under G.S. 163-166.16. Any declaration shall prominently include the penalty under G.S. 163-275(13) for falsely or fraudulently making the declaration.
- (8a) Repealed by Session Laws 2012-18, s. 2.2, as amended by Session Laws 2012-194, s. 54, effective July 1, 2012.
- (9) Certified Copies. – For furnishing a certified copy of an instrument for which no other provision is made by this section five dollars (\$5.00) for the first page, plus two dollars (\$2.00) for each additional page or fraction thereof.
- (10) Comparing Copy for Certification. – For comparing and certifying a copy of any instrument filed for registration, when the copy is furnished by the party filing the instrument for registration and at the time of filing thereof five dollars (\$5.00).
- (11) Uncertified Copies. – A register of deeds who supplies uncertified copies of instruments, or index pages, as a convenience to the public, may charge

fees that the register of deeds determines bear a reasonable relation to the quality of copies supplied and the cost of purchasing and maintaining copying and/or computer equipment. These fees may be changed from time to time, but the amount of these fees shall at all times be uniform and prominently posted in the office of the register of deeds.

- (12) Notarial Acts. – For taking an acknowledgment, oath, or affirmation or performing any other notarial act the maximum fee set in G.S. 10B-31 or G.S. 10B-118 for electronic notarial acts. This fee shall not be charged if the act is performed as a part of one of the services for which a fee is provided by this subsection; except that this fee shall be charged in addition to the fees for registering, filing, or recording instruments or plats as provided by subdivisions (1) and (3) of this subsection.
- (13) Uniform Commercial Code. – The following fees apply for services related to financing statements or other records under Part 5 of Article 9 of Chapter 25 of the General Statutes:
  - a. For filing and indexing financing statements or records with two or fewer pages, thirty-eight dollars (\$38.00).
  - b. For filing and indexing financing statements or records with more than two pages, forty-five dollars (\$45.00) for the first 10 pages, plus two dollars (\$2.00) for each additional page.
  - c. For responding to an information request, including a communication with respect to requests for financing statement information for a particular debtor, thirty-eight dollars (\$38.00).

This subdivision shall not apply to either the recording or the satisfaction of a deed of trust or mortgage, when such deed of trust or mortgage acted as a fixture filing or financing statement covering as-extracted collateral or timber to be cut as authorized under G.S. 25-9-502(c).
- (14) Torrens Registration. – Such fees as are provided in G.S. 43-5.
- (15) Master Forms. – Such fees as are provided for instruments in general.
- (16) Repealed by Session Laws 2011-296, s. 1, effective October 1, 2011.
- (17) Qualification of Notary Public. – For administering the oaths of office to a notary public and making the appropriate record entries as provided in G.S. 10B-10 ten dollars (\$10.00).
- (18) Reinstatement of Articles of Incorporation. – For filing reinstatements of Articles of Incorporation prepared pursuant to G.S. 105-232; such fees as provided for instruments in general. The fee shall be paid by the corporation affected.
- (18a) Nonstandard Document. – For registering or filing any document not in compliance with the recording standards adopted under G.S. 161-14(b), the fee shall be twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) in addition to all other applicable recording fees.

(19) Miscellaneous Services. – For performing miscellaneous services such as faxing documents, providing laminated copies of documents, expedited delivery of documents, and similar services, the cost of the service.

(b) The uniform fees set forth in this section are complete and exclusive and no other fees shall be charged by the register of deeds.

(c) These fees shall be collected in every case prior to filing, registration, recordation, certification or other service rendered by the register of deeds unless by law it is provided that the service shall be rendered without charge. (Code, ss. 710, 3109, 3751; 1887, c. 283; 1891, c. 324; 1897, cc. 27, 68; 1899, c. 17, s. 2; c. 247, s. 3; cc. 261, 302, 578, 723; 1901, c. 294; 1903, c. 792; 1905, cc. 226, 292, 319; Rev., s. 2776; 1911, c. 55, s. 3; C.S., s. 3906; 1967, c. 639, s. 4; c. 823, s. 33; 1969, c. 80, s. 1; c. 912, s. 3; 1973, c. 507, s. 5; c. 1317; 1975, c. 428; 1977, 2nd Sess., c. 1132; 1981, c. 968, ss. 1, 2; 1983, c. 894, ss. 2, 3; 1987, c. 792, ss. 2-5; 1989, c. 523, s. 1; 1991, c. 636, s. 18; c. 683, s. 3; c. 693, s. 1; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 1030, s. 49; 1993, c. 425, s. 1; 1997-309, s. 9; 2000-167, s. 1; 2000-169, s. 44; 2001-390, s. 1; 2005-123, s. 7; 2005-391, s. 8; 2008-107, s. 29.7(a); 2009-451, ss. 17.8(a), 20A.4(a); 2011-296, s. 1; 2012-18, s. 2.2; 2012-79, s. 2.16; 2012-194, s. 54; 2013-225, s. 7(a), (b); 2013-381, s. 3.3; 2015-206, s. 1; 2015-227, s. 1; 2016-86, s. 1; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-80, s. 1.2; 2018-144, s. 3.2(b); 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b).)

**§ 161-10.1. Exemption of Armed Forces discharge documents and certain other records needed in support of claims for veterans' benefits.**

Any schedule of fees which is now or may be prescribed in Chapter 161 of the General Statutes or in G.S. 161-10 shall not apply to nor shall the same repeal any of the provisions of Article 5 of Chapter 47 of the General Statutes. Any schedule of fees which is now or may be hereafter prescribed in Chapter 161 of the General Statutes or as may appear in G.S. 161-10 shall not apply to nor shall the same repeal any of the provisions of G.S. 143B-1215. (1971, c. 679; 2011-183, s. 109; 2015-241, s. 24.1(ee); 2015-268, s. 7.3(a).)

**§ 161-10.2. Repealed by Session Laws 1969, c. 80, s. 6.**

**§ 161-11. Repealed by Session Laws 1973, c. 1027.**

**§ 161-11.1. Fees for Children's Trust Fund.**

(a) Five dollars (\$5.00) of each fee collected by a register of deeds on or after October 1, 1983, for issuance of a marriage license pursuant to G.S. 161-10(a)(2) shall be forwarded, as soon as practical but no later than 60 days after collection by the register of deeds, to the county finance officer, who shall forward same to the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services, for deposit in the Children's Trust Fund.

(b) Repealed by Session Laws 1997-136, s. 1, effective June 4, 1997. (1983, c. 894, s. 4; 1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 1039, s. 8; 1997-136, s. 1; 2010-31, s. 10.20A(b).)

**§ 161-11.2. Fees for domestic violence centers.**

Thirty dollars (\$30.00) of each fee collected by a register of deeds for issuance of a marriage license pursuant to G.S. 161-10(a)(2) shall be forwarded by the register of deeds to the county finance officer, who shall forward the funds to the Department of Administration to be credited to the Domestic Violence Center Fund established under G.S. 50B-9. The register of deeds shall forward the fees to the county finance officer as soon as practical. The county finance officer shall forward the fees to the Department of Administration within 60 days after receiving the fees. The Register of Deeds shall inform the applicants that thirty dollars (\$30.00) of the fee for a marriage license shall be used for Domestic Violence programs. (1991, c. 693, s. 2; 2009-451, s. 20A.4(b).)

**§ 161-11.3. Automation Enhancement and Preservation Fund.**

Ten percent (10%) of the fees collected pursuant to G.S. 161-10 and retained by the county, or six dollars and twenty cents (\$6.20) in the case of a fee collected pursuant to G.S. 161-10(a)(1a) for the first page of a deed of trust or mortgage, shall be set aside annually and placed in a nonreverting Automation Enhancement and Preservation Fund, the proceeds of which shall be expended on computer or imaging technology and needs associated with the preservation and storage of public records in the office of the register of deeds. Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect the duty of the board of county commissioners to furnish supplies and equipment to the office of the register of deeds. (2001-390, s. 2; 2007-353, s. 5; 2009-451, s. 17.8(c); 2011-296, s. 2; 2013-225, s. 7(a).)

**§ 161-11.4:** Repealed by Session Laws 2013-225, s. 7(c), effective July 1, 2013.

**§ 161-11.5. Fees to be remitted to State Treasurer.**

Six dollars and twenty cents (\$6.20) of each fee collected by the register of deeds under G.S. 161-10(a)(1) and (a)(1a) shall be remitted by the register of deeds to the county finance officer, who shall remit the funds to the State Treasurer on a monthly basis to be credited as follows:

- (1) Fifty-five percent (55%) to the Floodplain Mapping Fund established under G.S. 143-215.56A.
- (2) Twenty percent (20%) to the General Fund as nontax revenue.
- (3) Twenty-five percent (25%) to the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources to be used as provided in G.S. 121-5(e). (2009-451, s. 17.8(b); 2011-296, s. 3; 2013-225, s. 7(a); 2015-241, s. 14.30(s).)

**§ 161-11.6:** Repealed by Session Laws 2013-225, s. 7(c), effective July 1, 2013.

Article 2.

The Duties.

**§§ 161-12 through 161-13: Repealed by Session Laws 1973, c. 1027.**

**§ 161-14. Registration of instruments.**

(a) After the register of deeds has determined that all statutory and locally adopted prerequisites for recording have been met, the register of deeds shall immediately register all written instruments presented to him for registration. When an instrument is presented for registration, the register of deeds shall endorse upon it the day and hour on which it was presented. This endorsement forms a part of the registration of the instrument. All instruments shall be registered in the precise order in which they were presented for registration. Immediately after endorsing the day and hour of presentation upon an instrument, the register of deeds shall index and cross-index it in its proper sequence. The register of deeds shall then proceed to register it on the day that it is presented unless a temporary index has been established.

The register of deeds may establish a temporary index in which all instruments presented for registration shall be indexed until they are registered and entered in the permanent indexes. A temporary index shall operate in all respects as the permanent index. All instruments presented for registration shall be registered and indexed and cross-indexed on the permanent indexes not later than 30 days after the date of presentation.

(b) All instruments, except instruments conforming to the provisions of G.S. 25-9-521, presented for registration on paper shall meet all of the following requirements:

- (1) Be eight and one-half inches by eleven inches or eight and one-half inches by fourteen inches.
- (2) Have a blank margin of three inches at the top of the first page and blank margins of at least one-half inches on the remaining sides of the first page and on all sides of subsequent pages.
- (3) Be typed or printed in black on white paper in a legible font. A font size no smaller than 9 points shall be considered legible. Blanks in an instrument may be completed in pen and corrections to an instrument may be made in pen.
- (4) Have text typed or printed on one side of a page only.
- (5) State the type of instrument at the top of the first page.

If an instrument does not meet these requirements, the register of deeds shall register the instrument after collecting the fee for nonstandard documents as required by G.S. 161-10(a)(18a) in addition to all other applicable recording fees. However, if an instrument fails to meet the requirements because it contains print in a font size smaller than 9 points, the register of deeds may register the instrument without collecting the fee for nonstandard documents if, in the discretion of the register of deeds, the instrument is legible.

(c) Repealed by Session Laws 2019-35, s. 4, effective June 21, 2019.

(d) For the purposes of this section, the term "instrument" means all of the following for which a fee is collected under G.S. 161-10(a):

- (1) Instruments in General.
- (2) Deeds of Trust, Mortgages, and Cancellation of Deeds of Trust and Mortgages.
- (3) Uniform Commercial Code filings.
- (4) Torrens Registrations.
- (5) Master Forms.

(e) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section, the register of deeds shall immediately register a written instrument presented to him or her for registration that meets the following requirements: (i) the instrument is a portion of a map of a cemetery that was divided into sections based upon race, (ii) the other portion of the map of a cemetery was properly registered in the office of the register of deeds, and (iii) the unregistered portion of the map does not have the surveyor's stamp or seal and original signature affixed. (R.C., c. 37, s. 23; 1868, c. 35, s. 9; Code, s. 3654; Rev., s. 2658; C.S., s. 3553; 1921, c. 114; 1971, c. 657; 1998-184, s. 5; 2001-390, s. 5; 2001-464, ss. 2, 3; 2002-159, s. 53; 2011-75, s. 1; 2011-296, s. 6; 2019-35, s. 4; 2019-117, s. 1.)

**§ 161-14.01. Registration of instruments for business and other purposes.**

(a) The register of deeds is hereby authorized to record and file documents relating to persons, partnerships, and corporations for business and other purposes, including but not limited to certificates of partnerships, assumed business names, incorporations, dissolutions, or amendments thereto, in a consolidated book or record, including books or records used for the filing of deeds, deeds of trust, leases, and similar documents. It is the intent of this section that the register of deeds may file and record some or all of the above instruments and documents and those of a similar nature in one book or record or in a series of books or records consolidated for recording purposes; provided, said instruments and documents shall be indexed as required by law.

(b) All other laws providing for the filing of documents provided for herein shall not be applicable to the county upon adoption by the register of deeds of a consolidated recording and filing system as authorized herein. (1973, c. 1013, ss. 1, 2.)

**§ 161-14.02. Registration of documents or instruments purporting to impact official birth records.**

(a) Prior to recording a document or instrument that (i) purports to impact an official record of birth meeting the requirements of G.S. 161-14 and (ii) is not a birth registration or birth certificate, an amendment of a birth certificate, or a certificate of identification as defined in Article 4 of Chapter 130A of the General Statutes, the Register of Deeds shall conspicuously mark the first page of the document or instrument with the following statement:

"THIS DOCUMENT IS NOT AN OFFICIAL BIRTH RECORD."

(b) This section does not apply to a document or instrument which is attached to real estate documents as an exhibit. (2015-197, s. 1.)

**§ 161-14.03. Registration of documents purporting to impact official marriage records.**

(a) Prior to recording a document or instrument that (i) purports to impact an official record of marriage meeting the requirements of G.S. 51-16 and (ii) is not a marriage license, a return, or an amendment or correction of a marriage license as described in Article 2 of Chapter 51 of the General Statutes, the register of deeds shall conspicuously mark the first page of the document or instrument with the following statement:

"THIS DOCUMENT IS NOT AN OFFICIAL MARRIAGE DOCUMENT."

(b) This section shall not apply to instruments or documents that are attached as exhibits to land records, orders or judgments issued by a court of this State or another state, or separation agreements presented for registration. (2015-53, s. 1.)

**§ 161-14.1. Recording subsequent entries as separate instruments.**

(a) As used in this section, the following terms mean:

- (1) Original instrument. – The previously recorded instrument that is modified, amended, restated, supplemented, assigned, satisfied, terminated, revoked, or cancelled by a subsequent instrument.
- (2) Recording data. – The book and page number or document number that indicates where an instrument is recorded in the office of the register of deeds.
- (3) Subsequent instrument. – Any instrument presented for registration that indicates in its title or within the first two pages of its text that it is intended or purports to modify, amend, restate, supplement, assign, satisfy, terminate, revoke, or cancel a previously registered instrument. Examples of subsequent instruments include the following:
  - a. The appointment or designation of a substitute trustee in a deed of trust.
  - b. A corrective notice affidavit registered pursuant to G.S. 47-36.1 or a curative affidavit registered pursuant to G.S. 47-36.2.
  - c. A lien maturity extension agreement or notice of maturity date registered pursuant to G.S. 45-36.1.
  - d. A document of rescission registered pursuant to G.S. 45-36.6.
  - e. The cancellation of a Notice of Inactive Hazardous Substance or Waste Disposal Site registered pursuant to G.S. 130A-310.8(f).
  - f. A record of satisfaction or other instrument purporting to satisfy a security instrument registered pursuant to G.S. 45-37 or G.S. 45-37.2.
  - g. A notice of foreclosure registered pursuant to G.S. 45-38.
  - h. An assignment of a security instrument or lease.
  - i. An instrument that amends, modifies, or restates an original instrument, such as an amendment or modification agreement or an amended and restated instrument.
  - j. A release or partial release of property from the lien of a security instrument, including a partial release registered pursuant to G.S. 45-36.22 or a deed of release or reconveyance.
  - k. An obligation release registered pursuant to G.S. 45-36.23.

- l. An assumption agreement.
- m. A subordination agreement.
- n. An instrument terminating future optional advances registered pursuant to G.S. 45-72.
- o. A certificate of extension extending the period for advances under an equity line of credit registered pursuant to G.S. 45-82.1.
- p. A notice of extension relating to after-acquired property registered pursuant to G.S. 47-20.5.
- q. The revocation of a power of attorney.
- r. Any instrument authorized or directed by law to be indexed under the provisions of this section.
- s. Any instrument for which the register of deeds is authorized or directed by law to make a subsequent entry upon the margin of the record of an original instrument.

(b) The register of deeds shall register each subsequent instrument as a separate instrument and do all of the following:

- (1) Index the parties to the subsequent instrument.
- (2) If the subsequent instrument names one or more of the original parties to the original instrument, index the original parties to the original instrument as they are named in the subsequent instrument.
- (3) If the subsequent instrument states the recording data for the original instrument, reference the recording data of the original instrument as that recording data is stated in the subsequent instrument to each name so indexed.

(c) The register of deeds shall not be required to (i) read or examine any page of an instrument, other than the first two pages, to determine whether it is a subsequent instrument within the meaning of this section, or (ii) verify or make inquiry concerning the accuracy, sufficiency, or completeness of information about an original instrument contained in any subsequent instrument. The register of deeds is expressly authorized to rely solely on the information contained in the subsequent instrument, including, but not limited to, the names of the original parties to the original instrument and the recording data for the original instrument. (1963, c. 1021, s. 3; 1991, c. 114, s. 1; 2005-123, s. 8; 2011-312, s. 28; 2017-110, s. 4; 2018-80, s. 1.3; 2021-91, s. 12.)

**§ 161-14.2. Indexing procedures for instruments and documents filed in the office of the register of deeds.**

The following procedure shall be used in making index entries:

- (1) When each word of the signature is legible and it gives the complete name of the party, the signature shall govern.
- (2) When the signature is legible but initials or abbreviations are used, any additional information given by the printed or typed name and not in conflict with the signature shall govern.
- (3) When none of the words in the signature are legible, the printed or typed name shall govern.

- (4) When one or more of the words in the signature are legible, then the words that are legible shall govern; the words that appear in the printed or typed name shall govern over the words of the signature that are not legible.
- (5) When the spelling of any word in a legible signature and the spelling of the corresponding word in the typed or printed name is at variance, and the variance would cause the entries to be made at different places in the index, then the instrument shall be indexed under both spellings.
- (6) When a reasonable interpretation of an illegible word in a signature is at variance with the corresponding word in a typed or printed name, and the variance would cause the entries to be made at different places in the index, then the instrument shall be indexed in both places. (1969, c. 694, s. 1.)

**§ 161-15. Certify and register copies.**

When a deed, mortgage, or other conveyance conveying real estate situate in two or more counties is presented for registration duly probated and a copy thereof is presented with the same, the register shall compare the copy with the original, and if it be a true copy thereof he shall certify the same, and thereupon the register shall endorse the original deed or conveyance as duly registered in his county, designating the book in which the same is registered, and deliver the original deed to the party entitled thereto and register the same from the certified copy thereof to be retained by him for that purpose. (1899, c. 302; Rev., s. 2657; C.S., s. 3554.)

**§ 161-16. Liability for failure to register.**

In case of his failure to register any deed or other instrument within the time and in the manner required by G.S. 161-14, the register shall be liable, in an action on his official bond, to the party injured by such delay. (1868, c. 35, s. 10; Code, s. 3660; Rev., s. 2659; C.S., s. 3555; 2019-177, s. 8.3.)

**§ 161-17. Papers filed alphabetically.**

The register shall keep in files alphabetically labeled all original instruments delivered to him for registration, and on application for such originals by any person entitled to their custody, he shall deliver the same. (1868, c. 35, s. 11; Code, s. 3661; Rev., s. 2660; C.S., s. 3556.)

**§ 161-18. Transcribe and index books.**

The board of county commissioners, when they deem it necessary, may direct the register of deeds to transcribe and index such of the books in the register's office as from decay or other cause may require to be transcribed and indexed. They may allow him such compensation at the expense of the county for this work as they think just. The books when

so transcribed and approved by the board shall be public records as the original books, and copies therefrom may be certified accordingly. (1868, c. 35, s. 12; Code, s. 3662; Rev., s. 2661; C.S., s. 3557.)

**§ 161-19. Number of survey in grants registered.**

The register of deeds in each county in this State, when grants have been registered without the number of tract or survey, shall place in the registration of the grants the number of the tract or survey, when the same shall be furnished him by the grantee or other person; and in registering any grant he shall register the number of the tract or survey. (1889, c. 522, s. 2; Rev., s. 2662; C.S., s. 3558.)

**§ 161-20. Certificate of survey registered.**

It shall be the duty of the register of deeds in each county, when any grant is presented for registration with a certificate of survey attached, to register such certificate of survey, together with all endorsements thereon, together with said grant, and a record of any certificate of survey so made shall be read in evidence in any action or proceeding: Provided, the failure to register such certificate of survey shall not invalidate the registration of the grant. (1905, c. 243; Rev., s. 2663; C.S., s. 3559.)

**§ 161-21. General index kept.**

The board of county commissioners shall, at the expense of the county, maintain a consolidated index of all the deeds and other documents affecting real property in the register's office. (1868, c. 35, s. 13; Code, s. 3663; Rev., s. 2664; C.S., s. 3560; 1929, c. 327, s. 1; 1987, c. 620, s. 5; 2008-194, s. 7(d).)

**§ 161-22. Index of registered instruments.**

(a) Except as otherwise provided by statute, the register of deeds shall provide and keep in the register's office full and complete alphabetical indexes of the names of the parties to all liens, grants, deeds, mortgages, bonds, and other instruments required or authorized to be registered, and the indexes shall state in full the names of all parties, whether grantors, grantees, vendors, vendees, obligors, or obligees. The full names of parties shall be entered in the indexes in accordance with the minimum indexing standards adopted pursuant to G.S. 147-54.3(b) and (b1). Reference shall be made, opposite each name, to the book and page or other location where the instrument is registered. All instruments shall be indexed on either the temporary or permanent index within 24 hours of registration. The register of deeds is not required to index an instrument that is part of a document containing multiple instruments, as defined in G.S. 161-10(a)(1), unless the title of that instrument is shown on the first page of the document and the additional registration fee is paid as required by G.S. 161-10(a)(1).

(b) Repealed by Session Laws 2008-194, s. 7(e), effective August 8, 2008.

(c) Repealed by Session Laws 2008-194, s. 7(e), effective July 1, 2008.

(d) Deeds of trust may be indexed in the names of the grantor and beneficiary only.

(e) Certificates filed for recording pursuant to G.S. 59-2, the Uniform Limited Partnership Act, shall be indexed only under the names of the partnership and each of the general partners. The register of deeds shall cause a statement to be affixed or printed on the index page of the book or books in which limited partnership agreements are filed that the documents are indexed only in the names of the partnership and of each of the general partners.

(f) The alphabetical indexes required by this section may be maintained in index books, on index cards, on film, or in computers or other automated data-processing machines. If the index is maintained in a computer or other automated data processing machine, the register of deeds shall, at least once each month, obtain from the computer or other automated data-processing machine a printed copy on paper or film, or a tape or disk, of all index entries made since the previous printed or filmed copy, or tape or disk, was obtained. These printed or filmed copies, tapes or disks, shall be retained as security copies and may not be altered or destroyed until a subsequent security copy is made containing the index entries from all previous security copies.

(g) The register of deeds may adopt rules establishing indexing procedures and the format of the indexes. The rules shall conform with the requirements of this section and of other applicable statutes. The rules may address such subjects, by way of example and not limitation, as the indexing of business firms, the indexing of names containing numerals, and the indexing of government agencies. The rules shall be posted in at least two prominent places in the office of register of deeds and shall also be placed near the index books or in user manuals in offices using automated indexing systems.

(h) No instrument shall be deemed registered until it has been indexed in a manner to put a reasonably careful and prudent examiner on notice upon inquiry, and, if upon inquiry, the instrument would have been found.

(i) Repealed by Session Laws 2008-194, s. 7(e), effective August 8, 2008. (1876-7, c. 93, s. 1; Code, s. 3664; 1899, c. 501; Rev., ss. 2665, 3600; C.S., s. 3561; 1929, c. 327, s. 2; 1967, cc. 443, 1262; 1973, c. 1136, ss. 1, 2; 1983, c. 127; c. 699, ss. 1, 3; 1989, c. 523, s. 2; 1993, c. 178, ss. 1, 2, 4, 5; c. 539, s. 1096; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2005-123, s. 9; 2008-194, s. 7(e).)

#### **§ 161-22.1. Index and cross-index of immediate prior owners of land.**

Whenever, any deed or other instrument conveying real property by a trustee, mortgagee, commissioner, or other officer appointed by the court, or by the sheriff under execution, is filed with the register of deeds for the purpose of being recorded, it shall be the duty of the register of deeds to index and cross-index as grantors the names of all persons recited in said instrument to be the persons whose interest in such real estate is being conveyed or from whom the title of such real estate was acquired by the grantor in such instrument. (1947, c. 211, ss. 1, 2; 1969, c. 80, s. 5.)

#### **§ 161-22.2. Parcel identifier number indexes.**

(a) In lieu of the alphabetical indexes required by G.S. 161-21, 161-22 and 161-22.1, the register of deeds of any county in which unique parcel identifier numbers have been assigned to all parcels of real property may install an index by land parcel identifier numbers. For each instrument filed of record, the entry in a land parcel identifier number index must contain the following information:

- (1) The parcel identifier number of the parcel or parcels affected;
- (2) A brief description of the parcel or parcels, including subdivision block and lot number, if any;
- (3) A description of the type of instrument recorded and the date the instrument was filed;
- (4) The names of the parties to the instrument to the same extent as required by G.S. 161-22 and the legal status of the parties indexed;
- (5) The book and page number, or film reel and frame number, or other file number where the instrument is recorded.

(b) Every instrument affecting real property filed for recording in the office of such register of deeds shall be indexed under the parcel identifier number of the land parcel or parcels affected.

(c) The parcel identifier number index may be maintained in index books, on index cards, on film, or in computers or other automated data-processing machines. If the parcel identifier number index is maintained in a computer or other automated data-processing machine, the register of deeds shall, at least once each month, obtain from the computer or other data-processing machine a printed copy on paper or film of all index entries made since the previous printed copy was obtained. The printed copies shall be retained as security copies and shall not be altered or destroyed.

(d) Before a register of deeds may install a parcel identifier number index in lieu of the alphabetical indexes required by G.S. 161-22, the proposed index must be approved by the Secretary of State. Before approving a parcel identifier number index, the Secretary must find that:

- (1) The requirements of this section, G.S. 161-22, and all other applicable indexing requirements of the North Carolina General Statutes and applicable judicial decisions will be met by the index;
- (2) Measures for the protection of the indexed information are such that computer or other machine failure will not cause an irremediable loss of the information;
- (3) Printed forms and index sheets used in the index permit a display of all information required by law and are otherwise adequate;
- (4) Any computer or other data-processing machine used and the program for the use of such machines are adequate to perform the tasks assigned to them;
- (5) Access to the information contained in the index can be obtained by the use of both a parcel identifier number and the name of any party to an instrument filed of record;

- (6) Any parcel identifier number either reflects the State plane coordinates of some point in the parcel, or is keyed to a map of the parcel that shows the location of the parcel within the county;
- (7) The parcel identifier numbering system is designed so that no parcel will be assigned the same number as any other parcel within the county;
- (8) The parcel identifier numbering system shows for parcels of land created by subdivision, the number of the parcel of land subdivided in addition to the numbers of the newly-created parcels;
- (9) The parcel identifier numbering system shows for parcels of land created by the combining of separate parcels, the numbers of the land parcels that were combined in addition to the number of the newly-created parcel;
- (10) The parcel identifier numbering system is capable of identifying condominium units and other separate legal interests that may be created in a single parcel of land;
- (11) The parcel identifier numbering system will meet the needs of the users as well as or better than the alphabetical indexes required by G.S. 161-21, 161-22 and 161-22.1.

The Secretary may require a register of deeds seeking approval of a parcel identifier number index to furnish him with any information concerning the index that is pertinent to the findings required for approval.

- (e)
  - (1) An approved parcel identifier number index shall become effective as the official real property index of the county as of the first day of July or the first day of January, as the board of commissioners directs, following approval by the Secretary of State.
  - (2) In any county in which a parcel identifier index is the official index, the register of deeds shall post notices in the alphabetical index books and at other appropriate places in his office stating that the parcel identifier number index is the official index and the date when the change became effective. (1977, c. 589; 1979, c. 700, s. 2; 1983, c. 49; 1985, c. 757, s. 161(a), (b); 1989, c. 727, s. 218(163); 1989 (Reg. Sess., 1990), c. 1004, s. 19(b); 1997-443, s. 11A.119(a); 1999-119, s. 3.)

### **§ 161-22.3. Minimum standards for land records management.**

In addition to the recording and indexing procedures set forth in this Article, the register of deeds shall follow the rules specifying minimum standards and procedures in land records management adopted by the Department of Secretary of State pursuant to G.S. 147-54.3(b1). (1991, c. 697, s. 2; 1993, c. 178, s. 3; 2015-264, s. 25.)

### **§ 161-23. Clerk to board of commissioners.**

The register of deeds, or such other county officer or employee as the board of county commissioners shall designate in accordance with the provisions of G.S. 153-40, shall be ex officio clerk of the board of county commissioners, and as such shall perform the duties

imposed by law or by order of said board. (Const., art. 7, s. 2; 1868, c. 35, s. 15; Code, s. 3656; Rev., s. 2666; C.S., s. 3562; 1955, c. 247, s. 2.)

**§ 161-24. Repealed by Session Laws 1973, c. 108, s. 99.**

**§ 161-25. Repealed by Session Laws 1973, c. 803, s. 36.**

**§ 161-26. Duties unperformed at expiration of term.**

Whenever, upon the termination for any cause of the term of office of the register of deeds, it appears that he has failed to perform any of the duties of his office, the board of commissioners shall cause the same to be performed by another person or the successor of any such defaulting register. Such person or successor shall receive for his compensation the fees allowed for such services, and if any portion of the compensation has been paid to such defaulting register, the same may be recovered by the board of county commissioners, by suit on his official bond, for the benefit of the county or person injured thereby. (1868, c. 35, s. 14; Code, s. 3655; Rev., s. 2669; C.S., s. 3566.)

**§ 161-27. Register of deeds failing to discharge duties; penalty.**

(a) If any register of deeds fails to perform any of the duties imposed or authorized by law, he shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor, and he shall be removed from office.

(b) No assistant register of deeds or deputy register of deeds recusing in accordance with G.S. 51-5.5 may be charged under this section for recusal to issue marriage licenses in accordance with Chapter 51 of the General Statutes. (1868, c. 35, s. 18; Code, s. 3659; Rev., s. 3599; C.S., s. 3567; 1993, c. 539, s. 1097; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2015-75, s. 3.)

**§ 161-28. Validation of acts of assistant and deputy registers of deeds performed pending filling of vacancy in office of register of deeds.**

Any and all acts and duties performed by any and all assistant or deputy registers of deeds appointed and acting under the provisions of G.S. 161-6 or any other provisions of law, general, local, or special, after a vacancy may have occurred from any cause in the office of register of deeds, including, but not restricted to, a vacancy occurring as a result of the death in office of any incumbent register of deeds, and before the board of county commissioners shall have filled such vacancy by the appointment of a successor and his qualification for office as required by law, under and pursuant to the provisions of G.S. 161-5 and any other applicable provisions of law, shall be and the same are hereby validated, ratified and confirmed to all intents and purposes as if performed by an incumbent in the office of register of deeds and to all intents and purposes as if performed under and pursuant to specific provisions of law authorizing and empowering the register of deeds, or any assistant or deputy registers of deeds, to perform all such acts and duties. The provisions of this validating act shall include, but not be restricted to, all acts and

duties of the office of register of deeds, or of the office of assistant or deputy register of deeds, as enumerated and set forth under the specific provisions of this Chapter, or under the provisions of any other general laws as set forth in the General Statutes of North Carolina, or in any other provisions of law, private, local or special. (1965, c. 835, s. 1.)

**§ 161-29. Validating acts of assistant and deputy registers of deeds in failing to execute instruments in the name of the register of deeds.**

(a) Any and all acts and duties performed by any and all assistant or deputy registers of deeds in executing any instrument, while acting under the provisions of G.S. 161-6 or any other provisions of law, general, local or special, which failed to substantially comply with G.S. 161-6(b), shall be and the same are hereby validated, ratified and confirmed to all intents and purposes as if executed in full compliance with G.S. 161-6(b).

(b) The provisions of this validating act shall include all acts and duties of the office of assistant or deputy register of deeds, as enumerated and set forth under the specific provisions of this Chapter, or under the provisions of any general laws as set forth in the General Statutes of North Carolina, or in any other provisions of law, private, local or special. (1973, c. 166, ss. 1, 2.)

**§ 161-29.1. Validating acts of assistant and deputy registers of deeds performed before they were sworn into office.**

All acts and duties heretofore performed by any and all assistant or deputy registers of deeds, who were appointed but who were not sworn into office or who were sworn into office after their duties commenced, shall be and the same are hereby validated, ratified, and confirmed to all intents and purposes as if performed by assistant or deputy registers of deeds who were theretofore formally appointed and sworn into office, as required by G.S. 161-6, or as required by any other provision of law. (1977, c. 124, s. 1.)

**§ 161-30. Modernization of land records.**

(a) The county commissioners of any county may require that the register of deeds shall not accept for registration any map or instrument affecting real property unless the following requirements are satisfied:

(1) With the exception of a map or instrument that is submitted electronically, the name and address of the person to whom the map or instrument is to be returned is affixed on the face thereof.

(2) The grantee's or owner's permanent mailing address is affixed on the face thereof.

(a1) A map or instrument that is submitted electronically shall not be required to contain on its face the name and address of the person to whom the map or instrument is to be returned. The register of deeds shall not be required to return a recorded map or instrument that was submitted electronically but may return to the submitting party a recorded map or instrument that was submitted electronically in accordance with an authorizing agreement.

(b) In any county in which parcel identifiers have been assigned to any of the real property situated within the county, the county commissioners may require that the register of deeds shall not accept for registration any map, deed, deed of trust or other instrument affecting real property unless the parcel identifier for all of the property described and affected is affixed and verified by the county on the face of the map or instrument or affixed and verified by the county as a part of the legal description contained in any instrument.

(c) Failure to comply with the provisions of subsections (a) and (b) above shall not affect the validity of any map or other instrument that is duly recorded. (1973, c. 992; 2019-117, s. 2.)

### **§ 161-31. Tax certification.**

(a) Tax Certification. – The board of commissioners of a county may, by resolution, require the register of deeds not to accept any deed transferring real property for registration unless the county tax collector has certified that no delinquent ad valorem county taxes, ad valorem municipal taxes, or other taxes with which the collector is charged are a lien on the property described in the deed. The county commissioners may describe the form the certification must take in its resolution.

(a1) Exception to Tax Certification. – If a board of county commissioners adopts a resolution pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, notwithstanding the resolution, the register of deeds shall accept without certification a deed submitted for registration under the supervision of a closing attorney and containing this statement on the deed: "This instrument prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_, a licensed North Carolina attorney. Delinquent taxes, if any, to be paid by the closing attorney to the county tax collector upon disbursement of closing proceeds."

(b) Applicability. – This section applies only to Alamance, Alexander, Anson, Beaufort, Bertie, Bladen, Brunswick, Buncombe, Burke, Cabarrus, Caldwell, Camden, Carteret, Caswell, Catawba, Cherokee, Chowan, Clay, Cleveland, Columbus, Currituck, Dare, Davidson, Davie, Duplin, Durham, Edgecombe, Forsyth, Franklin, Gaston, Gates, Graham, Granville, Greene, Halifax, Harnett, Haywood, Henderson, Hertford, Hoke, Hyde, Iredell, Jackson, Johnston, Jones, Lee, Lenoir, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, Martin, McDowell, Montgomery, Nash, Northampton, Onslow, Pasquotank, Pender, Perquimans, Person, Pitt, Polk, Randolph, Robeson, Rockingham, Rowan, Rutherford, Sampson, Scotland, Stanly, Stokes, Surry, Swain, Transylvania, Tyrrell, Vance, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Wilson, Yadkin, and Yancey Counties. (2001-464, s. 1; 2001-513, s. 14; 2002-51, s. 1; 2003-72, s. 1; 2003-189, s. 6; 2003-354, s. 3; 2004-65, s. 1; 2005-109, s. 1; 2005-433, s. 2(a); 2006-16, s. 1; 2006-150, s. 1; 2007-221, s. 1; 2009-290, s. 1; 2010-44, s. 1; 2011-33, s. 1; 2011-45, s. 1; 2012-23, s. 3; 2012-114, s. 1; 2014-29, s. 1; 2017-81, s. 2; 2018-8, s. 1; 2019-25, s. 1.)

**§§ 161-32 through 161-49. Reserved for future codification purposes.**

### Article 3.

#### Register of Deeds' Supplemental Pension Fund Act of 1987.

##### **§ 161-50. Short title and purpose.**

(a) This Article shall be known and may be cited as the "Registers of Deeds' Supplemental Pension Fund Act of 1987."

(b) The purpose of this Article is to create a pension fund to supplement local government retirement benefits which will attract the most highly qualified talent available within the State to the position of register of deeds. (1987, c. 792, s. 1.)

##### **§ 161-50.1. Scope.**

(a) This Article provides supplemental pension benefits for all county registers of deeds who are retired from the Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System or an equivalent locally sponsored plan as herein described.

(b) The Board of Trustees of the Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System shall administer the provisions of this Article.

(c) The provisions of this Article shall be subject to future legislative change or revision, and no person is deemed to have acquired any vested right to a pension payment provided by this Article. (1987, c. 792, s. 1; 2013-287, s. 2.)

##### **§ 161-50.2. Assets.**

(a) On and after October 1, 1987, each County Commission shall remit monthly to the Department of State Treasurer an amount equal to one and one-half percent (1.5%) of the monthly receipts collected pursuant to Article 1 of Chapter 161 of the General Statutes, to be deposited to the credit of the Registers of Deeds' Supplemental Pension Fund, hereinafter referred to as the Fund, to be used in making monthly pension payments to eligible retired registers of deeds under the provisions of this Article and to pay the cost of administering the provisions of this Article. A County Commission's submission of these amounts to the Department of State Treasurer constitutes a certification of the accuracy of these amounts.

(b) The State Treasurer shall be the custodian of the Registers of Deeds' Supplemental Pension Fund and shall invest its assets in accordance with the provisions of G.S. 147-69.2 and G.S. 147-69.3. (1987, c. 792, s. 1; 2007-245, s. 1; 2021-60, s. 2.2.)

##### **§ 161-50.3. Disbursements.**

(a) Immediately following July 1, 1988, the Department of State Treasurer shall divide an amount equal to forty-five percent (45%) of the assets of the Fund at the end of the preceding fiscal year into equal shares and disburse the same as monthly pension payments to all eligible retired registers of deeds as of July 1, 1988, payable in accordance with the method described in G.S. 161-50.5, except that such pension benefit shall be computed for a six-months basis beginning with the month of July, 1988.

(b) Immediately following January 1, 1996, and the first of January of each succeeding calendar year thereafter, the Department of State Treasurer shall divide an amount equal to

ninety-three percent (93%) of the assets of the Fund at the end of the preceding calendar year into equal shares and disburse the same as monthly payments in accordance with the provisions of this Article.

(c) The remaining seven percent (7%) of the Fund's assets as of December 31, 1995, and at the end of each calendar year thereafter, may be used by the Department of State Treasurer in administering the provisions of this Article.

(d) All the Fund's disbursements shall be conducted in the same manner as disbursements are conducted for other special funds of the State.

(e) If, for any reason, the Fund shall be insufficient to pay any pension benefits or other charges, then all benefits or payments shall be reduced pro rata for as long as the deficiency in amount exists. No claim shall accrue with respect to any amount by which a pension payment shall have been reduced. (1987, c. 792, s. 1; 1995, c. 259, s. 2.)

#### **§ 161-50.4. Eligibility.**

(a) Each county register of deeds who has retired with at least 12 years eligible service as register of deeds from the Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System or an equivalent locally sponsored plan before June 30, 1988, and those who retire on or after June 30, 1988, but before July 1, 1991, and who have completed at least 12 years of eligible service as register of deeds is entitled to receive a monthly pension under this Article, beginning July 1, 1988. Effective July 1, 1991, each county register of deeds who retires with at least 10 years of eligible service as register of deeds is entitled to receive a monthly pension under this Article.

(a1) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, effective January 1, 1996, any county register of deeds who separates from service as register of deeds after completing at least 10 years of eligible service as register of deeds, but who does not commence retirement with the Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System, shall have the right to receive a monthly pension under this Article payable upon retirement with the Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System.

(a2) Each county register of deeds who is not eligible to retire with the Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System solely because the county has not elected to participate as an employer with the Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System and who has either (i) attained the age of 65, (ii) attained 30 years of creditable service regardless of age, or (iii) attained the age of 60 with not less than 25 years of creditable service, and who has completed at least 10 years of creditable service as a register of deeds is entitled to receive a monthly pension under this Article, provided that register of deeds is not eligible to receive any retirement benefits from any State or locally sponsored plan.

(b) Each eligible retired register of deeds as defined in subsection (a), (a1), or (a2) of this section relating to service and retirement status shall be entitled to receive a monthly pension under this Article beginning with the month of retirement.

(c) A county register of deeds who is otherwise eligible to receive a monthly pension under this Article shall cease to be eligible upon forfeiture of any retirement benefits under G.S. 128-38.4 or G.S. 128-38.4A. (1987, c. 792, s. 1; 1991, c. 443, s. 1; 1995, c. 259, s. 1; 1998-147, s. 1; 2007-245, s. 2; 2018-84, s. 2(c).)

### **§ 161-50.5. Benefits.**

(a) An eligible retired register of deeds shall be entitled to receive an annual pension benefit, payable in equal monthly installments, equal to one share for each full year of eligible service as register of deeds multiplied by his total number of years of eligible service. The amount of each share shall be determined by dividing the total number of years of eligible service for all eligible retired registers of deeds on December 31 of each calendar year into the amount to be disbursed as monthly pension payments in accordance with the provisions of G.S. 161-50.3. In no event, however, shall a monthly pension under this Article exceed an amount which, when added to a retirement allowance under the maximum allowance at retirement from the Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System or an equivalent locally sponsored plan, is greater than seventy-five percent (75%) of a register of deed's equivalent annual salary immediately preceding retirement computed on the latest monthly rate, including any and all supplements, to a maximum amount of one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500).

(a1) A register of deeds eligible under G.S. 161-50.4(a2) shall be entitled to receive an annual pension benefit, payable in equal monthly installments as determined under the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, but reduced by an amount equal to the benefit that would be payable from the Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System if the register of deeds had been a member of the Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System and all of the years of local service were creditable to that System.

(b) All monthly pensions payable under this Article shall be paid on the same business day of each month that benefits are paid from the Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System.

(c) Monthly pensions payable under this Article shall cease at the death of the pensioner and no payment will be made to any beneficiaries or to the decedent's estate.

(d) Monthly pensions payable under this Article will cease upon the full-time reemployment of a pensioner with an employer participating in the Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System for as long as the pensioner is so reemployed.

(d1) Monthly pensions payable under this Article will cease upon the ineligibility of a pensioner under G.S. 161-50.4(c) due to the forfeiture of any retirement benefits under G.S. 128-38.4 or G.S. 128-38.4A.

(e) Repealed by Session Laws 1989, c. 792, s. 2.11, effective for taxable years beginning on or after January 1, 1989.

(f) Nothing contained in this Article shall preclude or in any way affect the benefits that a pensioner may be entitled to from any state, federal or private pension, retirement or other deferred compensation plan. (1987, c. 792, s. 1; 1989, c. 792, s. 2.11; 1991, c. 50, s. 1; c. 443, s. 2; 1998-147, s. 2; 2007-245, s. 3; 2009-576, s. 1; 2018-84, s. 2(d).)