

## ARTICLE I MEMBERSHIP

**SECTION 1. Requirements for Membership.** Any natural person, firm, association, corporation, business trust, partnership, federal agency, state or political subdivision, or Agency thereof, or any body politic will become a member of Sandhill Telephone Cooperative, Inc. (hereinafter called "Cooperative") upon receipt of wireline telephone services or Tier II or higher broadband service (Membership Qualifying Service) from the Cooperative, provided that he or it has first:

- (a) Made a written application for membership therein;
- (b) Agreed to purchase Membership Qualifying Service from the Cooperative as hereinafter specified;
- (c) Agreed to comply with and be bound by the articles of incorporation and bylaws of the Cooperative and any rules and regulations adopted by the board, and
- (d) Paid the membership fee hereinafter specified. No member may hold more than one membership in the Cooperative, and no membership in the Cooperative shall be transferable, except as provided in these bylaws.

**SECTION 2. Membership Certificates.** Membership in the Cooperative shall be evidenced by a membership certificate which shall be in such form and shall contain such provisions as shall be determined by the board. Such certificate shall be signed by the President and by the Secretary of the Cooperative and the corporate seal shall be affixed thereto. No membership certificate shall be issued for less than the membership fee fixed by these bylaws, nor until such membership fee has been fully paid. In case a certificate is lost, destroyed, or mutilated, a new certificate may be issued for such uniform terms and indemnity to the Cooperative as the board may prescribe.

**SECTION 3. Joint Membership.** All memberships in the Cooperative are extended only to individual persons (natural or corporate) who meet the requirements of Section 1. Memberships formerly issued to husbands and wives, previously referred to as joint memberships, will be allowed to continue. However, from the date of the revised edition of Bylaws (11/95), no new joint memberships will be established. Thus, the term "member" as used in these bylaws shall refer to an individual but can, on the grandfathered basis, be deemed to include a husband and wife still holding a joint membership and any provisions relating to the rights and liabilities of membership shall apply equally with respect to the holders of a joint membership. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the effect of the hereinafter specified actions by or in respect of the holders of a grandfathered joint membership shall be as follows:

- (a) The presence at a meeting of either or both shall be regarded as the presence of one member and shall constitute waiver of notice of the meeting;
- (b) The vote of either separately or both jointly shall constitute one joint vote;
- (c) A waiver of notice signed by either or both shall constitute a joint waiver;
- (d) Notice to either shall constitute notice to both;
- (e) Expulsion of either shall terminate the joint membership;
- (f) Withdrawal of either shall terminate the joint membership;
- (g) Either, but not both, may be elected or appointed as an officer or board member, provided that both meet the qualifications for such office.

Upon the death of either spouse who is a party to the joint membership, such membership shall be held solely by the survivor. The outstanding membership certificate shall be surrendered and shall be reissued in such manner as shall indicate the changed membership status, provided, however, that the estate of the deceased shall not be released from any debts due the Cooperative. No capital credits shall be paid in advance to joint membership members until the death of both joint membership members.

**SECTION 4. Membership Fees.** The membership fee, if any, shall be determined by the board at a uniform amount.

**SECTION 5. Purchase of Services.** Each member shall, as soon as service is available, take Membership Qualifying Service from the Cooperative and shall pay therefor monthly at rates as fixed by the board. It is expressly understood that amounts paid for services in excess of costs are furnished by members as capital and each member shall be credited with the capital so furnished as provided in these bylaws. Each member shall also pay all amounts owed by him to the Cooperative when the same shall become due and payable.

## **SECTION 6. Termination of Membership Shall Occur:**

- (a) When any member may withdraw from membership upon compliance with such uniform terms and conditions as the board may prescribe. The board may, by the affirmative vote of not less than two-thirds of all members of the board, expel any member who fails to comply with any of the provisions of the articles of incorporation, bylaws, or rules and regulations adopted by the board, but only if such member shall have been given written notice by the Cooperative that such failure makes him liable to expulsion and such failure shall have continued for at least ten days after such notice was given. Any expelled member may be reinstated by vote of the board or by vote of the members at an annual or special meeting. The membership of a member who for a period of thirty (30) days after service is available to him has not permitted the installation of a service, or of a member who has ceased to purchase Membership Qualifying Service from the Cooperative, shall be terminated and will be so recorded on the books of the Cooperative.
- (b) Upon the cessation of service, withdrawal, death, cessation of existence of or expulsion of a member, the membership of such member shall thereupon terminate, and the membership certificate of such member shall be surrendered forthwith to the Cooperative. Termination of membership in any manner shall not release a member or his estate from any debts due the Cooperative.
- (c) In case of withdrawal or termination of membership in any manner, the Cooperative shall repay to the member the amount of the membership fee paid by him provided, however, that the Cooperative shall deduct from the amount of the membership fee the amount of any debts or obligations owed by the member to the Cooperative.

## **ARTICLE II RIGHTS AND LIABILITIES OF MEMBERS**

### **SECTION 1. Property Interest of Members.** Upon dissolution, after:

- (a) All debts and liabilities of the Cooperative shall have been paid,
- (b) All capital furnished through patronage shall have been retired as provided in these bylaws, and
- (c) All membership fees shall have been repaid, the remaining property and assets of the Cooperative shall be distributed among the members and former members in the proportion which the aggregated patronage of each member bears to the total patronage of all members during the seven years next preceding the date of the filing of the certificate of dissolution, or, if the Cooperative shall not have been in existence for such period, during the period of its existence.

**SECTION 2. Non-liability for Debts of the Cooperative.** The private property of the members shall be exempt from execution or other liability for the debts of the Cooperative and no member shall be liable or responsible for any debts or liabilities of the Cooperative.

## **ARTICLE III MEETINGS OF MEMBERS**

**SECTION 1. Annual Meeting.** The annual meeting of the members shall be held during the month of April or May of each year beginning with the year 1992 at such place within a county served by the Cooperative, as selected by the board and which shall be designated in the notice of the meeting, for the purpose of electing board members, passing upon reports for the previous fiscal year and transacting such other business as may come before the meeting. It shall be the responsibility of the board to make adequate plans and preparations for the annual meeting. Failure to hold the annual meeting at the designated time shall not work a forfeiture or dissolution of the Cooperative.

**SECTION 2. Special Meetings.** Special meetings of the members may be called by resolution of the board, or upon a written request signed by any three board members, by the President, or by not less than ten percent of all the members, and it shall thereupon be the duty of the Secretary to cause notice of such meeting to be given as hereinafter provided. Special meetings of the members may be held at such place within a county served by the Cooperative as designated by the board and shall be specified in the notice of the special meeting.

**SECTION 3. Notice of Members' Meetings.** Written or printed notice stating the place, day, and hour of the meeting and in case of a special meeting or an annual meeting at which business requiring special notice is to be transacted, the purpose or purposes for which the meeting is called, shall be delivered not less than ten days nor more than twenty days before the date of the meeting, either personally or by mail, by or at the direction of the Secretary, or upon a default in duty by the Secretary, by the persons calling the meeting, to each member. If mailed, such notice shall be deemed to be delivered when deposited in the United States mail, addressed to the member at his address as it appears on the records of the Cooperative, with postage thereon prepaid. The failure of any member to receive notice of an annual or special meeting of the members shall not invalidate any action which may be taken by the members at any such meeting.

**SECTION 4. Quorum.** Business may not be transacted at any meeting of the members unless there are present in person at least fifty (50) members or one-half (1/2) of one percent (1%) of the then total members of the Cooperative, whichever is greater, except that, if less than a quorum is present at any meeting, a majority of those present in person may adjourn the meeting to another time and date, provided that the secretary shall notify any absent members of the time, date and place of such adjourned meeting by delivering notice thereof as provided in Section 3. At all meetings of the members, whether a quorum be present or not, the secretary shall affix to the meeting minutes, or incorporate therein by reference, a list of those members who were registered as present in person.

**SECTION 5. Voting; Proxy Voting Prohibited.** Each member shall be entitled to only one vote upon each matter submitted to a vote at a meeting of the members. All questions shall be decided by a vote of a majority of the members voting thereon in person. Voting by proxy shall be prohibited.

**SECTION 6. Order of Business.** The order of business at the annual meeting of the members and, so far as possible at all other meetings of the members, shall be essentially as follows, except as otherwise determined by the members at such meetings:

1. Report on the number of members present in person in order to determine the existence of a quorum.
2. Reading of the notice of the meeting and proof of the due publication or mailing thereof of the waiver or waivers of notice of the meeting, as the case may be.
3. Reading of unapproved minutes of previous meetings of the members and the-taking of necessary action thereon.
4. Presentation and consideration of reports of officers, trustees, and committees.
5. Election of board members.
6. Unfinished business.
7. New business.
8. Adjournment.

## **ARTICLE IV BOARD MEMBERS**

**SECTION 1. General Powers.** The business and affairs of the Cooperative shall be managed by a board of eight members which shall exercise all of the powers of the Cooperative except such as are by law, the articles of incorporation, or these bylaws conferred upon or reserved to the members.

**SECTION 2. Election and Tenure of Office.** The persons named as board members in the articles of incorporation shall compose the board until the first annual meeting or until their successors shall have been elected and shall have qualified.

The board of directors shall be a board of eight members, one member from each exchange (exchange meaning the central office switch from which the subscriber is served), and one at large member.

The board of directors shall be and is divided into three classes, as nearly equal in number as possible, designated: Class I, Class II and Class III. The Class I directors shall be directors representing the Bethune, Jefferson and Pageland exchanges. Class II directors shall be directors representing the Ruby and McBee exchanges and the at large director, who shall be a person of a minority race. The Class III directors shall be directors representing the Chesterfield and Patrick exchanges.

Each director shall serve for a term ending on the date of the third annual meeting following the annual meeting at which such director was elected; provided further, that the term of each director shall continue until the election and qualification of a successor and be subject to such director's earlier death, resignation or removal.

Directors whose term shall be expiring, or for any vacancy on the board, shall be elected by secret ballot at the annual meeting of the members. All members shall vote for each director to be elected. Board members may be elected by a plurality vote of the members.

The name of each candidate qualifying for election as director shall appear only on a ballot in alphabetical order, from the exchange in which he is a resident subscriber.

In case of any increase or decrease, from time to time, in the number of directors, the number of directors in each class shall be apportioned as nearly equal as possible. No decrease in the number of directors shall shorten the term of any incumbent director.

If an election of board members shall not be held on the day designated herein for the annual meeting, or at any adjournment thereof, a special meeting of the members shall be held for the purpose of electing board members within a reasonable time thereafter.

**SECTION 3. Qualifications.** Any member shall be eligible to be nominated, elected, and remain a Director of the Cooperative provided that he/she:

- (1) Resides in the exchange in which he or she is a subscriber. (Exchange meaning the central office switch from which the subscriber is served); and has resided there for more than two hundred and forty (240) days during the last twelve (12) month period.
- (2) is NOT in any way financially interested in a competing enterprise or a business engaged in selling communication services or communication supplies or maintaining communications facilities. However, the board may grant exceptions for "de-minimum" competing enterprise.
- (3) Is NOT an employee of the Cooperative or has NOT been employed by the Cooperative at any time during a period of four (4) years prior to his nomination. Upon establishment of the fact that a board member is holding the office in violation of any of the foregoing provisions, the board shall remove such board member from office. Nothing contained in this section shall affect any manner whatsoever the validity of any action taken at any meeting of the board.

**SECTION 4. Nominations.** It shall be the duty of the board to appoint a nominating committee. The committee shall meet, not less than 30 nor more than 60 days before the date of a meeting of the members at which board members are to be elected. This committee on nominations consisting of not less than 5 nor more than 9 members shall be selected from different exchanges so as to insure equitable representation. No member of the board may serve on such committee. The committee, keeping in mind the principle of equitable representation, shall prepare and post at the principal office of the Cooperative at least twenty days before the meeting a list of nominations for board members. The Secretary shall be responsible for mailing with the notice of the meeting or separately, but at least ten days before the date of the meeting, a statement of the number of board members to be elected and the names and exchange of the candidates nominated by the committee on nominations. Any fifteen or more members acting together may make other nominations by petition and the Secretary shall post such nominations at the same place where the list of nominations made by the committee is posted. Nominations made by petition, if any, must be received at least twenty days before the meeting and shall be included on the official ballot.

**SECTION 5. Removal of Board Member by Members.** Any member may bring charges against a board member and, by filing with the secretary such charges in writing together with a petition signed by at least ten per centum of the members, may request the removal of such board member by reason thereof. Such board member shall be informed in writing of the charges at least ten days prior to the meeting of the members at which the charges are to be considered and shall have an opportunity at the meeting to be heard in person or by counsel and to present evidence in respect to the charges; and the person or persons bringing the charges against him shall have the same opportunity. The question of the removal of such

board member shall be considered and voted upon at the meeting of the members. No director shall be removed from office unless by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members present. Any vacancy created by such removal may be filled by vote of the members at such meeting without compliance with the foregoing provisions with respect to nominations.

**SECTION 6. Vacancies.** Subject to the provisions of these bylaws with respect to the filling of vacancies caused by the Removal of Board Member by Members (Article IV Section 5), a vacancy occurring in the board shall be filled by the affirmative vote of a majority of the remaining board members until the next meeting of the members at which directors are elected, unless such vacancy is eliminated by the reduction in the number of directors of the Cooperative, in which case no election shall be required; provided, however, that in the event the vacancy is not filled or otherwise eliminated by the board within sixty days after the vacancy occurs, the members shall have the right to fill such vacancy at a meeting of the members without compliance with the foregoing provisions in respect to nominations. A director elected to fill a vacancy or a newly created directorship shall hold office until the next meeting of the members at which directors are elected.

**SECTION 7. Compensation.** Board members shall not receive any salary for their services as such, except that the board may by resolution authorize a fixed sum for each day or portion thereof spent on Cooperative business, such as attendance at meetings, conferences, and training programs or performing committee assignments when authorized by the board. If authorized by the board, board members may also be reimbursed for expenses actually and necessarily incurred in carrying out such Cooperative business or granted a reasonable per diem allowance by the board in lieu of detailed accounting for some of these expenses. No board member shall receive compensation for serving the Cooperative in any other capacity. Board members who elect to participate may be extended various forms of liability, accident, health and life insurance as well as participation in benefits provided to employees, except for benefits based on salary.

## **ARTICLE V MEETINGS OF BOARD**

**SECTION 1. Regular Meetings.** A regular meeting of the board shall be held without notice, immediately after the annual meeting of the members. A regular meeting of the board shall also be held monthly at such time and place within one of the counties served by the Cooperative as designated by the board. Such regular monthly meeting may be held without notice other than such resolution fixing the time and place thereof.

**SECTION 2. Special Meetings.** Special meetings of the board may be called by the President or by any three board members, and it shall thereupon be the duty of the Secretary to cause notice of such meeting to be given as hereinafter provided. The President or board members calling the meeting shall fix the time and place for the holding of the meeting.

**SECTION 3. Notice of Board Meetings.** Written notice of the time, place, and purpose of any special meeting of the board shall be delivered to each board member either personally or by mail, by or at the direction of the Secretary, or upon a default in duty by the secretary, by the President or one of the board members calling the meeting. If mailed, such notice shall be deemed to be delivered when deposited in the United States mail addressed to the board member at his address as it appears on the records of the Cooperative with postage thereon prepaid, at least five days before the date set for the meeting.

**SECTION 4. Quorum.** A majority of the board shall constitute a quorum, provided that if less than such a majority of the board is present at said meeting, a majority of the board present may adjourn the meeting from time to time; and provided further, that the Secretary shall notify any absent board members of the time and place of such adjourned meeting. The act of a majority of the board members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the board, except as otherwise provided in these bylaws.

**SECTION 5. Unanimous Consent In Writing.** Unless otherwise prohibited by law, board actions may be taken without a meeting and without a vote if unanimous consent of the board is obtained in writing setting forth the action taken in detail and the detail is signed by all board members entitled to vote.

## **ARTICLE VI OFFICERS**

**SECTION 1. Number.** The officers of the Cooperative shall be a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and such other officers as may be determined by the board from time to time. The offices of Secretary and Treasurer may be held by the same person.

**SECTION 2. Election and Term of Office.** The officers shall be elected annually by and from the board at the meeting of the board held immediately after the annual meeting of the members. If the election of officers shall not be held at such meeting such election shall be held as soon thereafter as may be convenient. Each officer shall hold office until the first meeting of the board following the next succeeding annual meeting of the members or until his successor shall have been elected and shall have qualified. A vacancy in any office shall be filled by the board for the unexpired portion of the term.

**SECTION 3. Removal of Officers and Agents by the Board.** Any officer or agent elected or appointed by the board may be removed by the board whenever in its judgment the best interests of the Cooperative will be served thereby. The officer against whom charges have been brought shall be informed in writing of the charges at least 10 days prior to the board meeting at which the charges are to be considered and shall have an opportunity at the meeting to be heard in person or by counsel and to present evidence in respect of the charges; and the person or persons bringing the charges against him shall have the same opportunity.

**SECTION 4. President.** The President shall:

- (a) be the principal executive officer of the Cooperative and, unless otherwise determined by the members or the board, shall preside at all meetings of the members and the board;
- (b) sign, with the Secretary, certificates of membership, the issuance of which shall have been authorized by the board or the members, and may sign any deeds, mortgages, deeds of trust, notes, bonds, contracts, or other instruments authorized by the board to be executed, except in cases in which the signing and execution thereof shall be expressly delegated by the board or by these bylaws to some other officer or agent of the Cooperative, or shall be required by law to be otherwise signed or executed; and
- (c) in general perform all duties incident to the office of President and such other duties as may be prescribed by the board from time to time.

**SECTION 5. Vice President.** In the absence of the President, or in the event of his inability or refusal to act, the Vice President shall perform the duties of the President, and when so acting shall have all the powers of and be subject to all the restrictions upon the President. The Vice President shall also perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him by the board.

**SECTION 6. Secretary.** The Secretary shall be responsible for:

- (a) keeping the minutes of the meetings of the members and of the board in books provided for that purpose;
- (b) seeing that all notices are duly given in accordance with these bylaws or as required by law;
- (c) the safekeeping of the corporate books and records and the seal of the Cooperative and affixing the seal of the Cooperative to all certificates of membership prior to the issue thereof, and to all documents, the execution of which on behalf of the Cooperative under its seal is duly authorized in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws;
- (d) keeping a register of the names and mailing addresses of all members;
- (e) signing, with the president, certificates of membership the issue of which shall have been authorized by the board or the members;
- (f) keeping on file at all times, a complete copy of the articles of incorporation and bylaws of the Cooperative containing all amendments hereto (which copy shall always be open to the inspection of any member) and at the expense of the Cooperative, furnishing a copy of the bylaws and of all amendments thereto each member; and
- (g) in general performing all duties incident to the office of Secretary and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him by the board.

**SECTION 7. Treasurer.** The treasurer shall be responsible for:

- (a) custody of all funds and securities of the Cooperative;
- (b) the receipt of and the issuance of receipts for all monies due and payable to the Cooperative and for the deposit of all such monies in the name of the Cooperative in such bank or banks as shall be selected in accordance with the provisions of these bylaws; and
- (c) the general performance of all the duties incident to the office of Treasurer and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him by the board.

**SECTION 8. Manager.** The board may appoint a manager who may be, but who shall not be required to be, a member of the Cooperative. The manager shall perform such duties and shall exercise such authority as the board may from time to time vest in him.

**SECTION 9. Bonds of Officers.** The Treasurer and any other officer or agent of the Cooperative charged with responsibility for the custody of any of its funds or property shall be bonded in such sum and with such surety as the board shall determine. The board in its discretion may also require any other officer, agent or employee of the Cooperative to be bonded in such amount and with such surety as it shall determine.

**SECTION 10. Compensation.** The powers, duties and compensation of officers, agents, and employees shall be fixed by the board subject to the provisions of these bylaws with respect to compensation for a board member and close relatives of a board member.

**SECTION 11. Reports.** The officers of the Cooperative shall submit at each annual meeting of the members reports covering the business of the Cooperative for the previous fiscal year. Such reports shall set forth the condition of the Cooperative at the close of such fiscal year.

## **ARTICLE VII INDEMNIFICATION OF OFFICERS, BOARD MEMBERS, EMPLOYEES AND AGENTS**

**SECTION 1. Scope of Indemnification.** The Cooperative shall indemnify any person who was or is a party, or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending, or completed action, suit, or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative (other than an action by, or in the right of the Cooperative) by reason of the fact that such person is or was a board member, officer, employee, or agent of the Cooperative or who is or was serving at the request of the Cooperative as a board member, officer, employee, or agent of another Cooperative, association, corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, or other enterprise, against expenses, (including attorney's fees) adjustments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by such person in connection with such action, suit or proceeding; provided such person acted in good faith and in a manner such person reasonably believed to be in, or not opposed to, the best interests of the Cooperative, and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe the conduct of such person was unlawful. The termination of any actions, suit, or proceeding by judgment, order settlement, conviction, or upon pleas of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner which such person reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to, the best interests of the Cooperative, and with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had reasonable cause to believe that the conduct of such person was unlawful.

**SECTION 2. Indemnification For Good Faith Action.** The Cooperative shall indemnify any person who was or is a party, or is threatened to be made a party to, any threatened, pending, or completed action or suit by, or in the right of, the Cooperative to procure a judgment in its favor by reason of the fact that such person is, or was a board member, officer, employee, or agent of the Cooperative, or is, or was, serving at the request of a Cooperative as a board member, officer, employee, or agent of another Cooperative, association, corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, or other enterprise, against expenses (including attorney's fees) actually and reasonably incurred by such person in connection with the defense or settlement of such action or suit, if such person acted in good faith, and in a manner such person reasonably believed to be in, or not opposed to the best interests of the Cooperative. No indemnification shall be made in respect of any claim, issue

or matter as to which such person shall have adjudged to be liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of the duty of such person to the Cooperative, unless, and only to the extent that the court in which such action or suit was brought shall determine upon application that, despite the adjudication of liability, but in view of all the circumstances of the case, such person is fairly and reasonably entitled to indemnity of such expenses as the court shall deem proper.

**SECTION 3. Cost of Defense Indemnified.** To the extent that a board member, officer, employee, or agent of the Cooperative has been successful, on the merits or otherwise, in the defense of any action, suit or proceeding referred to in Section 7.1 and 7.2, in defense of any claim, issue or matter therein, such person shall be indemnified against expenses (including attorney's fees) actually and reasonably incurred by such person in connection therewith.

**SECTION 4. Amount of Indemnification.** Any indemnification under Sections 7.1 and 7.2 (unless ordered by a court) shall be made by the Cooperative only as authorized in the specific case, upon a determination that indemnification of the board member, officer, employee, or agent is proper in the circumstances because such person has met the applicable standard of conduct set forth in sections 1 and 2. Such determination shall be made:

- (1) By the board by a majority vote of a quorum consisting of board members who were not parties to such action, suit, or proceedings; or
- (2) If such a quorum is not obtainable, or if obtainable, if a quorum of disinterested board members so directs, by independent legal counsel in a written opinion; or
- (3) by the members.

**SECTION 5. Expenses Advanced.** Expenses incurred in defending a civil or criminal action, suit, or proceeding may be paid by the Cooperative in advance of the final disposition of such action, suit or proceeding, as authorized by the board in the specific case, upon receipt of a firm commitment by or on behalf of the board member, officer, employee, or agent to repay such amount, unless it shall ultimately be determined that he is entitled to be indemnified by the Cooperative as authorized in this Article.

**SECTION 6. Rights of Persons Indemnified.** The indemnification provided by this Article shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which those seeking indemnification may be entitled under any bylaw, agreement, vote of members or disinterested board members, or otherwise, both as to action in his official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding such office, and shall continue as to a person who has ceased to be a board member, officer, employee, or agent, and shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors and administrators of such a person.

**SECTION 7. Insurance Coverage.** The Cooperative may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a board member, officer, employee, or agent of the Cooperative, or who is or was serving at the request of the Cooperative as a board member, officer, employee, or agent of another Cooperative, association, corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, against any liability asserted against such person and incurred by such person in any such capacity, or arising out of the status of such person as such, whether or not the Cooperative would have the power to indemnify such person against such liability under the provisions of this Article.

## **ARTICLE VIII NON-PROFIT OPERATION**

**SECTION 1. Interest or Dividends on Capital Prohibited.** The Cooperative shall at all times be operated on a Cooperative non-profit basis for the mutual benefit of its members. No interest or dividends shall be paid or payable by the Cooperative on any capital furnished by its members.

**SECTION 2. Patronage Capital in Connection with Furnishing Membership Qualifying Service.** In the furnishing of Membership Qualifying Service the Cooperative's operations shall be so conducted that all members will through their patronage furnish capital for the Cooperative. In order to induce patronage and to assure that the Cooperative will operate on a non-profit basis, the Cooperative is obligated to account on a patronage basis to all its members for all amounts received and receivable from the furnishing of Membership Qualifying Service in excess of operating costs and expenses properly chargeable against the furnishing of Membership Qualifying Service. All such amounts in excess of operating



costs and expenses at the moment of receipt by the cooperative are received with the understanding that they are furnished by the members as capital. The Cooperative is obligated to pay by credits to a capital account for each member all such amounts in excess of operating costs and expenses. The books and records of the Cooperative shall be set up and kept in such a manner that the end of each fiscal year the amount of capital, if any, so furnished by each member is clearly reflected and credited in an appropriate record to the capital account of each member and the Cooperative shall within a reasonable time after the close of the fiscal year notify each member of the amount of capital, so credited to his account. All such amounts credited to the capital account of any member shall have the same status as though they had been paid to the member in cash in pursuance of a legal obligation to do so and the member had then furnished the Cooperative corresponding amounts for capital.

Operating margins as well as any margins determined to be patronage derived for federal income tax reporting purposes shall insofar as permitted by law be

- (a) used to offset any losses incurred during the current or any prior fiscal year and
- (b) to the extent not needed for the purpose, allocated to its members by credits to a capital account for each member all such amounts in excess of operating costs and expenses derived from Membership Qualifying Service and other patronage activities.

In the event of dissolution or liquidation of the Cooperative, after all outstanding indebtedness of the Cooperative shall have been paid, outstanding capital credits shall be retired without priority on a pro rata basis before any payments are made on account of property rights of members. If, at any time prior to dissolution or liquidation, the board shall determine that the financial condition of the Cooperative will not be impaired thereby, the capital credited to members' accounts may be retired in full or in part. Any such retirements of capital shall be made in order of priority according to the year in which the capital was furnished and credited, the capital first received by the Cooperative being first retired, less any amounts due the Cooperative.

Capital credited to the account of each member shall be assignable only on the books of the Cooperative pursuant to written instructions from the assignor and only to successors in interest or successors in occupancy in all or a part of such member's premises served by the Cooperative unless the board, acting under policies of general application, shall determine otherwise. In the event that a prior member shall elect to again become a member of the Cooperative, the capital credited to the account of such prior member may, at the discretion of the Board, be applied toward the payment of a membership fee on behalf of such prior member.

Notwithstanding any other provision of these bylaws, the board at its discretion, shall have the power at any time upon the death of any member who was a natural person, if the legal representatives of his estate shall request in writing that the capital credited to any such member be retired prior to the time such capital would otherwise be retired under the provisions of these bylaws, to retire capital credited to any such member immediately upon such terms and conditions as the Board, acting under policies of general application, and the legal representatives of such member's estate shall agree upon; provided, however, that the financial condition of the Cooperative will not be impaired thereby.

The members of the Cooperative, by dealing with the Cooperative, acknowledge that the terms and provisions of the articles in incorporation and bylaws shall constitute and be a contract between the Cooperative and each member, and both the Cooperative and the member are bound by such contract, as fully as though each member had individually signed a separate instrument containing such terms and provisions. The provisions of this article of the bylaws shall be called to the attention of each member of the Cooperative by publication in each annual edition of the Cooperative Directory.

## **ARTICLE IX DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY**

The Cooperative may not sell, mortgage, lease or otherwise dispose of or encumber all or any substantial portion of its property unless such sale, mortgage, lease or other disposition or encumbrance is authorized at a meeting of the members thereof by the affirmative vote of not less than two-thirds (2/3) of all of the members of the Cooperative, and unless the notice of such proposed sale, mortgage, lease or other disposition or encumbrance shall have been contained in the notice of

the meeting; provided, however, that notwithstanding anything herein contained, the board of the Cooperative, without authorization by the members thereof, shall have full power and authority to authorize the execution and delivery of a mortgage or mortgages or a deed or deeds of trust upon, or the pledging or encumbering of, any or all of the property, assets, rights, privileges, licenses, franchises, and permits of the Cooperative, whether acquired or to be acquired, and wherever situated, as well as the revenues and income therefrom, all upon such terms and conditions as the board shall determine, to secure any indebtedness of the Cooperative to the United States of America or any instrumentality or agency thereof; or any other lending entity provided further that the board may upon the authorization of a majority of those members of the Cooperative present at a meeting of the members thereof, sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of all or a substantial portion of its property to another Cooperative or a foreign corporation doing business in this State pursuant to the Act under which this Cooperative is incorporated.

## **ARTICLE X SEAL**

The corporate seal of the Cooperative shall have inscribed thereon the name of the Cooperative and the Words "Corporate Seal State of South Carolina".

## **ARTICLE XI FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS**

**SECTION 1. CONTRACTS.** Except as otherwise provided in these bylaws, the board may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name and on behalf of the Cooperative, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

**SECTION 2. CHECKS, DRAFTS, ETC.** All checks, drafts, or other orders for the payment of money, and all notes, bonds, or other evidences of indebtedness issued in the name of the Cooperative shall be signed by such officer or officers, agent or agents, employee or employees of the Cooperative and in such manner as shall from time to time be determined by resolution of the board .

**SECTION 3. DEPOSITS.** All funds except petty cash of the Cooperative shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the Cooperative in such bank or banks as the board may select.

**SECTION 4. FISCAL YEAR.** The fiscal year of the Cooperative shall begin on the first day of January of each year and shall end on the 31st day of December of the same year.

## **ARTICLE XII MISCELLANEOUS**

**SECTION 1. MEMBERSHIP IN OTHER ORGANIZATIONS.** The Cooperative may become a member or purchase stock in other profit or nonprofit organizations, associations, partnerships, or joint ventures when the board finds that the general or long-term interests of its membership will be served by such investments or participations.

**SECTION 2. WAIVER OF NOTICE.** Any member or board member may waive in writing any notice of a meeting required to be given by these bylaws. The attendance of a member or board member at any meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting by such member or board member, except in case a member or board member shall attend a meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business on the ground that the meeting has not been lawfully called or convened.

**SECTION 3. POLICIES, RULES, AND REGULATIONS.** The board shall have power to make and adopt such policies, rules, and regulations, not inconsistent with law, the articles of incorporation, or these bylaws, as it may deem advisable for the management of the business and affairs of the Cooperative.

**SECTION 4. ACCOUNTING SYSTEM AND REPORTS.** The board shall cause to be established and maintained a complete accounting system which, among other things, and subject to applicable laws and rules and regulations of any regulatory body, shall conform to such accounting system as may be from time to time designated by the Administrator of the Rural Utilities Service of the United States of America. The board shall also cause to be made by a certified public accountant a full and complete annual audit of the accounts, books, and financial condition of the Cooperative. The results of such audit shall be reported to the members at the next following annual meeting.

**SECTION 5. AREA COVERAGE.** The Board shall make diligent effort to see that Membership Qualifying Service is extended to all unserved persons within the Cooperative service area who

- (a) desire such service and
- (b) meet all reasonable requirements established by the Cooperative as a condition of such service.

### **ARTICLE XIII AMENDMENTS**

These bylaws may be altered, amended, repealed, or rewritten by the affirmative vote of not less than a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the board at any regular or special board meeting, but only if the notice of such meeting shall have contained a copy of the proposed alterations, amendments, or repeals, or an accurate summary explanation thereof; provided, however, that the provision of Article IX relating to disposition of property, may be altered, amended, or repealed only by the affirmative vote of not less than two-thirds (2/3) of all current members of the Cooperative voting in person.