

AN ACT GRANTING AUTONOMY TO BARRIOS OF THE PHILIPPINES

REPUBLIC ACT NO. 2370, June 20, 1959

Read online (full-text search, related cases, audio case brief): <https://batas.org/library/6d41b701ced4/>

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. This Act shall be known as the Barrio Charter.

ARTICLE I.—General Provisions

SEC. 2. Definition and general powers of barrios.—Barrios are units of municipalities or municipal districts in which they are situated. They are quasi-municipal corporations endowed with such powers as are herein provided for the performance of particular government functions, to be exercised by and through their respective barrio governments in conformity with law.

It shall be competent for them in their proper corporate name to sue and be sued, to contract and be contracted with and to acquire and hold real and personal property for Purposes herein specified, and generally to exercise the powers herein or otherwise conferred upon them by law.

ARTICLE II.—Organization of Barrios

SEC. 3. The creation of new barrios.—All barrios existing at the time of the passage of this Act shall come under the provisions hereof.

Upon petition of a majority of the voters in the areas affected, a new barrio may be created or the name of an existing one may be changed by the provincial board of the province, upon recommendation of the council of the municipality or municipalities in which the proposed barrio is situated. The recommendation of the municipal council shall be embodied in a resolution approved by at least two-thirds of the entire membership of the said council: Provided, however, That no new barrio may be created if its population is less than five hundred persons.

Barrios shall not be created or their boundaries altered nor their names changed except under the provisions of this Act or by Act of Congress.

Boundary disputes between barrios within the same municipality shall be heard and decided by the municipal council, subject to appeal within thirty days from receipt of notice of the decision by the barrio council concerned to the corresponding, provincial board, whose decision shall be final.

Boundary disputes between barrios belongings to different municipalities shall be treated as boundary disputes between municipalities under existing provisions of law.

All property rights of the barrios whose boundaries are altered shall be vested in the barrio in which the property is situated after the alteration has been made.

SEC. 4. The barrio assembly.—The barrio assembly shall consist of all persons who are qualified electors, who are duly registered in the list of barrio assembly members kept by the secretary thereof, and have been residents of the barrio for at least six months.

The barrio assembly shall meet at least once a year to hear the annual report of the barrio council concerning the

activities and finances of the barrio.

It shall meet also when members of the barrio council are to be elected and/or at the call of the barrio council or upon written petition of at least one-fifth of the members of the barrio assembly.

For the purpose of conducting business and taking any official action in the barrio assembly, it is necessary for a quorum, which shall consist of at least one-third of the members of the barrio assembly, to be present. All actions involving the raising of taxes, payment of compensation and solicitation of voluntary contributions shall be by a two-thirds vote of those present at the meeting there being a quorum. All other actions may be by a majority vote of those present at the meeting there being a quorum.

No meeting of the barrio assembly shall take place unless notice is given one week prior to the meeting except in matters involving public safety or security in which case notice within a reasonable time shall be sufficient. The barrio lieutenant shall act as presiding officer at all meetings of the barrio assembly. The barrio council secretary shall be the secretary of the barrio assembly; and, in his absence or inability, the assistant barrio council secretary shall discharge the duties of secretary of the barrio assembly: Provided, That the barrio lieutenant may designate a temporary barrio assembly secretary before the election and qualification of a permanent barrio council secretary and assistant secretary.

SEC. 5. Powers of the barrio assembly.—The powers of the barrio assembly shall be as follows:

- to elect members of the barrio council; act upon their resignation, if presented, and fill vacancies therein by election;
- to provide for reasonable compensation of barrio council members when authorized- by two-thirds vote of the barrio assembly;
- to adopt measures for the raising of funds for the barrio by taxation and by voluntary contributions;
- to adopt measures for the good of the barrio;
- to decide on measures submitted to it in accordance with law; and
- to enter into contracts for and in behalf of the barrio and to authorize the barrio council so to do.

SEC. 6. The barrio council.—In each barrio there shall be organized a barrio council which shall have as members the following:

- a barrio lieutenant;
- a barrio treasurer;
- four council members;
- vice barrio lieutenants, in such number as there are sitios in the barrio; or where are no sitios, one vice barrio lieutenant for every two hundred inhabitants of the barrio: Provided, That no person shall be elected vice barrio lieutenant unless he is a resident of the sitio he shall represent.

SEC. 7. Election of the barrio council.—The barrio lieutenant, the barrio treasurer, the vice barrio lieutenants, and the four council members shall be elected at a meeting of the barrio assembly.

The election shall be held on the second Sunday of January of even-numbered years: Provided, That if the meeting is not held on the second Sunday of January, it may be held on any day thereafter within the month of January to be determined by the barrio council. The meeting shall be called by the barrio lieutenant who shall

preside over the meeting. The Assembly shall elect a board of three election tellers, one of whom shall be a school teacher who shall act as the chairman, to conduct the election and count the votes.

All members of the barrio assembly as denned in section four shall have the right to vote at such elections. Voting shall be by secret ballot: Provided, That open voting may be allowed if two-thirds votes of the qualified voters present in the meeting shall so decide. No votes may be cast by proxy.

Those who obtain the highest number of votes for the position for which they are candidates shall be declared elected by the election tellers and shall assume office immediately by taking the oath of office before any person authorized to administer oaths. In case of a tie, the same shall be decided by drawing lots and the winner shall be proclaimed.

All disputes as to procedure before the balloting shall be decided by the board of election tellers.

All disputes over barrio elections shall be brought before the justice of the peace court of the municipality concerned; in the determination and decision thereof, the court shall follow as closely as possible the procedure prescribed for inferior courts in Rule 4, Rules of Court. The decision of the justice of the peace court shall be appealable pursuant to the Rules of Court to the court of first instance whose decision shall be final on questions of fact.

The members of the barrio council shall hold office for two years from the time of their election and qualification or until their successors are duly elected and qualified. In no case shall a member of the council be elected to the same position for more than three consecutive terms, but after two years shall have elapsed from the expiration of his last term he shall again be eligible for election to the same position.

SEC. 8. Qualifications for election to the barrio council.—Candidates for election to the barrio council:

- Must be a qualified elector and must have been a resident of the barrio for at least six months prior to the election; and
- Must not have been convicted of a crime involving moral turpitude or of a crime which carries a penalty of at least one year's imprisonment.

SEC. 9. The municipal mayor shall exercise the power of supervision over barrio officials. He shall receive and investigate complaints made under oath against barrio officers for neglect of duty, oppression, corruption or other form of misconduct in office, and conviction by final judgment of any crime involving moral turpitude. For minor delinquency, he may reprimand the offender; and if a more severe punishment seems to be desirable, he shall submit written charges touching tho matter to the municipal council, furnishing a copy of such charges to the respondent either personally or by registered mail. The municipal mayor may in such case suspend the officer pending action by the council, if in his opinion the charge be one affecting the official integrity of the officer in question, but in no case shall the period of suspension exceed thirty days. Where suspension is thus effected the written charges against the officer shall be filed within five days with the municipal council, which shall adopt the procedure specified in sections twenty-one hundred eighty-nine to twenty-one.hundred ninety of the Revised Administrative Code.

The decision of the council shall be appealable within ten days from notice thereof to the provincial board, whose decision shall be final.

ARTICLE III.—Powers, Rights and Duties

SEC. 10. Rights and duties of members of the barrio council.—The barrio lieutenant, or in his absence or inability, the vice barrio lieutenant designated by the barrio council, shall discharge the following duties:

- To look after the maintenance of public order in the barrio and to assist the municipal councilor in the performance of his duties in such barrio;
- To preside over the meetings of the barrio assembly and the barrio council;
- To organize a fire brigade;
- To organize and lead an emergency group whenever the same may be necessary for the maintenance of peace and order within the barrio;
- To approve vouchers relating to the disbursement of barrio funds;
- To attend conventions of barrio lieutenants; and
- To enforce all laws and ordinances which are operative within the barrio and to sign and enter into contracts with the approval of the barrio council.

The vice barrio lieutenants shall be peace officers and as such shall take charge of the maintenance of public order, in their respective sitios.

The council members shall attend the meetings of the barrio council and cooperate with the barrio lieutenant and vice barrio lieutenants in the discharge of their duties.

SEC. 11. Rights and privileges of incumbent barrio lieutenants.—In addition to the rights and privileges now granted by existing laws to barrio lieutenants, they shall, if they have served their constituents properly, as shown by a resolution of the barrio council, other qualifications being equal:

- Have preference in appointments in and to any government office, agency, or instrumentality or in and to any government-owned or controlled corporation; and
- Have preference to purchase public lands and government-owned or managed agricultural farms or subdivisions, to obtain homesteads, concessions and franchises, and other privileges for the exploitation of the natural resources which are permissible and made available by existing laws. An incumbent barrio lieutenant who is permanently incapacitated from work owing to sickness, disease or injury incurred in line of duty shall receive the necessary hospitalization and medical care from government hospitals free of charge.

Incumbent barrio lieutenants having children attending public elementary and intermediate schools shall be exempted from paying the corresponding tuition fees.

SEC. 12. Powers and duties of the barrio council.—The barrio council shall have the power to promulgate barrio ordinances not inconsistent with law or municipal ordinances.

All barrio ordinances shall be submitted within fifteen days after their approval to the municipal council. Barrio ordinances shall take effect thirty days after their approval, unless the municipal council finds that such ordinances are not in accordance with law, in which case, they shall be returned to the barrio council for adjustment, amendment or repeal. In case of disagreement between the barrio council and the municipal council the dispute shall be referred to the provincial fiscal for final action.

Any violation of barrio ordinances duly promulgated be punished by a fine of not more than one hundred Pesos or imprisonment of not more than fifteen days, or both such fine and imprisonment, in the discretion of the court.

The barrio council shall have the following powers, duties and responsibilities:

- To construct and/or maintain within its boundaries the following public works: barrio roads, bridges, viaducts

and sidewalks, playgrounds and parks, school buildings; water supply, drainage, irrigation, sewerage, and public toilet facilities, and other public works and facilities, and for this purpose, to exercise the power of eminent domain with the approval of the municipal council;

- To undertake cooperative enterprises that will improve the economic condition and well-being of the barrio residents. Such enterprises may include stores for the sale or purchase of commodities and/or produce, warehouses, activities relating to agricultural and livestock production and marketing, fishing, and home and barrio industries, and other activities which may promote the welfare of the barrio inhabitants;
- To accept in all or any of the foregoing public works and cooperative enterprises such cooperation as is made available by municipal, provincial and national governmental agencies established by law to render financial, technical and advisory assistance to barrios and to barrio residents: Provided, however, That in accepting such cooperation, the barrio council may not pledge sums of money for expenditure in excess of amounts currently in the barrio treasury or encumbered for other purposes;
- To initiate and submit to the barrio assembly community programs of economic and social benefit to the inhabitants of the barrio;
- To employ or contribute to the expenses of employing community development workers under terms of agreement made with the Office of the Presidential Assistant on Community Development or with any other bureau or agency of the government;
- To submit to the municipal council such suggestions or recommendations as it may see fit for the improvement of its barrio and/or for the welfare of the inhabitants thereof;
- To provide for the publication by town crier or such other means as they see fit, of laws, ordinances and/or matters of public interest;
- To hold benefits in their respective barrios without having to secure permits from the Social Welfare Administration. The proceeds from such benefits shall be tax-exempt and shall go to the barrio general fund, unless previously set aside for a specific purpose;
- To organize at least twice a month such lectures, programs and/or community assemblies as may serve to educate and enlighten the people on moral, civic, political, educational and other matters of public interest.
- To regulate the use of cement, palay or copra driers (patios), or similar project constructed with government funds for public service within the jurisdiction of the barrio and to charge reasonable fees for such use;
- To exercise any powers necessary to carry out the foregoing provisions;
- To organize annually as soon after the barrio council shall have been elected and qualified, committees composed of men and women of high moral standing and integrity in the barrio to take care of the problem of juvenile delinquency, if the same exists, by providing spiritual help and guidance to the juvenile delinquents and by helping them secure wholesome occupations and entertainment in the barrios or elsewhere; and
- To appropriate barrio funds to implement the decisions of the barrio assembly and for purposes herein specified.

SEC. 13. Procedure in barrio councils.—The barrio lieutenant shall be the presiding officer of the barrio council. In his absence or inability, the vice barrio lieutenant designated by the barrio council shall act as presiding officer. Regular meetings of the barrio council shall be held at least once a month at the call of the barrio lieutenant. Special meetings may also be called by him and by any three members of the barrio council at any time.

In order to transact business, the barrio council must constitute a quorum of a majority of its members. All

ordinances and resolutions must be approved by a majority vote of those present.

At the first meeting of the newly elected barrio council the barrio lieutenant, with the approval of the majority of the council, shall name the chairman and members of the standing and special committees to study and report from time to time on various problems that come before the barrio council.

The barrio council may hold its sessions in the barrio hall or public school building of the barrio during hours when there are no classes, or in any house or lot in the barrio the provisional or permanent use of which may be granted for said purpose free of charge.

The barrio council shall elect from among its members a secretary and an assistant secretary. It shall be the duty of the secretary to keep simple minutes of the meetings of both the barrio assembly and the barrio council during his term of office, to keep a list of all qualified barrio assembly members, and be responsible for the custody of all barrio council and barrio assembly records. The assistant secretary shall perform such duties as may be assigned by the barrio council and upon designation by the barrio council, shall act as secretary in case of absence or inability of the latter.

SEC. 14. Taxing powers of the barrio council and the barrio assembly.—The barrio council with the approval of a two-thirds vote of the barrio assembly as provided in section four hereof, may raise, levy, collect and/or accept monies and other contributions from the following sources:

- Voluntary contributions annually from each male or female resident twenty-one years of age or over;
- Licenses on stores, signs, signboards, and billboards displayed or maintained in any place exposed to public view except those displayed at the place or places where profession or business advertised thereby is in whole or in part conducted;
- A tax on gamecocks owned by residents of the barrio and on the cockfights conducted therein: Provided, That nothing herein shall authorize the barrio council to permit cockfights.
- Monies, materials and voluntary labor for specific public works and cooperative enterprises of the barrio raised from resident, landholders, producers and merchants of the barrio;
- Monies from grants-in-aid, subsidies, contributions and revenues made available to barrios from municipal, provincial or national funds;
- Monies from private agencies and individuals;
- An additional percentage, not exceeding one-fourth of one per cent of the assessed valuation of the property within the barrio, collected by the municipal treasurer along with the tax on real property levied for municipal purposes by the municipality and deposited in the name of the barrio with the municipal treasurer: Provided, That no tax or license fee imposed by a barrio council shall exceed fifty per centum of a similar tax or fee levied, assessed or imposed by the municipal council.

SEC. 15. Share in real estate taxes.—Ten per cent of all real estate taxes collected within the barrio shall accrue to the barrio general fund, which sum shall be deducted in equal amounts from, the respective shares of the province and municipality: Provided, That the municipal treasurer may designate the barrio lieutenant and/or the barrio treasurer as his deputy to collect the said taxes.

SEC. 16. Financial Procedure.—All ordinances for raising barrio funds through taxes and voluntary contributions may be initiated in the barrio council, and submitted to the barrio assembly. Such ordinances may also originate in the barrio assembly which may approve the same finally without further action by the barrio council.

The barrio treasurer shall collect all taxes existing (except real property taxes), fees and contributions due the barrio treasury for which he shall issue official receipts. The treasurer, who shall be bonded in any amount to be fixed by the barrio council not exceeding ten thousand pesos, shall be the custodian of the barrio funds and property and shall deposit all collections with the municipal treasurer within a period of one week after receipt of such fees and contributions. He shall disburse the same in accordance with resolutions of the council, upon voucher signed by the payee and approved by the barrio lieutenant and subject to the availability of funds in the barrio treasury, and to all existing applicable auditing rules and regulations.

The barrio council may provide for necessary travel expenses for the barrio lieutenant or any member of the council on official business.

The financial records of the barrio council shall be kept in a simplified manner as prescribed by the municipal treasurer who shall annually audit such accounts and make a report of the audit to the barrio council and to the municipal council.

SEC. 17. Extent of applicability.—The above provisions shall be made applicable to all barrios within the jurisdiction of chartered cities.

SEC. 18. Repealing clause.—All existing legislations or regulations relating to barrio government in conflict or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed.

SEC. 19. Effectivity of the Act.—This Act shall take effect January first, nineteen hundred and sixty.

Approved, June 20, 1959.

ABOUT BATAS.ORG

Study smarter at BATAS.org

The Philippine bar review and law-school companion built around how your brain actually remembers.

The complete Philippine law library - free for everyone.

More than 100,000 Supreme Court decisions, Republic Acts, and executive issuances - full-text searchable, browsable by category and year, and always free. No paywall, no login. This PDF came from it.

Audio case-brief lectures.

Any decision becomes a podcast-style lecture - facts, issues, ruling, and doctrine - with read-along highlighting and a hands-free presentation mode. Study while commuting, working out, or resting your eyes.

Bar review built on the science of memory.

Complete, sequenced courses for all eight bar subjects, narrated like podcasts and reinforced with retrieval practice and spaced review - the study techniques with the strongest evidence behind them.

The full law-school curriculum.

One subscription unlocks the entire J.D. curriculum - every subject, every lesson, with your progress tracked down to the paragraph so you can pick up exactly where you left off, on any device.

Mock exams that tell you where you stand.

Timed multiple-choice exams graded instantly, with per-subject score breakdowns and focus suggestions that point you at your weakest topics first.

A study planner that keeps you on pace.

Set your schedule and BATAS tells you every day whether you are on track for bar day - and exactly which lesson to take next.

Start free at <https://batas.org>

The law library is free forever - and your first lesson is one click away.

The text of this document is an official public record and remains in the public domain. Formatting, presentation, and compilation © 2026 batas.org.

Downloaded free from the batas.org Law Library. Share it freely - the library is free for every law student, bar reviewee, and practitioner.