

CHAPTER 23

COASTAL AND LAKE WATERSHED DISTRICTS

§2001. Watershed districts authorized

Watershed districts may be created pursuant to this section to protect, restore and maintain the natural functions and values of coastal wetlands; freshwater wetlands; rivers, streams and great ponds; coastal harbors; bays; estuaries and marine waters and to manage and conserve the land and water resources of watersheds of those resources within the jurisdictions of these districts. The natural functions and values of those resources include water quality, water quality maintenance, aquatic and wildlife habitat, scenic quality and floodwater storage and conveyance. The term "participating water district," as used in this chapter, means a water district, as defined by Title 35-A, section 6101, subsection 3, included in the application provided for by section 2002. [PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. E, §2 (AMD); PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. H, §1 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 106, §1 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 721, §E2 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 721, §H1 (AFF).

§2002. Formation

1. Initiation. The municipal officers of the municipality or municipalities, or portions of the municipality or municipalities, or the residents of unorganized territory who desire to form a watershed district shall file a statement of intent to organize on a form or forms to be prepared by the commissioner, setting forth the name or names of the municipality or municipalities, or portions of the municipality or municipalities or, in the case of residents of unorganized territory, the names of those residents that propose to be included in the district and they shall furnish such other data as the commissioner determines necessary and proper. The application must contain, but is not limited to, a description of the territory of the proposed district, the names of water districts that utilize water from surface or ground water supplies within the territory of the proposed district, the name proposed for the district, which must include the words "watershed district" or "management district." [PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. E, §3 (AMD); PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. H, §1 (AFF).]

2. Initiation by referendum. Residents of a municipality or municipalities, or portions thereof, that desire to form a watershed district may petition the municipal officers to file a statement of intent to form a watershed district with the commissioner. The petition must contain a description of the territory of the proposed district.

Upon receipt of a written petition signed by at least 10% of the number of voters voting for the gubernatorial candidates at the last statewide election in that proposed district, the municipal officers shall submit the question to the voters of the proposed district at the next general, primary or special election within the proposed district. The referendum question must read as follows:

"Shall the municipal officers representing the proposed watershed district, consisting of (describe the territory of the proposed district), initiate proceedings to form the proposed district?"

If the referendum question is approved by a majority of the legal voters voting at the election, provided that the total number of votes cast for and against the referendum question equals or exceeds 20% of the total number of votes cast in the proposed district in the last gubernatorial election, the municipal officers representing the residents of the proposed watershed district shall file a statement of intent to form the proposed district in accordance with subsection 1.

[PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. E, §3 (AMD); PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. H, §1 (AFF).]

3. Public hearing.

[PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. E, §3 (RP); PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. H, §1 (AFF).]

4. Commissioner convenes joint meeting. Upon receiving a complete statement of intent to form a watershed district, the commissioner shall give notice to participating water districts, the municipal officers within the municipality or municipalities involved and, when unorganized territory is involved, to the persons signing the application described in subsection 1 and the commissioners of the county in which the unorganized territory is located of a date, time and place of a meeting of the municipal officers of the municipality or municipalities involved and, when unorganized territory is involved, a joint meeting of all the persons signing the application described in subsection 1 and the commissioners of the county in which the unorganized territory is located. The notice must be in writing and sent by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the addresses shown on the application described in subsection 1 and, in the case of county commissioners, to the addresses of those commissioners obtained from the county clerk. A return receipt properly endorsed is evidence of the receipt of notice. The notice must be mailed at least 10 days prior to the date set for the meeting.

[PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. E, §3 (AMD); PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. H, §1 (AFF).]

5. Denial of application.

[PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. E, §3 (RP); PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. H, §1 (AFF).]

6. Joint meeting. The persons to whom the notice described in subsection 4 is directed shall meet at the time and place appointed. When more than one municipality or unorganized territory is involved, the persons shall organize by electing a chair and a secretary. An action may not be taken at any such meeting unless, at the time the meeting is convened, there are present at least 1/2 of the total number of municipal officers eligible to attend and participate at the meeting and, when the proposed district includes or is composed solely of unorganized territory, at least 2/3 of the persons signing the application described in subsection 1 and at least 2 commissioners of the county in which the unorganized territory is located, other than to report to the commissioner that a quorum was not present and to request the commissioner to issue a new notice for another meeting. The purposes of the meeting are to develop a declaration of district responsibilities and to determine a fair and equitable number of trustees, subject to section 2004, to be elected by and represent each participating municipality or, in the case of unorganized territory, the residents of that territory within the bounds of the proposed district. The declaration of district responsibilities must list the powers and duties of the proposed watershed district. These powers and duties are limited to those authorized under section 2007. The declaration must also include a method of determining each municipality's proportional share, and where unorganized territory is involved, that unorganized territory's share, of the proposed district's annual budget. When a decision has been reached on a declaration of district responsibilities, the number of trustees and the number to represent each municipality or the residents of the unorganized territory within the bounds of the proposed district, subject to the limitations provided, this decision must be reduced to writing by the secretary and must be approved by a 2/3 vote of those present. When 2 or more municipalities are, or unorganized territory is, involved, the vote so reduced to writing and the record of the meeting must be signed by the chair and attested by the secretary and filed with the commissioner. When a single municipality is involved, a copy of the vote of the municipal officers duly attested by the clerk of the municipality must be filed with the commissioner.

[PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. E, §3 (AMD); PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. H, §1 (AFF).]

6-A. Water district representation. The trustees of each participating water district shall annually appoint one water district official or staff person to serve as a trustee of the watershed district for a one-year term.

[PL 1989, c. 106, §3 (NEW).]

7. Submission. When the record of the municipality or the record of the joint meeting, when municipalities are, or unorganized territory is, involved, has been received by the commissioner and found by the commissioner to be in order, the commissioner shall order the question of the formation

of the proposed watershed district and other related questions to be submitted to the legal voters residing within that portion of the municipality, municipalities or unorganized territory that falls within the proposed watershed district. The order must be directed to the municipal officers of the municipality or municipalities which propose to form the watershed district and, when the proposed watershed district includes or is composed solely of unorganized territory, to the commissioners of the county in which the unorganized territory is located, directing them to call town meetings, city elections or a meeting of the residents of the unorganized territory within the bounds of the proposed watershed district for the purpose of voting in favor of or in opposition to each of the following articles or questions, as they may apply, in substantially the following form:

A. To see if the town (or city) of (name of town or city) will vote to incorporate as a watershed district to be called (name) Watershed District; [PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).]

B. To see if the residents of the following described section of the town (or city) of (name of town or city) will vote to incorporate as a watershed district to be called (name) Watershed District: (legal description of the bounds of section to be included); [PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).]

C. To see if the residents of the (following described section of) (name of town or city) (unorganized territory) will vote to join with the residents of the (following described section of) (name of town or city) (unorganized territory) to incorporate as a watershed district to be called (name) Watershed District: (legal description of the bounds of the proposed watershed district, except where the district is to be composed of entire municipalities); [PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).]

D. To see if the inhabitants of the following described section of that unorganized territory known as Township (number), Range (number) will vote to incorporate as a watershed district to be called (name) Watershed District: (legal description of the bounds of the proposed watershed district); [PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).]

E. To see if the residents of (the above described section of) (name of town or city) will vote to approve the total number of trustees and the allocation of representation among the municipalities (and included section of unorganized territory) on the board of trustees as determined by the municipal officers (and the persons representing the included area of unorganized territory) and listed as follows:

Total number of trustees is and the residents of (the above described section of) (town or city) are entitled to trustees (and the residents of the above described section of unorganized territory are entitled to trustees); [PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. E, §3 (AMD); PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. H, §1 (AFF).]

F. To choose (number) trustees to represent the residents of (the above described section) of (town or city) (unorganized territory) on the board of trustees of the (name) Watershed District; and [PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. E, §3 (AMD); PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. H, §1 (AFF).]

G. To see if the residents of (the above described section of) (name of town or city or included section of unorganized territory) will vote to adopt a declaration of district responsibilities that describes and restricts the powers of the (name) Watershed District. [PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. E, §3 (NEW); PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. H, §1 (AFF).]

[PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. E, §3 (NEW); PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. H, §1 (AFF).]

At any such town meeting, city election or election by the residents of the proposed watershed district, trustees must be chosen to represent the municipality or the unorganized territory within the proposed watershed district in the manner provided in section 2005. [PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. E, §3 (AMD); PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. H, §1 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 106, §§2,3 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 890, §§A40,B280- 283 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 721, §E3 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 721, §H1 (AFF).

§2003. Approval and organization

When the residents of the municipality or each municipality, when more than one is involved, or the unorganized territory within the proposed watershed district have voted upon the formation of a proposed watershed district and all of the other questions submitted therewith, the clerk of each municipality and, when the proposed district includes unorganized territory, the county clerk shall make a return to the commissioner in such form as the commissioner determines. If the commissioner finds from the returns that a majority of the residents within each of the municipalities involved and, when the proposed district includes unorganized territory, that a majority of the residents of the unorganized territory within the proposed watershed district, voting on each of the articles and questions submitted to them, have voted in the affirmative and have elected the necessary trustees and the names of those elected to represent each municipality, or the residents of the unorganized territory within the proposed watershed district, that each participating water district has appointed a trustee as provided by section 2002, subsection 6-A, and that all other steps in the formation of the proposed watershed district are in order and in conformity with law, the commissioner shall make a finding to that effect and record the same upon departmental records. The commissioner shall, immediately after making findings, issue a certificate of organization in the name of the watershed district in such form as the commissioner determines. The original certificate must be delivered to the trustees on the day that they are directed to organize and a copy of the certificate duly attested by the commissioner must be filed and recorded in the Office of the Secretary of State. The issuance of that certificate by the commissioner is conclusive evidence of the lawful organization of the watershed district. The watershed district is not operative until the date set by the commissioner under section 2006. [PL 1989, c. 106, §4 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 890, Pt. A, §40 (AFF); PL 1989, c. 890, Pt. B, §284 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 106, §4 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 890, §§A40,B284 (AMD).

§2004. Trustees

1. Authorization. All the affairs of a watershed district shall be managed by a board of trustees. The board shall consist of not less than 3 trustees, or not less than 5 trustees in watershed districts involving more than one municipality or one or more municipalities and residents of an unorganized territory. In addition, the board shall consist of one trustee representing each participating water district. Trustees, other than those representing participating water districts, shall be elected in accordance with this chapter. The exact number of trustees shall be determined in accordance with section 2002. A watershed district may alter the number of trustees by submitting the proposed alteration to the voters in the same manner as provided in section 2002, subsection 7. No municipality nor unorganized territory within any watershed district may have less than one trustee. A quorum of the trustees may conduct the affairs of the district even if there is a vacancy on the board of trustees. [PL 1989, c. 106, §5 (AMD).]

2. Recall. Trustees may be recalled under the following provisions.

A. The qualified electors of the watershed district may petition for the recall of any trustee after the first year of the term for which the trustee is elected by filing a petition with the municipal clerk, or the county commissioners in unorganized territory, demanding the recall of the trustee. A trustee may be subject to recall for misfeasance, malfeasance or nonfeasance in office. The petition shall be signed by electors of the political subdivision which that trustee represents equal to at least 25% of the vote cast for the office of Governor at the last gubernatorial election within the political subdivision of the trustee being recalled. The recall petition shall state the reason for which removal is sought. [PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).]

B. Within 3 days after the petition is offered for filing, the official with whom the petition is left shall determine by careful examination whether the petition is sufficient and so state in a certificate attached to the petition. If the petition is found to be insufficient, the certificate shall state the particulars creating the insufficiency. The petition may be amended to correct any insufficiency within 5 days following the affixing of the original certificate. Within 2 days after the offering of the amended petition for filing, it shall again be carefully examined to determine sufficiency and a certificate stating the findings shall be attached. Immediately upon finding an original or amended petition sufficient, the official shall file the petition and call a special election to be held not less than 40 days nor more than 45 days from the filing date. The official shall notify the trustee, against whom the recall petition is filed, of the special election. [PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).]

C. The trustee against whom the recall petition is filed shall be a candidate at the special election without nomination, unless the trustee resigns within 10 days after the original filing of the petition. There shall be no primary. Candidates for the office may be nominated under the usual procedure of nomination for a primary election by filing nomination papers, not later than 5 p.m., 4 weeks preceding the election and have their names placed on the ballot at the special election. [PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).]

D. The trustee against whom a recall petition has been filed shall continue to perform the duties of office until the result of the special election is officially declared. The person receiving the highest number of votes at the special election shall be declared elected for the remainder of the term. If the incumbent receives the highest number of votes, the incumbent shall continue in office. If another receives the highest number of votes, that person shall succeed the incumbent, if qualified, within 10 days after receiving notification. [PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).]

E. After one recall petition and special election, no further recall petition may be filed against the same trustee during the term for which the trustee was elected. [PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).]

[PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 106, §5 (AMD).

§2005. Election of trustees

Except for trustees representing participating water districts, whose selection is governed by section 2002, subsection 6-A, trustees shall be nominated and elected in the same manner as municipal officers are nominated and elected under Title 30-A, or in accordance with a municipal charter, whichever is applicable; or, in the case of unorganized territory, in accordance with the procedure for the organization of larger townships set forth in Title 30-A, section 7001. Upon receipt of the names of all the trustees, the commissioner shall set a time, place and date for the first meeting of the trustees, notice of the meeting to be given to the trustees by certified or registered mail, return receipt requested, mailed at least 10 days prior to the date set for the meeting, to determine the length of their terms. Except for trustees representing water districts whose term is set by section 2002, subsection 6-A, the terms must be determined by lot in accordance with the following table:

Total number of trustees	TERM		
	1 year	2 years	3 years
5	1	2	2
6	2	2	2
7	2	2	3
8	2	3	3
9	3	3	3
10	3	3	4
11	3	4	4
12	4	4	4

13	4	4	5
14	4	5	5
15	5	5	5
16	5	5	6
17	5	6	6
18	6	6	6

The trustees shall enter on their records the determination so made. The trustees shall serve their terms as determined at the organizational meeting, except that, in the case of trustees representing a municipality, those trustees shall serve an additional period until the next regular election of the municipality and, thereafter, those trustees' terms of office shall date from the time of each regular municipal election; and except that, in the case of trustees representing residents of unorganized territory, those trustees shall serve until an election to fill the vacancies caused by the expiration of their terms shall be called by the county commissioners. The commissioners shall call the election in the same manner provided for the initial election of trustees and cause that election to be held on a date as closely following the date upon which the terms expire.

The trustees shall organize by election from their own members a chair, a vice-chair, a treasurer and a clerk and choose, employ and fix the compensation of other necessary officers and agents who serve at their pleasure and they shall adopt a corporate seal. Prior to the election of the officers, each trustee must be sworn to the faithful performance of the trustee's duties. [RR 2021, c. 2, Pt. B, §298 (COR).]

At the first organizational meeting, the trustees shall determine the percentage of the watershed district's operating budget to which each participating water district shall contribute. Any contributions paid by a participating water district shall be recovered, with carrying costs, in the district's next rate case. The agreed upon contribution of a participating water district may not be changed during the fiscal year unless the participating water district approves the change. The percentage contribution of a participating water district may be reviewed and changed by the trustees at the end of the fiscal year. [PL 1989, c. 106, §7 (NEW).]

The trustees may from time to time adopt, establish and amend through bylaws consistent with the laws of the State and necessary for their own convenience and the proper management of the affairs of the district and perform any other acts within the powers delegated to them by law. [PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).]

After the original organizational meeting, the trustees shall meet annually at a time determined by their bylaws for the purpose of electing from among the members a chair, vice-chair, treasurer and clerk to serve until the next annual election and until their successors are elected and qualified. The treasurer shall furnish bond in such sum and with such sureties as the trustees approve, the cost of the bond to be paid by the district. The chair, vice-chair, treasurer and clerk may receive compensation for serving in these capacities as the trustees determine. This compensation is in addition to the compensation payable to them as trustees. The trustees shall make and publish an annual report including a report of the treasurer. [RR 2021, c. 2, Pt. B, §299 (COR).]

At the expiration of the terms, the vacancy shall be filled for a term of 3 years and the trustees shall notify the municipal officers of the municipalities within the watershed district before the annual town meeting or before the regular city election if a city falls within the watershed district; or, in the case of unorganized territory, the trustees shall notify the commissioners of the county in which the unorganized territory, encompassed by the watershed district, is located of the fact that a vacancy will occur so that the municipal officers in these municipalities or the county commissioners may provide for the election of a trustee or trustees to fill the vacancy that will occur. All trustees shall serve until their successors are elected and qualified. The trustees shall receive compensation as recommended by them and approved by majority vote of the municipal officers in municipalities representing a majority

of the population within the district, including compensation for any duties they perform as officers as well as for their duties as trustees. Certification thereof shall be recorded with the Secretary of State and recorded in the bylaws. Their compensation for duties as trustees shall be based on the amount specified in the bylaws, each meeting actually attended and reimbursement for travel and expenses, with the total not to exceed the amount specified in the bylaws. Compensation schedules in effect on January 1, 1988 shall continue in effect until changed. [PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).]

When a vacancy on the board of trustees occurs by reason of death, resignation or otherwise, the municipal officers of the municipality that the trustee represented shall fill the vacancy by electing a trustee from the municipality to serve until the municipality shall fill the vacancy at its next annual town meeting or next regular city election. In the case of a vacancy in the office of a trustee representing unorganized territory, the commissioners of the county in which the unorganized territory is located shall fill the vacancy by electing a trustee from the unorganized territory and resident within the boundaries of the watershed district until the next election of trustees is held. The person so chosen shall serve until a successor is elected and qualified. If any member of the board of trustees moves from the municipality represented, or, in the case of a trustee representing unorganized territory, if that trustee moves outside the boundaries of the watershed district, a vacancy shall be declared to exist by the board of trustees and the municipal officers or the county commissioners shall choose another trustee as provided. [PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).]

No member of the board of trustees may be employed for compensation or in any other capacity by the watershed district of which the member is a trustee, except as otherwise provided. [PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 106, §6 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 106, §§6,7 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 890, §§A40,B285 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 890, Pt. A, §40 (AFF). PL 1989, c. 890, Pt. B, §285 (AMD). RR 2021, c. 2, Pt. B, §§298, 299 (COR).

§2006. Operational date of watershed districts

On the date set by the commissioner as provided in section 2005, the watershed district becomes operative. [PL 1989, c. 890, Pt. A, §40 (AFF); PL 1989, c. 890, Pt. B, §286 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 890, §§A40,B286 (AMD).

§2007. Powers

A watershed district has the following powers. [PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).]

1. General. Any district organized under this chapter may sue and be sued; make contracts; accept gifts, purchase, lease, devise or otherwise acquire, hold or dispose of real or personal property; disburse money; contract debt; adopt rules; and do such other acts as necessary to carry out the purposes of the district.

[PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).]

2. Security required. The district may require that a contracting party give adequate security to assure performance of the contract and to pay all damages which may arise from inadequate performance.

[PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).]

3. Responsibilities. The district is responsible for those activities listed in the declaration of district responsibilities as approved in accordance with section 2002. The activities are limited to the following:

- A. Initiating and coordinating research and surveys for the purpose of gathering data on wetlands, water bodies, related shorelands and watersheds within the territory of the district; [PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. E, §4 (AMD); PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. H, §1 (AFF).]
- B. Planning natural resource restoration projects; [PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. E, §4 (AMD); PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. H, §1 (AFF).]
- C. Contacting and attempting to secure the cooperation of municipal officials and state agencies for the purpose of enacting and enforcing ordinances and regulations necessary to further the purposes of the district; [PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).]
- D. Adopting and implementing natural resource protection, management and restoration plans; [PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. E, §4 (AMD); PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. H, §1 (AFF).]
- E. Adopting and implementing plans and programs to facilitate coordination of water level management and surface water use on great ponds within the territory of the district; and [PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. E, §4 (AMD); PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. H, §1 (AFF).]
- F. Entering into agreements with a municipality or group of municipalities that are wholly or partially within the district to administer the land use ordinances of that municipality or group of municipalities. [PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. E, §4 (NEW); PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. H, §1 (AFF).]
[PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. E, §4 (AMD); PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. H, §1 (AFF).]

4. Limits on jurisdiction. The limits on jurisdiction regarding the regulation of water level are as follows.

- A. The district has no authority to set a water level regime for a body of water impounded by a dam that is exempt, under section 840, subsection 1, from the authority of the commissioner to set water level regimes. [PL 1989, c. 890, Pt. A, §40 (AFF); PL 1989, c. 890, Pt. B, §287 (AMD).]
- B. The district's authority to set a water level regime for any water body within its boundaries and over any dams within its boundaries is subordinate to the authority of a municipality under Title 30-A, chapter 187, subchapter VI and to the authority of the Department of Environmental Protection under chapter 5, subchapter I, article 1, subarticle 1-B, article 3-A and article 4. [PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. E, §5 (AMD); PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. H, §1 (AFF).]
[PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. E, §5 (AMD); PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. H, §1 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 890, §§A40,B287 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 721, §§E4,5 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 721, §H1 (AFF).

§2008. Budget meeting

The trustees of a watershed district shall annually before June 1st call a district budget meeting to approve the operating budget, reserve fund for a capital outlay purpose or capital outlay appropriations in the following manner. [PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).]

1. Call and notice. Each district budget meeting shall be called by a warrant signed by a majority of the trustees. The warrant shall specify the time and place of the meeting and shall set forth the proposed budget and any other items of business. The warrant shall be directed to any resident of the district, by name, ordering that resident to notify all voters within the district to assemble at the time and place appointed. An attested copy of the warrant shall be posted by the person to whom it is directed in some conspicuous place in each of the municipalities within the district at least 7 days before the meeting. The person who gives notice of the meeting shall make a return on the warrant, stating the manner of notice in each municipality and the time when it was given.
[PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).]

2. Voting list. The trustees shall appoint a resident of the district to serve as registration clerk and to make and keep a voting list of all residents in the district eligible to vote. The registration clerk shall compile the district voting list from the voting lists of all municipalities and the portions of unorganized territory lying within the district. At least 14 days before any budget meeting, the registration clerk shall bring that voting list up to date by comparing the list with those voting lists found in the municipalities and the portions of unorganized territory within the district and by making such additions and deletions as necessary. Additions or deletions may not be made within the 14-day period prior to the meeting.

[PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. E, §6 (AMD); PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. H, §1 (AFF).]

3. Quorum; meeting rules. Each person whose name appears on the district voting list may attend and vote at a district budget meeting. Twenty-five registered voters constitute a quorum. When a quorum of voters is present, the chair of the trustees shall open the meeting by calling for the election of a moderator, receiving and counting votes for moderator and swearing in the moderator. As soon as a moderator has been elected and sworn, the moderator shall preside at the meeting. The secretary of the district shall record accurately all votes of the meeting.

[RR 2021, c. 2, Pt. B, §300 (COR).]

4. Budget approval. The trustees shall thoroughly explain the proposed budget and the voters of the district shall be given an opportunity to be heard. At the district budget meeting, only those items dealing with the expenses necessary to operate the district, appropriations for a reserve fund and capital outlay shall be subject to change by the voters. The initial budget submitted by the trustees of the watershed district following the district's formation and organization must be approved by the voters at the district budget meeting. If the initial budget is not approved by July 1st, the trustees shall make as many revisions and conduct as many meetings as necessary to secure budget approval by the voters. If a budget for the operation of the district is not approved prior to July 1st in any following year, the previous fiscal year's budget shall automatically be considered the approved budget for that fiscal year.

[PL 1989, c. 106, §8 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 106, §8 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 721, §E6 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 721, §H1 (AFF). RR 2021, c. 2, Pt. B, §300 (COR).

§2009. Exemption

The property, both real and personal, rights and franchises of any watershed district formed under this chapter and held within the boundaries of the district is forever exempt from taxation. [PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).

§2010. Assessments

Assessments shall be made as follows. [PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).]

1. Method. Following adoption of the district budget, the trustees shall issue their warrants, in substantially the same form as the warrant of the Treasurer of State, for taxes to each participating municipality and, in the case of unorganized territory, to the commissioner's of the county within which that territory lies, requiring it to pay its proportionate part of the district budget. Each municipality's proportionate part of the budget or, in the case of unorganized territory, each county's proportionate share, must be based upon its percentage of shoreline frontage on the great ponds and marine waters within the district's territory, or an alternative method as described in the declaration of district responsibilities and approved at referendum under section 2003.

[PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. E, §7 (AMD); PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. H, §1 (AFF).]

2. Fiscal year; payments. The fiscal year of the district is July 1st to June 30th. In the fiscal year in which the assessment is levied, the treasurer of each municipality and, in the case of unorganized territory, the county treasurer, shall pay the amount of the assessment in 3 equal installments to the treasurer of the district. Installments must be paid by August 1st, December 1st and March 31st. [PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. E, §8 (AMD); PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. H, §1 (AFF).]

3. Water utility benefiting. Any water utility benefiting from the services of this district has the right to contribute funds to the district as a utility operating expense. [PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 106, §9 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 721, §§E7,8 (AMD). PL 1993, c. 721, §H1 (AFF).

§2011. Liability

Any watershed district formed under this chapter is a governmental entity for the purposes of Title 14, chapter 741. [PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1987, c. 711 (NEW).

§2012. State agency assistance

The Department of Economic and Community Development, the Department of Environmental Protection and other state agencies with expertise in watershed management shall, to the extent practicable, develop advisory guidelines, models and other technical assistance materials on the watershed planning process for municipalities, interested citizens and others. These agencies shall, upon request and as resources allow, provide assistance to watershed districts in the development and implementation of watershed management plans. [PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. E, §9 (NEW); PL 1993, c. 721, Pt. H, §1 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1993, c. 721, §E9 (NEW). PL 1993, c. 721, §H1 (AFF).

§2013. Priority watershed protection grants program

A priority watershed protection grants program is established, to be administered by the department, for the purpose of providing financial assistance to entities to conduct projects that implement best management practices or other management measures in order to reduce or eliminate nonpoint source pollution in surface waters of the State. Funding may not be used to pay salaries of state agency staff. [PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §1 (NEW); PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §3 (AFF).]

1. Project elements. Each project proposal must either create a watershed management plan or implement an existing plan. A plan must include the following elements:

A. An assessment of water quality and uses of water bodies within the watershed; [PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §1 (NEW); PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §3 (AFF).]

B. An inventory of the types of land uses and the types and severity of nonpoint source pollution in the watershed; [PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §1 (NEW); PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §3 (AFF).]

C. An evaluation of the types and severity of other factors that may be affecting water quality; [PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §1 (NEW); PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §3 (AFF).]

D. A determination of nonpoint source pollution controls and measures necessary to improve or protect water quality; [PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §1 (NEW); PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §3 (AFF).]

E. An implementation strategy to address nonpoint sources of pollution in the watershed that includes costs and schedules for implementing best management practices or other management measures and agreements outlining responsibilities for meeting this strategy; [PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §1 (NEW); PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §3 (AFF).]

F. Actions to inform eligible landowners of the importance of utilizing best management practices on a voluntary or cost-shared basis; [PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §1 (NEW); PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §3 (AFF).]

G. An objective evaluation of the plan following implementation; and [PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §1 (NEW); PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §3 (AFF).]

H. Actions to achieve self-sustaining financial support of the plan. [PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §1 (NEW); PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §3 (AFF).]
[PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §1 (NEW); PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §3 (AFF).]

2. Project approval. The board shall approve funding for projects based on the following preferences, considering public comments on project proposals that have been submitted to the board:

A. [PL 2011, c. 655, Pt. EE, §25 (RP); PL 2011, c. 655, Pt. EE, §30 (AFF).]

B. Projects that demonstrate extensive local support in either funding or services; [PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §1 (NEW); PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §3 (AFF).]

C. Projects that seek to solve current pollution problems and plan for future protection of resources; and [PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §1 (NEW); PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §3 (AFF).]

D. Projects that create techniques, products or information that can be of use in more than one setting or in other projects in the State. [PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §1 (NEW); PL 1997, c. 519, Pt. B, §3 (AFF).]

[PL 2011, c. 655, Pt. EE, §25 (AMD); PL 2011, c. 655, Pt. EE, §30 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1997, c. 519, §B1 (NEW). PL 1997, c. 519, §B3 (AFF). PL 2011, c. 655, Pt. EE, §25 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 655, Pt. EE, §30 (AFF).

§2014. Alternative method

This chapter may not be construed to limit a municipality's home rule authority or its ability to form a watershed district through its interlocal cooperation authority under Title 30-A, chapter 115 but provides an additional and alternative method for the formation of a watershed district and provides powers supplemental and additional to powers conferred by other laws, and may not be regarded as in derogation of or repealing any powers existing under any other law, either general, special or local. [PL 2009, c. 506, §2 (NEW); PL 2009, c. 506, §3 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2009, c. 506, §2 (NEW). PL 2009, c. 506, §3 (AFF).

The State of Maine claims a copyright in its codified statutes. If you intend to republish this material, we require that you include the following disclaimer in your publication:

All copyrights and other rights to statutory text are reserved by the State of Maine. The text included in this publication reflects changes made through the Second Regular Session of the 131st Legislature and is current through October 15, 2024. The text is subject to change without notice. It is a version that has not been officially certified by the Secretary of State. Refer to the Maine Revised Statutes Annotated and supplements for certified text.

The Office of the Revisor of Statutes also requests that you send us one copy of any statutory publication you may produce. Our goal is not to restrict publishing activity, but to keep track of who is publishing what, to identify any needless duplication and to preserve the State's copyright rights.

PLEASE NOTE: The Revisor's Office cannot perform research for or provide legal advice or interpretation of Maine law to the public. If you need legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.