

CHAPTER 33

PUBLIC INLAND LAKE PROTECTION AND REHABILITATION

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33.001 Declaration of Intent. The legislature finds environmental values, wildlife, public rights in navigable waters, and the public welfare are threatened by the deterioration of public lakes; that the protection and rehabilitation of the public inland lakes of this state are in the best interest of the citizens of this state; that the public health and welfare will be benefited thereby; that the current state effort to abate water pollution will not undo the eutrophic and other deteriorated conditions of many lakes; that lakes form an important basis of the state's recreation industry; that the increasing recreational usage of the waters of this state justifies state action to enhance and restore the potential of our inland lakes to satisfy the needs of the citizenry; and that the positive public duty of this state as trustee of waters requires affirmative steps to protect and enhance this resource and protect environmental values. To this end, the legislature declares that it is necessary to embark upon a program of lake protection and rehabilitation, to authorize a conjunctive state and local program of lake protection and rehabilitation to fulfill the positive duty of the state as trustee of navigable waters, and protect environmental values. The legislature finds that a state effort of research, analysis, planning and financing, and a local effort undertaken by lake rehabilitation and protection districts of planning and plan implementation is necessary and desirable and that the local districts should be formed by persons directly affected by the deteriorated condition of inland waters and

willing to assist financially, or through other means, in remedying lake problems. The legislature further finds that state efforts are needed to aid and assist local efforts, to ensure that projects are undertaken only if they promote the public rights in navigable waters, environmental values, and the public welfare, and to administer a program of financial aids to support rehabilitation projects with benefits to all state citizens.

History: 1973 c. 301.

SUBCHAPTER I

DEFINITIONS

33.01 Definitions. As used in this chapter:

(1) "Council" means the inland lakes protection and rehabilitation council created by s. 15.347 (8).

(2) "Department" means the department of natural resources.

(3) "District" means a public inland lake protection and rehabilitation district.

(4) "Lake rehabilitation" means the improvement or restoration of lakes from an undesirable or degraded condition to a former, less deteriorated condition or to a condition of greater usefulness.

(5) "Municipality" means any city, village or town.

(6) "Program" means measures to effect lake protection and rehabilitation, including surveys of sources of degradation, treatment of

aquatic nuisances, securing cooperation of units of general purpose government to enact necessary ordinances, undertaking of projects as defined in sub. (7) and any other necessary measures.

(7) "Project" means activities or works such as are described in s. 33.15 (4) which are subject to the procedures of subch. III.

(8) "Public inland lake" or "lake" means a lake, reservoir or flowage within the boundaries of the state that is accessible to the public via contiguous public lands or easements giving public access.

(9) "Owner" or "landowner" means, solely for the purpose of petitioning and receiving notice under this chapter, the person whose name appears on the assessment roll prepared for purposes of real property taxation.

History: 1973 c. 301, 336; 1975 c. 197, 198, 422.

SUBCHAPTER II

INLAND LAKES PROTECTION AND REHABILITATION COUNCIL; DEPARTMENT

33.05 Council duties. The inland lakes protection and rehabilitation council shall advise the department on all matters pertaining to lake rehabilitation and preservation and the abatement of pollution of lakes. The council's duties include, but are not limited to:

(1) Recommending a classification system for the selection of eligible lakes for study or treatment and for determining priority of treatment among eligible lakes; taking into consideration such factors as amount of public use and private development, potential for adequate pollution and erosion controls within the drainage basin, special environmental values, potential for future successful management, and other factors.

(2) Recommending standards and guidelines for lake rehabilitation plans, to ensure that rehabilitation efforts and expenditures yield maximum returns, that environmental values are protected, and that rehabilitated lakes are protected from degradation to the maximum extent possible in the future.

(3) Making recommendations on the utilization of any federal or state funds available for lake rehabilitation and supporting research activities.

(4) Making recommendations on the qualifications of the personnel to staff the interdisciplinary subunit of the department created for the purpose of dealing with lake rehabilitation.

(5) Recommending to the department lakes to be used as benchmarks in measuring man-induced effects on lake environments.

(6) Recommending research programs and projects on lake degradation, protection or rehabilitation.

History: 1973 c. 301; 1975 c. 197.

33.06 Department; powers and duties.

(1) **RULES.** The department shall adopt such rules as are necessary to carry out this chapter, including rules on administration of financial aids to districts, but such rules shall not take effect until submitted to the assembly committees on natural resources and agriculture and the senate committees on natural resources and agriculture. It shall prescribe data to be secured, methods of analysis and evaluation, duration of data gathering and other technical regulations for the efficient administration of the program and efficient intergovernmental organization.

(2) **STUDIES, INVENTORIES.** The department shall undertake studies and inventories to assist the council in carrying out its duties.

(3) **AIDS.** The department shall administer a program of financial assistance to districts, using such funds as are appropriated by the legislature or made available from other sources.

(4) **ASSISTANCE.** The department shall assist districts seeking technical aid in any phase of lake protection or rehabilitation activity.

(5) **CLEARINGHOUSE.** The department shall serve as a clearinghouse for scientific data on lakes and information on accepted and experimental lake protection or rehabilitation techniques.

History: 1973 c. 301; 1975 c. 197.

33.07 Cooperation by state agencies. All departments and agencies of state government shall make available to the department such information and assistance as may be necessary to enable it to carry out its functions under this chapter.

History: 1973 c. 301.

SUBCHAPTER III

LAKE PROTECTION AND REHABILITATION PROJECTS

33.11 Goals. The primary goal of activity under this chapter shall be to improve or protect the quality of public inland lakes. In addition, compilation of basic scientific data on lakes of this state and assessment of experimental and innovative techniques of lake rehabilitation and protection shall be goals of the program. Districts may undertake protection and rehabilitation projects to achieve the purposes of such districts specified in s. 33.21. Projects may be undertaken in cooperation with the department, the university of Wisconsin system, and

other government agencies, and public and private organizations. Projects shall be divided into study, planning and implementation phases.

History: 1973 c. 301; 1975 c. 197

33.12 Scope. Any proposed activity by a district which does not involve an application for state aids or an application for a ch. 30 permit is exempt from subch. III. If a proposed activity by a district involves an application for state aids, subch. III applies. If a proposed activity by a district involves an application for a ch. 30 permit, subch. III shall apply only if the department determines that the activity requiring the permit is an integral part of a lake rehabilitation project.

History: 1973 c. 301

33.13 Feasibility study. (1) Feasibility study work done through government agencies and public or private organizations shall include gathering such data on the lake, drainage basin, sources of pollution or nutrients or such other information as is necessary to determine the causes of degradation and remedial courses of action to prevent continued degradation or to determine potential causes of degradation and preventive courses of action. The department shall prescribe data to be secured, methods of analysis and evaluation, and duration of data-gathering. Feasibility study work shall be let by the district to the lowest responsible bidder in such manner as the district commissioners prescribe.

(2) Data gathered shall be forwarded to the department, which shall analyze it on an interdisciplinary basis.

(3) The department shall formulate suggested alternative methods, including cost estimates, of protecting or rehabilitating the water quality of the lake or portions thereof. Alternative protection schemes shall include steps necessary to maintain the water quality of the lake. Alternative rehabilitative schemes shall include steps necessary to abate continued degradation of the lake following implementation of a given rehabilitative plan.

(4) The work under sub. (1) shall be eligible for financial assistance, subject to rules of the department establishing guidelines for funding of feasibility studies.

History: 1973 c. 301; 1975 c. 197

33.14 Plan adoption. (1) Where specific lake protection and rehabilitation measures developed under s. 33.13 appear feasible, the commissioners of the district shall develop a proposed plan based upon the recommendations of the department and the formulated alternatives.

(2) Prior to adopting a plan by formal resolution under s. 33.29, the commissioners shall:

(a) Forward a copy of the proposed plan to the department;

(b) Refer the proposed plan to the appropriate soil and water conservation district and to the appropriate regional planning agency for the area, if any, for review and comment within 60 days of receipt; and

(c) After carrying out pars. (a) and (b), make application for any required permits, and may file an application for financial aid, and request for a hearing.

(3) Within 10 days after receipt of the proposed plan and applications the department shall schedule a hearing in the area not more than 90 days later. If an environmental impact statement is required, notice of the scheduled hearing shall contain a statement that an environmental impact statement is required.

(4) The department shall consider the following at the hearing:

(a) The environmental impact statement on the proposed project;

(b) The issuance of permits which have been applied for;

(c) Whether the implementation of the plan is likely to cause long-range environmental pollution as defined in s. 144.30 (9);

(d) Comments made by the reviewing soil and water conservation district and regional planning agency, if any; and

(e) Such other subjects as the department by rule deems necessary for making the order required by sub. (5).

(5) Within 60 days following the hearing, the department shall by order either approve, approve with modification or disapprove the plan. The department shall concurrently rule on all permit applications and applications for financial aid.

History: 1973 c. 301; 1975 c. 197

33.15 Implementation. (1) No plan developed under this subchapter may be formally adopted for implementation by the district until the department has approved the plans or whatever modifications it believes appropriate. The department in issuing an order shall provide a range of technically and economically feasible alternatives for consideration by the applicant. If the department modifies an application on an order it shall clearly explain reasons why the modifications in approach are being made.

(2) Following receipt of the department's order, the district may adopt a plan falling within departmental alternatives under sub. (1) by resolution, in which case it shall forward a copy of the resolution and plan to the department.

(3) The district may then carry out the adopted plan of implementation.

(4) Implementation work shall consist of, without limitation because of enumeration:

- (a) Aeration.
- (b) Nutrient diversion.
- (c) Nutrient removal or inactivation.
- (d) Erosion control.
- (e) Sediment manipulation, including dredging.
- (f) Bottom treatments.

History: 1973 c. 301; 1975 c. 197.

33.16 Financial assistance program. (1)

No aids granted under this section may be such amount so as to reduce a district's share of project cost to less than 10%, except that up to 100% funding may be allowed on high-risk experimental projects where eventual results are highly uncertain. Any grant made shall not exceed 10% of state funds available in any one year, and shall not be renewable in future years unless the council finds that a special situation exists and recommends renewal of a grant.

(2) A municipality which has created a district, as authorized in s. 33.23, shall be eligible for funding as a district.

(3) A district desiring financial assistance shall apply to the department on forms provided by it and prescribing the information to be submitted.

(4) The department shall review applications and in the course of review shall consider, without limitation because of enumeration the following factors where appropriate:

(a) Whether the citizens of the state will reasonably benefit from any improvements made or information obtained, and the degree of benefit;

(b) Whether sufficient long- and short-term benefits will be derived from the project, in relation to its cost;

(c) Whether the project is financially viable, given the resources of the district and the possibility of financial and nonmonetary aid;

(d) Whether adequate steps have been or will be taken to ensure that the improved conditions resulting from the project will be sustained by adequate controls over potential sources of lake degradation including, where appropriate, control of sediments as suggested by the county soil and water conservation district;

(e) Whether experimental techniques involving a high risk of failure are being undertaken.

(5) The department shall approve, approve with modifications or disapprove each application for financial assistance within 60 days following the hearing. It shall make a finding whether the preponderance of evidence presented shows that, where applicable to the

situation under review, contamination from deleterious substances emitted by residential, municipal or industrial sources, sedimentation, siltation and nutrient fertilization from uncontrolled agricultural sources or septic tanks, groundwater, municipal and industrial wastes and other drainage sources, and any other sources responsible for lake degradation, are or will be substantially eliminated as a source of lake degradation, in order that any lake rehabilitated under this chapter may be protected or maintained in its protected or rehabilitated state. If the department finds in the affirmative and further finds that the application meets such other relevant requirements under sub. (4), it shall approve the application, certify to the district the amount of funds, if any, awarded to it, and set forth modifications, if any, that may be necessary. If the department does not find in the affirmative or for any other reason under sub. (4) it deems the application deficient, it shall deny the application in writing, clearly setting forth its reasons for doing so.

(6) Financial assistance under this section shall be so allocated that not less than 25% of said moneys biennially shall be spent on districts north of a line running east-west across the state and commencing at the southernmost point on the southern boundary of the city of Stevens Point.

History: 1973 c. 301; 1975 c. 197.

33.17 Unfunded application to continue.

(1) Aid applications approved but unfunded because of a lack of funds shall remain eligible for future funding, subject to such updating as the department may require. A lack of funding under this subchapter shall not preclude a district from implementing all or part of an approved plan with funding from any other source:

(2) Applications rejected shall be returned to the district with a concise statement of the reasons for rejection, but may be resubmitted at a future time.

History: 1973 c. 301; 1975 c. 197.

SUBCHAPTER IV

PUBLIC INLAND LAKE PROTECTION AND REHABILITATION DISTRICTS

33.21 Public inland lake protection and rehabilitation districts; purposes.

Public inland lake protection and rehabilitation districts may be created for the purpose of undertaking a program of lake protection and rehabilitation of a lake or parts thereof within the district.

History: 1973 c. 301.

33.22 District; powers. (1) 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 and do such other acts as are necessary to carry out a program of lake protection and rehabilitation. All contracts for the performance of any work or the purchase of any materials, exceeding \$500, shall be let by the commissioners to the lowest responsible bidder in such manner as they prescribe.

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

(3) Any district organized under this chapter may have such powers of a town sanitary district under ss. 60.30, 60.306 and 60.307, other than s. 60.306 (3), as are authorized by resolution of the board of the town having the largest portion by valuation of the district. Any town sanitary district powers which a district is authorized to exercise by resolution of the town board shall be exercised under the terms and procedures of this chapter. Requests for such powers shall be made by resolution adopted by the annual meeting of the district. Prior to adopting such resolution, the town board shall conduct a hearing on the issue of granting such powers. The procedures specified under s. 60.303 (2) and (5) shall apply to the hearing. The board of commissioners shall possess the powers of town sanitary district commissioners under s. 60.306 as authorized by resolution of the town board, except that the annual meeting of the district shall approve or disapprove by majority vote any work or project having a cost to the district in excess of \$5,000.

(4) Districts shall not exercise the town sanitary district powers authorized under sub. (3) within the boundaries of an incorporated municipality unless the governing body of the municipality consents. In addition, districts shall not exercise town sanitary district powers in any territory included in an existing town sanitary district except by contract under s. 66.30 or unless the sanitary district merges into the public inland lake protection and rehabilitation district under s. 33.235.

(5) Nothing in this chapter shall limit the authority of the department to establish town sanitary districts under s. 60.315.

History: 1973 c. 301; 1975 c. 197

33.23 Municipalities may establish district. The governing body of a municipality may by resolution establish a public inland lake protection and rehabilitation district if the municipality encompasses all the frontage of a

lake within its boundaries. The governing board which forms the district shall perform the function of the board of commissioners. Districts created by towns under this section may adopt the form of governance provided under s. 33.28 by petition to the town board. Upon presentation of a petition requesting such change and signed by at least 20% of the property owners within the district, the town board shall direct that such change shall become effective at the time of the next annual meeting, and shall provide for the necessary election of commissioners at that time.

History: 1973 c. 301; 1975 c. 197

33.235 Conversion and merger of town sanitary districts. (1) A town board by resolution may convert a town sanitary district which encompasses all the frontage of a lake within its boundaries into a public inland lake protection and rehabilitation district. The town sanitary district commissioners shall serve as the initial board of commissioners until the first annual meeting of the lake district, at which time the commissioners shall be selected under s. 33.28. Conversion shall not affect any preexisting rights or liabilities of the town sanitary district. All such rights or liabilities shall be assumed automatically by the newly created public inland lake protection and rehabilitation district.

(2) The commissioners of a town sanitary district which does not encompass all the frontage of a lake within its boundaries may, with approval of the town board, petition under s. 33.25 for the formation of a district to include the territory of the existing sanitary district and the additional lake frontage. The commissioners may sign the petition for the landowners in the sanitary district. If necessary to meet the requirements of s. 33.25, signatures of owners of land lying outside the sanitary district shall be obtained. Creation of a district which includes such additional territory shall not affect any preexisting rights or liabilities of the town sanitary district, and all such rights and liabilities shall be assumed automatically by the newly created public inland lake protection and rehabilitation district. The method by which such rights and liabilities are apportioned within the newly created district shall be determined by the county board, and set out in the order issued under s. 33.26 (3) creating the district.

(3) Town sanitary districts having boundaries coterminous or contiguous to a public inland lake protection and rehabilitation district may merge into the lake district. Merger shall be effected by approval of an identical merger resolution by a two-thirds vote of the commissioners of each district, followed by ratification by a majority vote of the electors of each district.

Merger shall not become effective unless the town board which created the sanitary district approves such merger. The commissioners of each district shall act jointly until the next annual meeting of the district and selection of new commissioners under s. 33.28. Merger shall not affect the preexisting rights or liabilities of the districts. All such rights and liabilities shall be assumed automatically by the merged district, but the method of discharging such rights or obligations shall be set out in the merger resolution.

(4) Any district which results from the conversion of a town sanitary district under sub. (1), the formation of a district from a preexisting town sanitary district under sub. (2), or the merger with a town sanitary district under sub. (3), shall have all powers granted to districts under this chapter and to town sanitary districts under ch. 60, except the taxation power under s. 60.306 (3). Such powers shall be exercised using the procedures and methods set out in this chapter.

History: 1975 c. 197

33.24 County board may establish district. The county board of any county may establish public inland lake protection and rehabilitation districts within the county if the conditions stated in s. 33.26 are found to exist. Before a district that includes any portion of a city or village, may be formed under authority of this section the city council or village board must have previously approved the inclusion of its territory within the boundaries of a proposed district.

History: 1973 c. 301.

33.25 Petition. (1) **WHO TO MAKE.** Before a county board may establish a district under s. 33.24, a petition requesting establishment shall be filed with the county clerk, addressed to the board and signed by persons constituting 51 % of the landowners or the owners of 51 % of the lands within the proposed district. Governmental subdivisions, other than the state or federal governments, owning lands within the proposed district are eligible to sign such petition. A city council or village board may by resolution represent persons owning lands within the proposed district who are within its jurisdiction, and sign for all such landowners.

(2) **CONTENTS.** The petition shall set forth:

- (a) The proposed name of the district;
- (b) The necessity for the proposed district;
- (c) That the public health, comfort, convenience, necessity or public welfare will be promoted by the establishment of the district and that the lands to be included therein will be benefited by such establishment; and

(d) The boundaries of the territory to be included in the proposed district.

(3) **VERIFICATION, PLAT.** The petition shall be verified by one of the petitioners, and shall be accompanied by a plat or sketch indicating the approximate area and boundaries of the district.

(4) **PRESUMPTION.** Every petition is presumed to have been signed by the persons whose signatures appear thereon, until proved otherwise.

History: 1973 c. 301; 1975 c. 197

33.26 Hearings, time, notice, boundaries, approval, limitations. (1) Upon receipt of the petition the county board shall arrange a hearing to be held not later than 30 days from the date of presentation of the petition, and shall appoint a committee to conduct the hearing. At the hearing all interested persons may offer objections, criticisms or suggestions as to the necessity of the proposed district as outlined and to the question of whether their property will be benefited by the establishment of such district. Any person wishing to object to the organization of such district may, before the date set for the hearing, file his objections to the formation of such district with the county clerk.

(2) Notice announcing the hearing and stating the boundaries of the proposed district shall be published in a paper of general circulation in the county in which the proposed district is located as a class 1 notice, under ch. 985, and shall be mailed by the county board to the last known address of each landowner within the proposed district.

(3) Following the hearing, the committee shall report to the county board. If it appears to the board, after consideration of all objections, that the petition is signed by the requisite owners as provided in s. 33.25, that the proposed district is necessary, that the public health, comfort, convenience, necessity or public welfare will be promoted by the establishment of the district, that the property to be included in the district will be benefited by the establishment thereof, and that formation of the proposed district will not cause or contribute to long-range environmental pollution as defined in s. 144.30 (9), the board, by formal order, shall declare its findings, shall establish the boundaries and shall declare the district organized and give it a corporate name by which it shall be known. Thereupon the district shall be a body corporate with the powers of a municipal corporation for the purposes of carrying out this chapter.

(4) If the board finds against the petition, it shall dismiss the proceedings, stating in writing its reasons for disapproval.

(5) The department shall be notified in writing of the hearing for the creation of the district at the time the hearing date is set.

(6) In establishing the district, the county board may change the boundaries from those originally proposed. However, lands not originally proposed for inclusion may not be included until a public hearing is held under this section.

(7) Any person aggrieved by the action of the board may petition the circuit court for judicial review. A verified petition shall be presented to the court not more than 30 days after the decision of the board, and shall specify the grounds upon which the appeal is based.

(8) Copies of the order by the county board establishing the district shall be filed with the department and with the register of deeds in each county in which the district is situated.

History: 1973 c. 301

33.27 Initial district board of commissioners.

(1) The county board shall, at the time of making the order establishing a district, appoint 3 persons owning property within the district, at least one of whom is a resident of the district, to serve as commissioners until the first annual meeting of the district, and shall also make the appointment required under s. 33.28 (2).

(2) Within 30 days following the county board's order establishing the district, the governing body of the town, city or village having the largest portion by valuation within the district shall appoint one of its members to the district board under s. 33.28 (2).

(3) Within the 60 days following the expiration of time for appeal to the circuit court, or following the final judgment in any appeal, the district board shall hold an organizational meeting, shall select officers to serve until the first annual meeting, and may commence conducting the affairs of the district.

(4) The board may make an initial assessment of all taxable property within the district to raise funds to pay organizational costs and operate the district until the receipt of the tax voted by the first annual meeting. The manner of making the assessment shall be within the discretion of the board.

History: 1973 c. 301; 1975 c. 197

33.28 District board of commissioners.

(1) Management of the affairs of the district shall be delegated to a board of commissioners.

(2) The board of commissioners shall consist of a person appointed by the county board who shall be a supervisor of the county soil and water conservation district or shall be nominated by the supervisors of the soil and water conservation district and appointed by the county board, a member of the governing body of the town,

village or city within which the largest portion by valuation of the district lies, appointed by the governing body and owning property within the district if possible, and 3 electors or persons owning property within the district elected by the qualified electors within the district, for staggered 3-year terms. At least one of the elected commissioners shall be a resident of the district.

(3) Three commissioners shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

(4) The board shall select a chairman, secretary and treasurer from among its members.

(5) Commissioners shall be paid actual and necessary expenses incurred while conducting business of the district, plus such compensation as may be established by the annual meeting.

(6) The board shall meet at least quarterly, and at other times on the call of the chairman or the petition of 3 of the members.

History: 1973 c. 301; 1975 c. 197

33.285 Property owning requirements.

Any requirement under s. 33.27 (1) or 33.28 that a person own property within the district to be eligible for membership on the board of commissioners shall be satisfied if a person is an official representative, officer or employe of any trust, foundation, corporation, association or organization owning property within the district.

History: 1975 c. 197

33.29 Board of commissioners; officers; powers and duties. (1) The board shall be responsible for:

(a) Initiating and coordinating research and surveys for the purpose of gathering data on the lake, related shorelands and the drainage basin;

(b) Planning lake rehabilitation projects;

(c) Contacting and attempting to secure the cooperation of officials of units of general purpose government in the area for the purpose of enacting ordinances deemed necessary by the board as furthering the objectives of the district;

(d) Adopting and carrying out lake protection and rehabilitation plans and obtaining any necessary permits therefor; and

(e) Maintaining liaison with those officials of state government involved in lake protection and rehabilitation.

(2) The board shall have control over the fiscal matters of the district, subject to the powers and directives of the annual meeting. The board shall annually at the close of the fiscal year cause an audit to be made of the financial transactions of the district, which shall be submitted to the annual meeting.

(3) The board, immediately after each annual meeting, shall elect a chairman, secretary and treasurer, whose duties shall be as follows:

(a) The chairman shall preside at the annual meeting, all meetings of the board and all public hearings held by the board.

(b) The secretary shall keep minutes of all meetings of the board and hearings held by it, and shall annually notify the department of the continued existence of the district.

(c) The treasurer shall receive and take charge of all moneys of the district, and pay out the same only on order of the board.

History: 1973 c. 301.

33.30 Annual meeting of district. (1) Every public inland lake protection and rehabilitation district shall have an annual meeting. The first annual meeting shall be scheduled during the time period between May 22 and September 8, and shall be held annually thereafter unless changed by vote of the previous annual meeting.

(2) The annual meeting shall be preceded by written notice mailed at least 10 days in advance of the meeting to all electors within the district and persons owning lands within the district, whose address is known or can be ascertained with reasonable diligence, and to the department. The district board of commissioners may substitute a class 2 notice, under ch. 985, in lieu of sending written notice to electors residing within the district.

(3) The annual meeting shall:

(a) Elect one or more commissioners to fill vacancies in the district board;

(b) Approve a budget for the coming year;

(c) Vote a tax upon all taxable property within the district for the costs of operation for the coming year, which tax shall not exceed a rate of 2.5 mills of equalized valuation, a report of which shall be delivered by the treasurer, by October 1, by certified statement to the clerk of each municipality having property within the district for collection.

(d) Approve or disapprove all proposed projects by the district having a cost to the district in excess of \$5,000, by vote of the electors and property owners within the district. The annual meeting may also authorize the board of commissioners, during the succeeding year until the next annual meeting, to approve or disapprove projects having a cost to the district in excess of \$5,000, and to enter into contracts accordingly.

(e) Take up and consider such other business as comes before it.

(f) Establish compensation, if any, to be paid the district board commissioners.

(g) Adopt rules relating to voting at annual and special meetings.

History: 1973 c. 301; 1975 c. 197.

33.31 Power to finance. (1) Every district may borrow money and use any other financing method prescribed by law, including methods designated under s. 66.54 (2), which utilizes special assessments or user charges as the primary method of raising funds to repay such debt. The commission in any district about to issue bonds shall adopt a resolution stating the amount of the proposed issue, the purpose or purposes of the issue and such other information as the commission deems necessary or useful.

(2) Every such resolution shall be offered and read at a meeting of the commission at which commissioners numbering a majority plus one are present, and shall be published in a newspaper having general circulation within the district as a class 2 notice, under ch. 985, within the 30 days following the reading. In order to be effective such resolution shall be passed at a meeting of the commissioners following such publication at which members numbering a majority plus one are present. When any such resolution is passed, it shall be recorded by being copied at length in a record book kept for that purpose.

(3) Every bond issued by a district shall be a negotiable instrument, payable to bearer, may be registrable as to principal, and shall mature in a period not exceeding 20 years from the date thereof and bear interest at a rate not to exceed 8% per annum which rate shall not exceed the rate of interest chargeable on the underlying special assessment. Districts may exercise all rights and privileges given municipalities under s. 66.54 in relation to the purchase of delinquent special assessments at tax sale.

(4) The bonds shall be executed in the name of the district, by the chairman and secretary, and shall be sealed with the seal of the district, if the district has a seal. The bonds shall be negotiated and sold, or otherwise disposed of, for not less than par and accrued interest, at public or private sale and such negotiation and sale or other disposition may be effected by disposition from time to time of portions only of the entire issue, when the purpose for which the bonds are authorized does not require an immediate realization upon all of them.

(5) Any district, when in temporary need, may borrow money pursuant to the provisions and limitation applicable to cities under s. 67.12. The required tax levy therefor shall be levied without limitation as to rate or amount on all taxable property within the district, shall be reported in accordance with s. 33.29 (3) (c), and shall not be included nor includible in the operations tax limit of s. 33.30 (3) (c).

History: 1973 c. 301; 1975 c. 197.

33.32 Special assessments. (1) Special assessments or charges for the purpose of carrying out district protection and rehabilitation projects, or for other lake management or sanitary service activities undertaken by the district, may be levied by the commissioners in the following manner:

(a) Upon approval of plans for any project by the district and by the department under s. 33.14, the commissioners shall determine the entire cost to the district of the work to be done.

(b) The commissioners shall then examine each parcel within the district, other than state or federal lands, and determine the benefits to each from the project, considering such factors as size, proximity to the lake and present and potential use of the parcel, including applicable zoning regulations. After benefits to each parcel are determined, assessments shall be made in an aggregate amount equal to the cost to the district of the project. Such assessments shall be made in accordance with s. 66.60, so far as it is applicable and not in conflict with this subchapter.

(c) The commissioners shall file in the office of the county clerk a report of the assessments made. Notice shall be given to each owner, mortgagee, lessee or other person having an interest in an affected parcel that the report is open for review at a specified place within the district for 30 days after the date of the notice and that on a day named therein, which shall not be more than 3 days after the expiration of the 30 days, the commissioners will hear objections that may be made to the report. Notice shall be by mail to each person whose post-office address is known or can be ascertained with reasonable diligence, accompanied by a statement of the assessment, and shall also be published as a class 2 notice, under ch. 985, in a newspaper having general circulation within the district.

(d) At the time specified for hearing objections to the report, the commissioners shall hear parties interested who may appear for that purpose and may review, modify and correct the report as they deem just and at the conclusion of the hearing shall make a final determination of assessments. No assessment may be increased without additional notice to affected persons and provisions for hearing objections to such increases.

(e) When a final determination of assessments has been made, the secretary shall publish a class 1 notice, under ch. 985, within the district that a final determination has been made, and shall notify by mail each person entitled to notice under par. (c) of the amount assessed against the affected parcel.

(f) If the owner, mortgagee, lessee or other person having an interest in any parcel affected by the determination feels aggrieved thereby, he

may, within 40 days after the date of mailing of notice, appeal therefrom to the circuit court of the county in which the district is located by causing a written notice of appeal to be served upon the secretary of the district. The secretary in case such appeal is taken shall make a brief statement of the proceedings had in the matter and shall transmit the same with all papers in the matter to the clerk of the circuit court. Such appeal shall be tried and determined in the same manner as cases originally commenced in said court.

(2) The commissioners of any district may provide that special assessments levied may be paid in annual instalments, not more than 10 in number, in the manner provided in s. 66.54 (7).

(3) (a) County and municipally owned real estate within a district shall be subject to special assessments.

(b) If a county or municipality fails to pay a special assessment levied by a district, the clerk of the district may certify this fact to the department of administration, and shall state the amount due. The department, at the time of making the next scheduled distribution under ss. 79.02 and 79.03, shall deduct the amount claimed from the payment due the county or municipality, and shall forward it to the district.

(4) Outstanding unpaid assessments on privately owned lands shall be paid in full by any public body, including the state, which purchases such lands.

History: 1973 c. 301; 1975 c. 197.

33.33 Merger, attachment, detachment.

(1) **MERGER.** Any district may merge with a contiguous district. The procedure of s. 66.02 shall apply to any proposed merger. The boards of commissioners of merging districts shall act jointly until the next annual meeting, at which time the board of the merged district shall be conformed to the requirements specified in s. 33.28. The governing body of the county, town, village or city having the largest portion by valuation within the district shall make the appointments under s. 33.28 (2).

(2) **ATTACHMENT.** Contiguous territory may be attached to a district upon petition by the owner or motion of the commissioners.

(a) *Petition.* A petition by an owner, directed to the district and requesting attachment, may be accepted by majority vote of the commissioners, upon which the attachment shall become effective.

(b) *Motion.* If the commissioners by motion initiate attachment proceedings, they shall notify the owners of the territory contemplated for attachment and the county board. The county board shall schedule a hearing on the motion, using the procedure of s. 33.26 as far as is

applicable. Following the hearing, the board shall make a finding on the necessity of attachment of territory, using the standards of s. 33.26 (3), and shall declare the territory to be either attached or not. Appeals of the board's decision shall be taken under s. 33.26 (7).

(3) **DETACHMENT.** Territory may be detached from the district following petition of the owner or motion of the commissioners. Proposals for detachment shall be considered by the commissioners, and territory may be detached upon a finding that such territory is not benefited by continued inclusion in the district. Appeals of the commissioners' decision may be taken under s. 33.26 (7).

History: 1973 c. 301; 1975 c. 197.

33.35 Dissolution of districts. An existing district created under this chapter may be dissolved upon a two-thirds vote of the membership at an annual meeting to petition the county board for dissolution. The county board may by order dissolve the district following receipt of the petition. The order shall be conditioned upon proper petition to the circuit court and appointment of a receiver to administer the winding up of the district under the supervision of the court and a final order of the court. The attorney general shall represent the

state and shall be a party to every dissolution proceeding where state money is involved.

History: 1973 c. 301.

33.36 Alteration of districts. (1) Whenever any territory which contains an entire district is incorporated as a city or village, or annexed to a city or village, the district shall survive and shall thereafter be subject to s. 33.23.

(2) Whenever any territory containing less than an entire district is incorporated as a city or village, or is annexed to a city or village, that portion of the district within the city or village shall survive, and the district shall continue to operate under this chapter, subject to the following modifications:

(a) The district shall exercise only those powers granted under this chapter. Sanitary district powers shall not be exercised unless consent for such exercise is obtained in advance from the governing body of the city or village.

(b) The governing body of the city, village or town having the largest portion by valuation of the district within its jurisdiction shall make the appointment under s. 33.28.

(c) Ownership of any water or sewerage system shall be determined according to s. 60.31 (2) (c).

History: 1975 c. 197.