

Powers and Governing Structure of Mosquito Control Districts

Summary of Statues prepared by Municipal Research & Services Center of Washington

Reviewed 03/2013

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The provisions relating to the powers and governance of mosquito control districts are summarized below, however the actual language of the statutes should be the guide for governing a district, not the summary provided.

Powers of Mosquito Control District (RCW 17.28.160)

- Take all necessary or proper steps for the extermination of mosquitoes.
- Subject to the paramount control of the county or city in which they exist, abate as nuisances all stagnant pools of water and other breeding places for mosquitoes.
- If necessary or proper, build, construct, repair, and maintain necessary dikes, levees, cuts, canals, or ditches upon any land, and acquire by purchase, condemnation, or by other lawful means, in the name of the district, any lands, rights of way, easements, property, or material necessary for any of those purposes. Make contracts to indemnify or compensate any owner of land or other property for any injury or damage necessarily caused by the use or taking of property for dikes, levees, cuts, canals, or ditches.
- Enter upon lands within the district for the purpose of inspection to ascertain whether breeding places of mosquitoes exist; or to abate public nuisances chapter 17.28 RCW; or to ascertain if notices to abate the breeding of mosquitoes have been complied with; or to treat with oil or other larvicidal material any breeding places of mosquitoes upon such lands.
- Sell or lease any land, rights of way, easements, property or material acquired by the district.
- Issue warrants payable at the time stated therein to evidence the obligation to repay money borrowed or any other obligation incurred by the district, warrants so issued to draw interest at a rate fixed by the board payable annually or semiannually as the board may prescribe.
- Make contracts with the United States, or any state, municipality, or any department of those entities for carrying out the general purpose for which the district is formed.
- Acquire by gift, devise, bequest, lease, or purchase, real and personal property necessary or convenient for its purposes.
- Make contracts, employ engineers, health officers, sanitarians, physicians, laboratory personnel, attorneys, and other technical or professional assistants; and publish information or literature and do any and all other things necessary or incident to the powers granted by, and to carry out the projects specified in this chapter.
- Power to abate mosquito breeding grounds (RCW 17.28.170)

- May adopt, by resolution, a policy declaring that the control of mosquitoes within the district is the responsibility of the owner of the land from which the mosquitoes originate. To protect the public health or welfare, the board may, in accordance with policies and standards established by the board following a public hearing, adopt a regulation requiring owners of land within the district to perform such acts as may be necessary to control mosquitoes. (RCW 17.28.175)

Governance of Mosquito Control Districts (RCW 17.28.110 - .150)

- The mosquito control district is governed by an appointed board of at least five trustees.

Method of Appointment of Board of Trustees (RCW 17.28.110)

- Within thirty days after the filing of the certified copy of the order of formation with the secretary of state, the governing board of trustees for the district shall be appointed.
- The board of trustees shall be appointed as follows:
 - If the district is situated in only one county and consists wholly of unincorporated territory, five members are appointed by the county commissioners/councilmembers of the county.
 - If the district is situated entirely in one county and includes both incorporated and unincorporated territory, one member is appointed from each commissioner/councilmember district lying wholly or partly within the district by the county commissioners/councilmembers, and one member is appointed from each city, the whole or part of which is situated in the district by the governing body of the city; but if the district board created consists of less than five members, the county commissioners/councilmembers appoint from the district at large enough additional members to make a board of five members.
 - If the district is situated in two or more counties and is comprised wholly of incorporated territory, one member shall be appointed from each commissioner/councilmember district of each county or portion of a county situated in the district by the county commissioners/councilmembers; but if the district board created consists of less than five members, the county commissioners/councilmembers of the county in which the greater area of the district is situated shall appoint from the district at large enough additional members to make a board of five members.
 - If the district is situated in two or more counties and consists of both incorporated and unincorporated territory, one member is appointed by the county commissioners/councilmembers of each of the counties from that portion of the district lying within each commissioner/councilmember district within its jurisdiction; and one member from each city, a portion of which is situated in the district by the governing body of the city; but if the board created consists of less than five members, the county commissioners/councilmembers in which the greater area of the district is situated shall appoint from the district at large enough additional members to make a board of five members.

Qualifications of Board of Trustees (RCW 17.28.120)

- Each member of the board appointed by the governing body of a city shall be an elector of the city from which he or she is appointed and a resident of that portion of the city which is in the district.

- Each member appointed from a county or portion of a county shall be an elector of the county and a resident of that portion of the county which is in the district.

Each member appointed at large shall be an elector of the district

Term of Office (RCW 17.28.130)

- The members of the first board shall classify themselves by lot at their first meeting so that:
 - If the total membership is an even number, the terms of one-half the members will expire at the end of one year, and the terms of the remainder at the end of two years, from the second day of the calendar year next succeeding their appointment.
 - If the total membership is an odd number, the terms of a bare majority of the members will expire at the end of one year, and the terms of the remainder at the end of two years, from the second day of the calendar year next succeeding their appointment.
- The term of each subsequent member is two years from and after the expiration of the term of his or her predecessor.
- In event of the resignation, death, or disability of any member, his or her successor shall be appointed by the governing body which appointed him or her.

Organization of Board (RCW 17.28.150)

- The board elects a president and secretary from among its members
- All sessions, whether regular or special, are open to the public.
- The district board designates the time and place of holding regular meetings, the manner of calling them, and rules for their proceedings.
- Special meetings may be called by three members, notice of which shall be given to each member at least twenty-four hours before the meeting.
- A majority of members constitutes a quorum for doing business.

Compensation (RCW 17.23.140)

- Members of the board of trustees receive no compensation for their services.
- Necessary expenses for actual travel in connection with meetings or district business may be paid.
- The secretary may receive such compensation as may be fixed by the board.

Reviewed by Id