CHAPTER 61-24.5
SOUTHWEST WATER AUTHORITY

61-24.5-01. Findings and declaration of policy.

1. Many areas and localities in southwestern North Dakota do not enjoy adequate quantities of high-quality drinking water. Other areas and localities in southwestern North Dakota do not have sufficient quantities of water to ensure a dependable, long-term supply. Supplementation of the water resources of southwestern North Dakota, with water supplies from Lake Sakakawea and the Missouri River, utilizing a pipeline transmission and delivery system, is a feasible approach to provide southwestern North Dakota with a safe, good quality, dependable source, and adequate quantity of water.
2. Opportunity for greater economic security, protection of health, property, enterprise, preservation of the benefits from the land and water resources of this state, and the promotion of the prosperity and general welfare of all of the people of North Dakota depends on the effective development and utilization of the land and water resources of this state, and require the exercise of the sovereign powers of the state and concern a public purpose. To accomplish this public purpose, a project to supply and distribute water to southwestern North Dakota, as authorized by chapter 61-24.3 must be established and constructed, to:
   a. Provide for the supply and distribution of water to the people of southwestern North Dakota through a pipeline transmission and delivery system for purposes including domestic, rural water, municipal, livestock, light industrial, mining, and other uses, with primary emphasis on domestic, rural water, and municipal uses.
   b. Provide for the future economic welfare and property of the people of this state, and particularly the people of southwestern North Dakota, by making available waters from Lake Sakakawea and the Missouri River for beneficial and public uses.
3. It is necessary to study and further develop water resources to provide adequate water supplies for energy, industrial, agriculture, and other opportunities in southwest North Dakota. This section may not be construed to limit the rights, powers, duties, and functions of the state water commission or the department of water resources, but must be considered supplementary to those rights, powers, duties, and functions.

61-24.5-02. Definitions.

In this chapter, unless the context or subject matter otherwise requires:

1. "Authority" means the southwest water authority.
2. "Board" means the board of directors of the southwest water authority.
3. "Person" includes any natural person, state agency, municipality, political subdivision, public or private corporation, limited liability company, partnership, or association.
4. "Southwest pipeline project" includes the project and works, or any part thereof, authorized in chapter 61-24.3.
5. "Works" includes all property rights, easements, and franchises relating thereto and deemed necessary or convenient for operation of the southwest pipeline project, all water rights acquired and exercised by the authority in connection with the southwest pipeline project, and all means of delivering and distributing water through the utilization of a pipeline transmission and delivery system, as authorized in chapter 61-24.3.

61-24.5-03. Southwest water authority created.

The southwest water authority shall consist of that part of the state which is included within the boundaries of Dunn, Stark, Golden Valley, Billings, Slope, Bowman, Adams, Grant, Hettinger, Morton, and Mercer Counties.

Such authority is a governmental agency, body politic and corporate with the authority to exercise the powers specified in this chapter, or which may be reasonably implied.

Any county adjoining the authority as herein created, or as hereafter composed, may join such authority upon application of its board of county commissioners and the approval of such application by the board of directors of the authority. The board of directors, as a condition of approval of such application, may require payments as may be equitable to equalize the burden of such county with the obligations paid or assumed by the other counties in the authority.

61-24.5-04. Board of directors - Officers - Meetings - Compensation.

The authority must be governed by a board of directors who must be chosen in accordance with this chapter. One director must be elected from each county within the authority, two directors must be elected in the city of Dickinson, and one director must be elected in the city of Mandan. The director from Stark County may not be a resident of the city of Dickinson. The director from Morton County may not be a resident of Mandan. The board shall elect from the directors a chairman, vice chairman, and secretary. A majority of the directors constitutes a quorum for the purpose of conducting the business of the board. The board shall meet at the time and place designated by the secretary. Board members are entitled to receive as compensation an amount determined by the board not to exceed the amount per day provided members of the legislative management under section 54-35-10 and must be reimbursed for their mileage and expenses in the amount provided for by sections 44-08-04 and 54-06-09.

61-24.5-05. Initial board of directors.

Repealed by S.L. 2001, ch. 569, § 4.

61-24.5-06. Election of county directors of the southwest water authority.

Any person who is a resident and qualified elector of the county, who aspires to the office of director of the southwest water authority, shall, before four p.m. of the sixty-fourth day before any primary election preceding a general election at which a director of the authority is to be elected, present to the county auditor a petition giving that person's name, post-office address, and the title of the office of the southwest water authority to which that person is seeking election. The petition must contain the signatures of not less than two percent of the qualified electors of the county as determined by the number of votes cast in the county for the office of director of the southwest water authority at the most recent preceding election at which the office of director of the southwest water authority was voted upon. Each signer of the petition shall include with that signer's name that signer's mailing address.

The petition must be accompanied by an affidavit substantially as follows:

State of North Dakota)
) ss.
County of _____)

I _____, being sworn, say that I reside in the county of _____ and State of North Dakota; that I am a qualified elector therein; that I am a candidate for the office of director of the Southwest Water Authority to be elected at the primary election to be held on _____, _____, and I request that my name be printed upon the no-party primary election ballot as provided by law, as a candidate for the office.

_____

Subscribed and sworn to before me on _____, _____.

_____
Notary Public

Upon receipt of the petition, the county auditor shall without fee place the name of the aspirant on the no-party primary election ballot as a candidate for the office of director. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes is elected.

At the primary election, votes must be canvassed, returned certified, and certificates of election issued in the manner provided by law for the election of county officers.

61-24.5-07. Election of city directors of the southwest water authority.

Any person who is a resident and qualified elector of the city of Dickinson or Mandan who aspires to the office of director of the southwest water authority shall, before four p.m. on the

sixty-fourth day before the election, file with the city auditor a petition signed by not less than ten percent of the number of qualified electors who voted for that office in the last city election, except that the petition for the first election must be signed by not less than two hundred qualified electors. Signers of a petition must reside within the corporate limits of the city, and each signer of the petition shall include with the signer's name the signer's mailing address. The petition must include the candidate's name, post-office address, and the title of the office of the southwest water authority for which the candidate is seeking election.

The petition must be accompanied by an affidavit substantially as follows:

State of North Dakota)
) ss.
City of _____)

I _____, being sworn, say that I reside in the city of _____ and State of North Dakota; that I am a qualified elector therein; that I am a candidate for the office of director of the Southwest Water Authority to be elected at the municipal election to be held on _____, _____, and I request that my name be printed upon the election ballot as provided by law, as a candidate for the office.

_____

Subscribed and sworn to before me on _____, _____.

_____
Notary Public

Upon receipt of the petition, the city auditor shall without fee place the name of the aspirant on the election ballot as a candidate for the office of director. The candidate or candidates, depending on whether one or two directors are being elected, receiving the highest number of votes are elected. The provisions of chapter 40-21 govern the election of directors from the city of Dickinson or Mandan for the southwest water authority.

61-24.5-08. Term of office of directors - Oath of office - Bonds.

Members of the board of directors of the authority hold office for a term of four years, until a successor has been duly elected and qualified. If the office of any director becomes vacant by reason of the failure of any director elected at any election to qualify or for any other reason, the director's successor must be appointed to fill the vacancy by the board of county commissioners of the county in which the vacancy occurs, or by the governing body of the city of Dickinson or Mandan, as appropriate. A director appointed to fill a vacancy shall hold office for the unexpired term of the director whose office has become vacant, and until a successor has been elected and qualified.

Members of the board of directors elected from a county must be elected at the primary election and assume office on the first Monday in July following their election. Members of the board of directors elected from the city of Dickinson or Mandan must be elected at the municipal election and assume office on the first Monday in July following their election.

In 2002 all directors' terms are deemed to have expired, and each county shall elect one director to serve on the board of directors and the city of Dickinson shall elect two directors to serve on the board of directors. In 2002 one director from the city of Dickinson and directors from Adams, Billings, Dunn, Grant, Oliver, and Slope Counties must be elected for two-year terms and in 2004 and thereafter must be elected for four-year terms. In 2010 the director from the city of Mandan must be elected to a four-year term. All subsequent directors elected must be elected for four-year terms.

Before assuming the duties of the office of director, each director shall take and subscribe to the oath of office prescribed by law for civil officers. The authority treasurer must be bonded in an amount as the board may prescribe.

61-24.5-09. Powers and duties of the district board of directors.

The board of directors of the southwest water authority has the power:

1. To sue and be sued in the name of the authority.
2. To exercise the power of eminent domain in the manner provided by title 32 for the purpose of acquiring and securing any right, title, interest, estate, or easement necessary to carry out the duties imposed by this chapter, and particularly to acquire

the necessary rights in land for the construction of pipelines, reservoirs, connections, valves, and all other appurtenant facilities used in connection with the southwest pipeline project, or any part thereof.

3. To accept funds, property, and services or other assistance, financial or otherwise, from federal, state, and other public or private sources for the purpose of aiding and promoting the construction, maintenance, and operation of the southwest pipeline project, or any part thereof.
4. To cooperate and contract with the state, its agencies, or its political subdivisions, or any agency of the United States, in research and investigation or other activities promoting the establishment, construction, development, or operation of the southwest pipeline project, or any part thereof.
5. To furnish assurances of cooperation, and as principal and guarantor or either to enter into a contract, or contracts, with the United States of America, or any department or agency thereof, and with public corporations and political subdivisions of North Dakota for the performance of obligations for the construction, operation, or maintenance of the southwest pipeline project, or any part thereof, or for the delivery of water to any such department, agency, or political subdivision.
6. To construct or purchase separately or in cooperation with agencies of the United States, or the state of North Dakota, its agencies or political subdivisions, and to equip, maintain, and operate an office and principal place of business for the district, or other buildings or facilities to carry out activities authorized by this chapter.
7. To appoint and fix the compensation of such employees as the board shall deem necessary to conduct the business and affairs of the authority, and to procure the services of engineers and other technical experts, and to retain an attorney or attorneys to assist, advise, and act for it in its proceedings.
8. To appoint from their number an executive committee and vest the same with such powers and duties as the board may from time to time delegate thereto, in order to facilitate the duties and work of the board in connection with the business affairs involved in the development, construction, operation, and maintenance of the southwest pipeline project, or any part thereof.
9. To enter into a contract or contracts for a supply of water from the United States or the state water commission and to sell, lease, and otherwise contract to furnish any such water for beneficial use to persons or entities within or outside the authority.
10. To accept, on behalf of the district, appointment of the district as fiscal agent of the United States or the state water commission and authorization to make collections of money for and on behalf of the United States or the state water commission in connection with the southwest pipeline project, or any part thereof.
11. To sell or exchange any and all real property purchased or acquired by the authority. All moneys received pursuant to any such sale or exchange shall be deposited to the credit of the authority and may be disbursed for the payment of expenses of the authority.
12. Notwithstanding any other law, to exercise the powers granted to a municipality under subsection 5 of section 40-33-01 pursuant to the limitations set forth therein. The authority may pay the cost of leasing any waterworks, mains, and water distribution system and any equipment or appliances connected therewith and any property related thereto pursuant to subsection 5 of section 40-33-01 solely from revenues to be derived by the authority from the ownership, sale, lease, disposition, and operation of the waterworks, mains, and water distribution system; the funds or any other amounts invested by the authority pursuant to the laws of the state or invested on the authority's behalf by the state, or any agency or institution of the state, in conformity with policies of the industrial commission, including investment in a guaranteed investment contract and any earnings thereon, to the extent pledged therefor; and funds, if any, appropriated annually by the board of the authority or received from federal or state sources.

13. To study and analyze options for providing additional water supplies to southwest North Dakota for purposes, including domestic, rural water, municipal, livestock, energy development, industrial, mining, and other uses.
14. To conduct engineering, legal, financial, educational, and other activities to further the completion of the southwest pipeline project, or any part thereof, or any other works or projects necessary to provide adequate water supplies for southwest North Dakota.

61-24.5-10. District budget - Tax levy.

For each taxable year through 2020, the authority may levy a tax of not to exceed one mill annually on each dollar of taxable valuation within the boundaries of the authority for the payment of administrative expenses of the authority, including per diem, mileage, and other expenses of directors, expenses of operating the office, engineering, surveying, investigations, legal, administrative, clerical, and other related expenses of the authority. All moneys collected pursuant to the levy must be deposited to the credit of the authority and may be disbursed only as herein provided. The board may invest any funds on hand, not needed for immediate disbursement or which are held in reserve for future payments, in bonds of the United States, certificates of deposit guaranteed or insured by the United States or an instrumentality or agency thereof, and bonds or certificates of indebtedness of the state of North Dakota or any of its political subdivisions. During the period of time in which the authority may levy one mill annually as provided herein, any joint water resource board created pursuant to section 61-16.1-11, by or among one or more of the water resource districts in the counties which are included in the authority, must be limited to one mill under the authority of section 61-16.1-11.

61-24.5-11. District budget - Determination of amount to be levied - Adoption of levy - Limitation.

In July of each year, the board of directors shall estimate and itemize all the administrative expenses and obligations of the district, including expenses of directors, expenses of operating the office, and any other obligations and liabilities relating to administrative, clerical, engineering, surveying, investigations, legal, and other related expenses of the authority. Upon the completion and adoption of such budget, the board of directors shall make a tax levy in an amount sufficient to meet such budget. Such levy must be in the form of a resolution, adopted by a majority vote of the members of the board of directors of the district. Such resolution must levy in mills, but may not exceed one mill, and must be sufficient to meet the administrative, engineering, surveying, investigations, legal and related expenses, obligations, and liabilities of the district as provided in the budget. The board shall also prepare and adopt an annual budget for operation, management, maintenance, and repayment of the southwest pipeline project. Revenues for operation, management, maintenance, and repayment of the southwest pipeline project must come from water service contract revenues.

61-24.5-12. Board to certify mill levy to city auditors, county auditors, and state tax commissioner.

Upon the adoption of the annual mill levy by the board of directors, but no later than October first, the secretary of the board shall send one certified copy of the mill levy to the county auditor of each county which is a member of the authority. Copies of all such documents must be sent to the state tax commissioner.

61-24.5-13. County auditors to extend tax levy.

The county auditor of each county within the authority, to whom a mill levy is certified in accordance with this chapter, shall extend the levy upon the tax lists for the current year against each description of real property and all personal property within the county in the same manner and with the same effect as other taxes are extended.

61-24.5-14. County treasurer or city auditor to collect and remit district taxes - District fund established - Nonreverter - Disbursements.

The treasurer of each county in which a mill levy has been certified shall collect the taxes, together with interest and penalty thereon, if any, in the same manner as the general taxes are collected, and shall pay over to the treasurer of the authority, on demand, all taxes, interest, and penalties so collected, and shall forthwith notify the secretary of the authority of such payment. Expenditures must be approved by the board of directors.

61-24.5-15. Proceedings to confirm contract.

The board of directors of the authority, after entering into a contract with the United States government, the state of North Dakota, or with any public corporation or political subdivision of the state of North Dakota, may commence a special proceeding in and by which the proceedings of the board and the making of such contract, or contracts, must be judicially examined, approved, and confirmed, or disapproved and disaffirmed. Such proceeding must comply as nearly as possible with the procedure required in the case of irrigation districts under the laws of North Dakota.

61-24.5-16. Procedure for exclusion from authority of county not benefited.

1. Any county in the authority not benefited or not to be benefited, in whole or in part, by the southwest pipeline project, or any part thereof, may be excluded from the authority as provided herein. The board of county commissioners of any such county may by resolution direct the county auditor and the chairman of the board to file with the board of directors of the authority a petition, for and on behalf of the county, requesting the board of directors of the authority to exclude such county therefrom. A certified copy of the resolution of the county board must accompany and be filed with such petition. The petition and resolution must state specific reasons why such county will not be benefited by the southwest pipeline project, or any part thereof.
2. Within sixty days from the date of filing said resolution and petition for exclusion from the authority, the authority board shall meet to consider such petition. It may grant such petition or it may fix a time and place for a hearing thereon. If a hearing is set, the secretary of the board shall cause notice of the filing of such petition for exclusion, and of the time and place for a hearing, to be published once each week for two consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation printed within the authority. The hearing mentioned in such notice must be held not less than ten nor more than twenty days after the last publication of such notice. The notice must state that any person, corporation, limited liability company, municipality, and county in the authority may appear or be represented at the hearing and show cause why the petition should or should not be granted. The board shall hear the petition at the time and place mentioned in the notice.
3. If after the hearing on the petition the authority board of directors shall determine that the county requesting to be excluded from the authority will not be benefited, the authority board shall by resolution grant the petition and shall direct the chairman and secretary to execute the order of the board excluding such county from the authority. If, however, the authority board shall decide that such county will be benefited, it shall deny the petition and direct the chairman and secretary to execute its order refusing to exclude such county from the authority. A county excluded from the authority is not liable for any obligations thereof incurred after exclusion but is liable for and shall pay to the authority taxes levied before exclusion.
4. If any contract has been made with the United States or any agency thereof, or the state of North Dakota or any agency thereof, before such petition is filed, such petition may not be granted unless consented thereto by the appropriate agency of the United States or North Dakota, and if such agency gives its consent upon condition, such conditions must be included in the order of exclusion and the county may be required to, and in that event such county shall continue to, pay and satisfy any obligations under any such contract.

61-24.5-17. Appeal from orders of authority board.

An appeal from an order of the board of directors of the authority denying a petition for exclusion may be taken to the district court of the petitioning county. The appeal provided for herein must be taken within thirty days after the order of the authority board has been filed with the secretary thereof and public notice of such order has been made. The appeal must be taken by serving notice of appeal upon the secretary of the authority. The appeal must be docketed as any cause pending in district court is docketed and thereupon the court shall have and exercise original jurisdiction and shall hear and determine the cause de novo without a jury. An appeal to the supreme court may be taken by the petitioning county or by the authority, from any judgment entered therein in district court, and from any order of said court if an appeal would lie from such order if entered by the court in a civil action.

61-24.5-18. Easement granted for ditches, canals, tramways, and transmission lines on any public lands.

In connection with the construction and development of the southwest pipeline project, there is granted over all the lands belonging to the state, including lands owned or acquired for highway right-of-way purposes, a right of way for pipelines, connections, valves, and all other appurtenant facilities constructed as part of the southwest pipeline project, provided, however, the director of the department of transportation and the director of the department of water resources must approve the plans of the authority regarding the use of all right of way of roads before the grant is effective.

61-24.5-19. Operation and maintenance fund.

To identify and distinguish the revenues received by the southwest water authority from water user entities for operation and maintenance of the southwest pipeline project, the southwest water authority shall maintain a fund designated as the southwest pipeline project operation and maintenance fund. All moneys received by the southwest water authority, whether from payments made by water user entities, or otherwise, for operation and maintenance of the southwest pipeline project must be by law or by other authoritative designation made applicable to the payment of operation and maintenance of the southwest pipeline project, must be kept in the fund distinct from all other moneys, and must be disbursed only for the particular purpose or purposes for which the moneys were received.

61-24.5-20. Revenues for operation and maintenance - Deposit - Use.

Money derived and received by the southwest water authority from water user entities for operation and maintenance of the southwest pipeline project must be deposited by the southwest water authority in the operation and maintenance fund and must be used to pay for costs and expenditures for operation and maintenance of the southwest pipeline project.

61-24.5-21. Reserve fund for replacement.

To identify and distinguish the revenues received by the southwest water authority from water user entities for replacement and extraordinary maintenance of the southwest pipeline project, there must be maintained a fund to be designated as the southwest pipeline project reserve fund for replacement. All moneys received by the southwest water authority, whether from payments made by water user entities, or otherwise, for replacement and extraordinary maintenance of the southwest pipeline project, which are by law or by other authoritative designation made applicable to replacement of the southwest pipeline project, must be kept by the southwest water authority in the fund distinct from all other moneys and may be disbursed only for the particular purpose for which the moneys were received.

61-24.5-22. Revenues for replacement - Deposit - Use.

Money derived and received by the southwest water authority from water user entities for replacement and extraordinary maintenance of the southwest pipeline project must be deposited by the southwest water authority in the reserve fund for replacement and must be

used to pay for replacement or extraordinary maintenance of works that are part of or associated with the southwest pipeline project.