

LEGISLATIVE BILL 587

Approved by the Governor April 14, 1987

Introduced by Withem, 14

AN ACT relating to sanitary and improvement districts; to amend section 31-735, Revised Statutes Supplement, 1986; to change a filing deadline; to eliminate certain election procedures; to provide for elections by mail-in ballot; to repeal the original section; and to declare an emergency.

Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

Section 1. That section 31-735, Revised Statutes Supplement, 1986, be amended to read as follows:

31-735. (1) For any sanitary and improvement district located in a county with a population of one hundred thousand or more, on the first Tuesday after the second Monday in September which is at least fifteen months after the judgment of the district court creating a sanitary and improvement district and on the first Tuesday after the second Monday in September each two years thereafter, the board of trustees shall cause a special election to be held, at which election a board of trustees of five in number shall be elected. Each member elected to the board of trustees shall be elected to a term of two years and shall hold office until such member's successor is elected and qualified. Any person desiring to file for the office of trustee may file for such office with the election commissioner of the county in which the greater proportion in area of the district is located not later than ~~thirty~~ fifty days before the election. No filing fee shall be required. A person filing for the office of trustee to be elected at the election held four years after the first election of trustees and each election thereafter shall designate whether he or she is a candidate for election by the resident owners of such district or whether he or she is a candidate for election by all of the owners of real estate located in the district. The name of such candidate shall appear on only one ballot. The name of a person may be written in and voted for as a candidate for the office of trustee, and such write-in candidate may be elected to the office of trustee. Such trustees shall be owners of real estate located in the district.

The election shall be conducted at a location or place selected by the election commissioner, but situated within the boundaries of the district unless there is no building within the district or all of the owners in the district shall consent to an election outside the district, except that in any district having ten or less total owners or in any districts where there are no resident owners, the election shall be held in such place in the county as the election commissioner shall designate. The polling place shall remain open to the voters for not less than four consecutive hours between 8:00 a-m- and 8:00 p-m- on the date of election. Notice of the time and place of the election shall be mailed by the election commissioner not later than twenty days prior to the election to each person who is entitled to vote at the election for trustees whose property ownership or lease giving a right to vote is of record on the records of the register of deeds as of a date designated by the election commissioner, which shall be not more than sixty-five days prior to the election.

(2) For any sanitary and improvement district located in a county with a population of less than one hundred thousand, on the first Tuesday after the second Monday in September which is at least fifteen months after the judgment of the district court creating a sanitary and improvement district and on the first Tuesday after the second Monday in September each two years thereafter, the board of trustees shall cause a special election to be held, at which election a board of trustees of five in number shall be elected. Each member elected to the board of trustees shall be elected to a term of two years and shall hold office until such member's successor is elected and qualified. Any person desiring to file for the office of trustee may file for such office with the county clerk, or election commissioner in counties having election commissioners, of the county in which the greater proportion in area of the district is located not later than thirty five days before the election. No filing fee shall be required. A person filing for the office of trustee to be elected at the election held four years after the first election of trustees and each election thereafter shall designate whether he or she is a candidate for election by the resident owners of such district or whether he or she is a candidate for election by all of the owners of real estate located in the district. The name of such candidate shall appear on only one ballot. The name of a person may be written in and voted for as a candidate for the office of trustee, and such write-in candidate

may be elected to the office of trustee. Such trustees shall be owners of real estate located in the district. The election shall be conducted at a location or place within the boundaries of the district unless there is no building within the district or all of the owners in the district shall consent to an election outside the district, and the polling place shall remain open to the voters for not less than four consecutive hours between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on the date of election. Notice of the time and place of the election shall be mailed by the clerk of the district not later than forty-five days prior to the election to each person who is entitled to vote at the election for trustees whose property ownership or lease giving a right to vote is of record on the records of the register of deeds as of a date designated by the board of trustees, which shall be not more than sixty-five days prior to the election. Notice of the time and place of the election shall also be mailed by the clerk of the district to the county clerk or election commissioner at least forty-five days prior to the election.

(3) For any sanitary and improvement district, persons whose ownership or right to vote becomes of record or is received after the such date specified pursuant to subsection (4) of this section may vote upon establishing their right to vote to the satisfaction of the election board. Such notice shall state the time, place, and purpose of the election. At the first election and at the election held two years after the first election, any person may cast one vote for each trustee for each acre of unplatted land or fraction thereof and one vote for each platted lot which he or she may own in the district. At the election held four years after the first election of trustees, two members of the board of trustees shall be elected by the legal property owners resident within such sanitary and improvement district and three members shall be elected by all of the owners of real estate located in the district pursuant to this section. Every resident property owner may cast one vote for a candidate for each office of trustee to be filled by election of resident property owners only. Such resident property owners may also each cast one vote for each acre of unplatted land or fraction thereof and for each platted lot owned within the district for a candidate for each office of trustee to be filled by election of all property owners. For each office of trustee to be filled by election of all property owners of the district, every legal property owner not resident within

such sanitary and improvement district may cast one vote for each acre of unplatted land or fraction thereof and one vote for each platted lot which he or she owns in the district. At the election held eight years after the first election of trustees, three members of the board of trustees shall be elected by the legal property owners resident within such sanitary and improvement district and two members shall be elected by all of the owners of real estate located in the district pursuant to this section, except that if more than fifty per cent of the homes in any sanitary and improvement district are used as a second, seasonal, or recreational residence, the owners of such property shall be considered legal property owners resident within such district for purposes of electing trustees, and at the election held six years after the first election of trustees, three members of the board of trustees shall be elected by the legal property owners resident within such sanitary and improvement district and two members shall be elected by all of the owners of real estate located in the district pursuant to this section. If there are not any legal property owners resident within such district, the five members shall be elected by the legal property owners of all property within such district as provided in this section. Any corporation, whether public, private, or municipal, owning any land or lot in the district may vote at such election the same as an individual. For purposes of voting for trustees, each condominium apartment under a condominium property regime established prior to January 1, 1984, under the Condominium Property Act or established after January 1, 1984, under the Nebraska Condominium Act shall be deemed to be a platted lot and the lessee or the owner of the lessee's interest, under any lease for an initial term of not less than twenty years which requires the lessee to pay taxes and special assessments levied on the leased property, shall be deemed to be the owner of the property so leased and entitled to cast the vote of such property. When ownership of a platted lot or unplatted land is held jointly by two or more persons, whether as joint tenants, tenants in common, limited partners, or any other form of joint ownership, only one person shall be entitled to cast the vote of such property. The executor, administrator, guardian, or trustee of any person or estate interested shall have the right to vote. No corporation, estate, or trust shall be deemed to be a resident owner for purposes of voting for trustees. Should two or more persons or officials claim the right to vote on the same tract, the

election board shall determine the party entitled to vote. Such board shall select one of their number chairperson and one of their number clerk. In case of a vacancy on such board, the remaining trustees shall fill the vacancy on such board until the next election.

(4) The election commissioner shall hold any election required by subsection (1) or (2) of this section by sealed mail ballot by notifying the board of trustees on or before June 30 of a given year. The election commissioner shall, at least twenty days prior to the election, mail a ballot and return envelope to each person who is entitled to vote at the election and whose property ownership or lease giving a right to vote is of record with the register of deeds as of the date designated by the election commissioner, which date shall not be more than sixty-five days prior to the election. The ballot and return envelope shall include: (a) The names and addresses of the candidates; (b) room for write-in candidates; and (c) instructions on how to vote and return the ballot. Such ballots shall be returned to the election commissioner no later than 10:00 a.m. of the first Thursday following the election.

Sec. 2. That original section 31-735, Revised Statutes Supplement, 1986, is repealed.

Sec. 3. Since an emergency exists, this act shall be in full force and take effect, from and after its passage and approval, according to law.