

**Chapter 54.12 RCW  
COMMISSIONERS**

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*Redistricting by local governments and municipal corporations—Census information for—Plan, prepared when, criteria for, hearing on, request for review of, certification, remand—Sanctions when review request frivolous: RCW 29A.76.010.*

**RCW 54.12.010 Exercise of power by commissioners—Number—Districts—Terms—Vacancies—Adjustment of boundaries.** A public utility district that is created as provided in RCW 54.08.010 shall be a municipal corporation of the state of Washington, and the name of such public utility district shall be Public Utility District No. . . . . of . . . . . County.

The powers of the public utility district shall be exercised through a commission consisting of three members in three commissioner districts, and five members in five commissioner districts.

(1) If the public utility district is countywide and the county has three county legislative authority districts, then, at the first election of commissioners and until any change is made in the boundaries of public utility district commissioner districts, one public utility district commissioner shall be chosen from each of the three county legislative authority districts.

(2) If the public utility district comprises only a portion of the county, with boundaries established in accordance with chapter 54.08 RCW, or if the public utility district is countywide and the county does not have three county legislative authority districts, three public utility district commissioner districts, numbered consecutively, each with approximately equal population and following precinct lines, as far as practicable, shall be described in the petition for the formation of the public utility district, subject to appropriate change by the county legislative authority if and when it changes the boundaries of the proposed public utility district. One commissioner shall be elected as a commissioner of each of the public utility district commissioner districts.

(3) Only a registered voter who resides in a commissioner district may be a candidate for, or hold office as, a commissioner of the commissioner district. Only voters of a commissioner district may vote at a primary to nominate candidates for a commissioner of the commissioner district. Voters of the entire public utility district may vote at a general election to elect a person as a commissioner of the commissioner district.

(4) The term of office of each public utility district commissioner other than the commissioners at large shall be six years,

and the term of each commissioner at large shall be four years. Each term shall be computed in accordance with RCW 29A.60.280 following the commissioner's election. All public utility district commissioners shall hold office until their successors shall have been elected and have qualified and assume office in accordance with RCW 29A.60.280.

(5) A vacancy in the office of public utility district commissioner shall occur as provided in chapter 42.12 RCW or by nonattendance at meetings of the public utility district commission for a period of sixty days unless excused by the public utility district commission. Vacancies on a board of public utility district commissioners shall be filled as provided in chapter 42.12 RCW.

(6) The boundaries of the public utility district commissioner districts may be changed only by the public utility district commission or by a court order issued pursuant to RCW 29A.92.110, and shall be examined every ten years to determine substantial equality of population in accordance with chapter 29A.76 RCW. Except as provided in this section, RCW 29A.92.110, RCW 54.04.039, or in the case of an intervening census, the boundaries shall not be changed more often than once in four years. Boundaries may only be changed when all members of the commission are present. Whenever territory is added to a public utility district under RCW 54.04.035, or added or withdrawn under RCW 54.04.039, the boundaries of the public utility commissioner districts shall be changed to include the additional or exclude the withdrawn territory. Unless the boundaries are changed pursuant to RCW 54.04.039, the proposed change of the boundaries of the public utility district commissioner district must be made by resolution and after public hearing. Notice of the time of the public hearing shall be published for two weeks before the hearing. Upon a referendum petition signed by ten percent of the qualified voters of the public utility district being filed with the county auditor, the county legislative authority shall submit the proposed change of boundaries to the voters of the public utility district for their approval or rejection. The petition must be filed within ninety days after the adoption of resolution of the proposed action. The validity of the petition is governed by the provisions of chapter 54.08 RCW. [2018 c 113 § 210; 2004 c 113 § 1; 1994 c 223 § 56; 1990 c 59 § 109; 1987 c 292 § 1; 1979 ex.s. c 126 § 37; 1977 ex.s. c 36 § 8; 1977 c 53 § 2; 1969 c 106 § 1; 1959 c 265 § 9; 1941 c 245 § 4; 1931 c 1 § 4; Rem. Supp. 1941 § 11608. Formerly RCW 54.08.030, 54.08.040, 54.12.010 through 54.12.070.]

**Findings—Intent—Short title—2018 c 113:** See RCW 29A.92.005 and 29A.92.900.

**Effective date—2004 c 113:** See note following RCW 54.04.039.

**Intent—Effective date—1990 c 59:** See notes following RCW 29A.04.013.

**Purpose—1979 ex.s. c 126:** See RCW 29A.60.280(1).

**Construction—Severability—1969 c 106:** See notes following RCW 54.08.041.

**RCW 54.12.080 Compensation and expenses—Group insurance. (1)**

Commissioners of public utility districts shall receive salaries as follows:

(a) Each public utility district commissioner of a district operating utility properties shall receive a salary of one thousand eight hundred dollars per month, as adjusted for inflation by the office of financial management in subsection (6) of this section, during a calendar year if the district received total gross revenue of over fifteen million dollars during the fiscal year ending June 30th before the calendar year.

(b) Each public utility district commissioner of a district operating utility properties shall receive a salary of one thousand three hundred dollars per month, as adjusted for inflation by the office of financial management in subsection (6) of this section, during a calendar year if the district received total gross revenue of from two million dollars to fifteen million dollars during the fiscal year ending June 30th before the calendar year.

(c) Commissioners of other districts shall receive a salary of six hundred dollars per month, as adjusted for inflation by the office of financial management in subsection (6) of this section, for each commissioner.

(2) In addition to salary, all districts shall provide for the payment of per diem compensation to each commissioner at a rate of ninety dollars, as adjusted for inflation by the office of financial management in subsection (6) of this section, for each day or portion thereof spent in actual attendance at official meetings of the district commission or in performance of other official services or duties on behalf of the district, to include meetings of the commission of his or her district or meetings attended by one or more commissioners of two or more districts called to consider business common to them, but such compensation paid during any one year to a commissioner shall not exceed twelve thousand six hundred dollars, as adjusted for inflation by the office of financial management in subsection (6) of this section. Per diem compensation shall not be paid for services of a ministerial or professional nature.

(3) Any commissioner may waive all or any portion of his or her compensation payable under this section as to any month or months during his or her term of office, by a written waiver filed with the district as provided in this section. The waiver, to be effective, must be filed any time after the commissioner's election and prior to the date on which the compensation would otherwise be paid. The waiver shall specify the month or period of months for which it is made.

(4) Each district commissioner shall be reimbursed for reasonable expenses actually incurred in connection with such business and meetings, including his or her subsistence and lodging and travel while away from his or her place of residence.

(5) Any district providing group insurance for its employees, covering them, their immediate family, and dependents, may provide insurance for its commissioner with the same coverage.

(6) The dollar thresholds for salaries and per diem compensation established in this section must be adjusted for inflation by the office of financial management every five years, beginning January 1, 2024, based upon changes in the consumer price index during that time period. "Consumer price index" means, for any calendar year, that year's annual average consumer price index, for Washington state, for wage earners and clerical workers, all items, compiled by the bureau

of labor and statistics, United States department of labor. If the bureau of labor and statistics develops more than one consumer price index for areas within the state, the index covering the greatest number of people, covering areas exclusively within the boundaries of the state, and including all items shall be used for the adjustments for inflation in this section. The office of financial management must calculate the new dollar threshold and transmit it to the office of the code reviser for publication in the Washington State Register at least one month before the new dollar threshold is to take effect.

(7) A person holding office as commissioner for two or more special purpose districts shall receive only that per diem compensation authorized for one of his or her commissioner positions as compensation for attending an official meeting or conducting official services or duties while representing more than one of his or her districts. However, such commissioner may receive additional per diem compensation if approved by resolution of all boards of the affected commissions. [2020 c 83 § 4; 2010 c 58 § 1; 2008 c 218 § 1; 2007 c 469 § 4; 1998 c 121 § 4; 1997 c 28 § 1; 1985 c 330 § 4; 1977 ex.s. c 157 § 1; 1969 c 106 § 5; 1967 c 161 § 1; 1957 c 140 § 2; 1955 c 124 § 5; 1951 c 207 § 4. Prior: (i) 1931 c 1 § 8, part; RRS § 11612, part. (ii) 1941 c 245 § 6; Rem. Supp. 1941 § 11616-5.]

**Construction—Severability—1969 c 106:** See notes following RCW 54.08.041.

*Group employee insurance: RCW 54.04.050.*

*Hospitalization and medical insurance not deemed additional compensation: RCW 41.04.190.*

**RCW 54.12.090 President—Secretary—Rules—Seal—Minutes.** The commission shall elect from its members, a president and secretary, and shall, by resolution, adopt rules governing the transaction of district business, and adopt an official seal. All proceedings of the commission shall be by motion or resolution, recorded in its minute books, which shall be public records.

A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum of the commission for the transaction of business. The concurrence of a majority of the whole commission in office at the time shall be necessary for the passage of any resolution, and no business shall be transacted, except in usual and ordinary course, unless there are in office at least a majority of the full number of commissioners as fixed by law.

The commission may create and fill such positions and fix salaries and bonds thereof as it may provide by resolution. [1955 c 124 § 6. Prior: 1931 c 1 § 8, part; RRS § 11612, part.]

**RCW 54.12.100 Oath or affirmation.** Each commissioner before he or she enters upon the duties of his or her office shall take and subscribe an oath or affirmation that he or she will faithfully and impartially discharge the duties of his or her office to the best of his or her ability. This oath, or affirmation, shall be administered and certified by an officer of the county in which the district is situated, who is authorized to administer oaths, without charge

therefor. The oath or affirmation shall be filed with the county auditor. [2010 c 8 § 17006; 1986 c 167 § 23; 1959 c 265 § 10.]

**Severability—1986 c 167:** See note following RCW 29A.16.040.

**RCW 54.12.110 Electrical utilities—Civil immunity of commissioners and employees for good faith mistakes and errors of judgment.** Commissioners and employees of public utility districts shall be immune from civil liability for mistakes and errors of judgment in the good faith performance of acts within the scope of their official duties involving the exercise of judgment and discretion which relate solely to their responsibilities for electrical utilities. This grant of immunity shall not be construed as modifying the liability of the public utility district. [1983 1st ex.s. c 48 § 2.]

**Severability—1983 1st ex.s. c 48:** See note following RCW 35.21.415.