

24-407. Powers of drainage districts. Each drainage district incorporated pursuant to K.S.A. 24-401 et seq., and amendments thereto, shall be a body politic and corporate. Subject to the superior jurisdiction of the United States over navigable waters, the governing body of each drainage district shall have exclusive control of the beds, channels, banks and of all lands the title to which is vested in the state of Kansas lying between the banks at high water mark of all natural watercourses within the district. The board of directors of every drainage district incorporated under the provisions of K.S.A. 24-401 et seq., and amendments thereto, shall have the power:

(1) To adopt a seal.
(2) To sue and be sued by its corporate name.
(3) To purchase, hold, sell and convey real estate and personal property necessary or convenient to carry out the purposes of the district.

(4) To take charge of and exercise exclusive control of all natural watercourses within the district, and widen, deepen, establish, regulate and maintain the channels thereof, construct and maintain levees along the banks thereof and detention dams and reservoirs in areas adjacent thereto which are necessary to prevent or restrain overflow or lessen the volume thereof or the injury likely to result therefrom. The board may construct ditches, drains, sewers and canals through lands subject to overflow, and may purchase, install and operate pumps necessary to remove, carry off and prevent water from standing or remaining in pools or ponds and becoming stagnant upon overflowed lands or necessary for sanitary purposes or conducive to the public health, convenience and welfare. The board may alter, change or abandon the channel or any part of the channel of any natural watercourse and relocate or excavate and establish a new channel for such watercourse or any part thereof located within the district. The board may take private property for public use by exercise of the right of eminent domain and may condemn and remove obstructions in such watercourses. The board may acquire by gift, purchase or condemnation lands for the purpose of constructing levees along or widening, deepening, changing or otherwise improving the channels of watercourses or for relocating, excavating and establishing new channels or constructing cutoffs, detention dams and reservoirs in areas adjacent to all such watercourses.

(5) To prescribe, regulate and fix the height of the superstructures above the water, the length of all spans and the location of the piers of all bridges across watercourses located within the district.

(6) To construct levees across the rights-of-way, roadbeds, tracks and lands of railroad companies and street-railroad companies. The board may condemn and appropriate by the exercise of the right of eminent domain sufficient rights-of-way or other lands of any railroad company or street-railroad company necessary for constructing and maintaining a continuous levee of uniform height across the same.

(7) To fix, regulate and change the grade or elevation of all public highways, railroads and street-railroads at points where any levee may cross or intersect the same.

(8) To require all railroad companies to elevate their tracks at all points where intersected by any levee so that the tracks will not interfere with the construction or maintenance of the levee as a continuous and effective work of uniform height to prevent the overflow of any natural watercourse.

(9) To maintain in any court of competent jurisdiction suits to enforce the reasonable orders of its directors, enjoin the placing or maintenance in any natural watercourse of any unauthorized bridge, embankment, pier or other work or structure constituting to any extent whatever an obstruction to the flow of the water, restrain all other wrongful or unauthorized encroachments upon or interference with the channel of the watercourse and to have all obstructions wrongfully placed in the channel of natural watercourses adjudged public nuisances and abated as such.

(10) To maintain actions in any court of competent jurisdiction to recover and hold exclusive possession of all land located between the banks of natural watercourses at high water mark, the title to which is vested in the state of Kansas. If the channel of any watercourse is altered, changed or abandoned, in whole or in part, the governing body may sell, convey and give good title to the land constituting the abandoned channel and apply the proceeds thereof to the cost of a new channel or for other improvement of the watercourse.

(11) To annually levy a tax not exceeding five mills on the assessed value of all tangible taxable property within the district to create a general fund.

If the board determines that a higher tax levy limit is necessary, it may adopt a resolution proposing to raise the limitation. Any proposed increase of the levy limitation shall be submitted for approval by the qualified voters of the drainage district. The election shall be called and held in the manner provided by the general bond law. If a majority of the voters voting on the question votes in favor thereof, the levy limitation may be increased.

(12) To levy special assessments against all real property located within the district that may be benefited to pay the costs of the construction and maintenance of levees or other works or improvements to prevent the overflow of natural watercourses, or provide drainage of overflowed lands therein or that may be conducive to the public health, convenience or welfare.

(13) To issue negotiable bonds to pay the costs of widening, deepening and otherwise improving the channels and constructing embankments, drains, levees and other works along the banks of natural watercourses, to pay the cost of constructing detention dams and reservoirs in areas adjacent to all such watercourses, to pay for the purchase or condemnation of land necessary therefor or to prevent overflow and protect the property located within the district from damage and injury thereby. The bonds shall be payable by general taxation of all property located within the district if it is determined that all property located within the district will be benefited thereby or that such work or improvement is necessary or will be conducive to the public health, convenience or welfare and beneficial to all of the inhabitants of the district. No bonds shall be issued until authorized by a vote of the taxpayers.

(14) To contract with other drainage districts or with public corporations organized for similar purposes in any adjoining state for cooperation or joint action in constructing detention dams and reservoirs in areas adjacent to any natural watercourse or in constructing levees along the banks or otherwise improving any natural watercourse to prevent its overflow where the overflow is likely to cause injury or damage to lands located within the territorial limits of all the cooperating districts or corporations. The board may contract and cooperate with private corporations and individuals owning lands located outside of the district or state which are subject to injury by overflow in common with lands located within the district. The board may contract for and receive aid and contributions from the United States, and from all public corporations the property within which will be benefited and with all private corporations and individuals whose property will be benefited by the improvement, whether the property is located within the district or within some other district or state.

(15) To enter contracts and exercise any of its corporate, legislative or administrative powers necessary to

accomplish the purpose of the district's organization.

(16) To do all other acts necessary to carry out and execute the general powers granted under the provisions of K.S.A. 24-401 et seq., and amendments thereto, although not specially enumerated. Before any drainage district constructs or modifies any dam, the drainage district shall file an application with the division of water resources of the Kansas department of agriculture pursuant to K.S.A. 82a-301, and amendments thereto.

History: R.S. 1923, 24-407; L. 1929, ch. 174, § 1; L. 1951, ch. 262, § 2; L. 1975, ch. 427, § 63; L. 1983, ch. 118, § 5; L. 2004, ch. 101, § 69; July 1.