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## **Special District Modifications**

## 2025 GENERAL SESSION STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Kirk A. Cullimore

House Sponsor: Thomas W. Peterson 2 3 **LONG TITLE** 4 **General Description:** 5 This bill amends provisions related to special districts. **Highlighted Provisions:** 6 7 This bill: 8 • provides for allowing alternate board member selection in certain circumstances; 9 reduces certain notice periods; 10 • amends provisions related to filling a midterm vacancy on a special district board; 11 provides for new methods of annexing certain jurisdictions into a special district service 12 area: 13 provides a uniform time period for a candidate to file for an elected special district board 14 position; and 15 makes technical changes. 16 **Money Appropriated in this Bill:** 17 None 18 **Other Special Clauses:** 19 None 20 **Utah Code Sections Affected:** 21 AMENDS: 22 **17B-1-306**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapters 382, 465 23 17B-1-416, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapter 15 24 **17B-1-643**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapter 382 25 **17B-2a-1106**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapters 342, 438

20A-1-512, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapter 388

28	Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:
29	Section 1. Section 17B-1-306 is amended to read:
30	17B-1-306 . Special district board Election procedures Notice.
31	(1) Except as provided in Subsection (12), each elected board member shall be selected as
32	provided in this section.
33	(2)(a) Each election of a special district board member shall be held:
34	(i) at the same time as the municipal general election or the regular general election,
35	as applicable; and
36	(ii) at polling places designated by the special district board in consultation with the
37	county clerk for each county in which the special district is located, which polling
38	places shall coincide with municipal general election or regular general election
39	polling places, as applicable, whenever feasible.
40	(b) The special district board, in consultation with the county clerk, may consolidate two
41	or more polling places to enable voters from more than one district to vote at one
42	consolidated polling place.
43	(c)(i) Subject to Subsections (5)(h) and (i), the number of polling places under
44	Subsection (2)(a)(ii) in an election of board members of an irrigation district shall
45	be one polling place per division of the district, designated by the district board.
46	(ii) Each polling place designated by an irrigation district board under Subsection
47	(2)(c)(i) shall coincide with a polling place designated by the county clerk under
48	Subsection (2)(a)(ii).
49	(3)(a) The clerk of each special district with a board member position to be filled at the
50	next municipal general election or regular general election, as applicable, shall
51	provide notice of:
52	(i) each elective position of the special district to be filled at the next municipal
53	general election or regular general election, as applicable;
54	(ii) the constitutional and statutory qualifications for each position; and
55	(iii) the dates and times for filing a declaration of candidacy.
56	(b) If the election is to be held at the same time as the municipal general election, a
57	declaration of candidacy shall be filed [on the days specified in Subsection
58	20A-9-203(3)(a)(i)] between June 1 and June 7 of any odd-numbered year.
59	(c) If the election is to be held at the same time as the regular general election, a
60	declaration of candidacy shall be filed [by the deadline stated in Subsection
61	<del>20A-9-201 5(2)</del> ] between June 1 and June 7 of any even-numbered year

62 (4) The clerk of the special district shall publish the notice described in Subsection (3)(a) 63 for the special district, as a class A notice under Section 63G-30-102, for at least 10 days 64 before the first day for filing a declaration of candidacy. 65 (5)(a) Except as provided in Subsection (5)(c), to become a candidate for an elective 66 special district board position, an individual shall file a declaration of candidacy in 67 person with an official designated by the special district within the candidate filing 68 period for the applicable election year in which the election for the special district 69 board is held and: 70 (i) during the special district's standard office hours, if the standard office hours 71 provide at least three consecutive office hours each day during the candidate filing 72 period that is not a holiday or weekend; [or] 73 (ii) if the standard office hours of a special district do not provide at least three 74 consecutive office hours each day, a three-hour consecutive time period each day 75 designated by the special district during the candidate filing period that is not a 76 holiday or weekend[-]; or 77 (iii) during the special district's standard office hours if the special district has 78 adopted a four day standard work week with standard office hours of at least eight 79 hours each of those days. 80 (b) When the candidate filing deadline falls on a Saturday, Sunday, [or-]holiday, or a day 81 that is not a regular business day for the special district pursuant to Subsection 82 (5)(a)(iii), the filing time shall be extended until the close of normal office hours on 83 the following regular business day. 84 (c) Subject to Subsection (5)(f), an individual may designate an agent to file a 85 declaration of candidacy with the official designated by the special district if: 86 (i) the individual is located outside of the state during the entire filing period; 87 (ii) the designated agent appears in person before the official designated by the 88 special district; and 89 (iii) the individual communicates with the official designated by the special district 90 using an electronic device that allows the individual and official to see and hear 91 each other. 92 (d)(i) Before the filing officer may accept any declaration of candidacy from an 93 individual, the filing officer shall:

requirements for the office that the individual is seeking; and

(A) read to the individual the constitutional and statutory qualification

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96 (B) require the individual to state whether the individual meets those requirements. 97 (ii) If the individual does not meet the qualification requirements for the office, the 98 filing officer may not accept the individual's declaration of candidacy. 99 (iii) If it appears that the individual meets the requirements of candidacy, the filing 100 officer shall accept the individual's declaration of candidacy. 101 (e) The declaration of candidacy shall be in substantially the following form: 102 "I, (print name) \_\_\_\_\_, being first duly sworn, say that I reside at (Street) \_\_\_\_\_, City of \_\_\_\_\_\_, County of \_\_\_\_\_\_, state of Utah, 103 (Zip Code) \_\_\_\_\_\_, (Telephone Number, if any) \_\_\_\_\_\_; that I meet the qualifications 104 for the office of board of trustees member for \_\_\_\_\_\_ (state the name of 105 the special district); that I am a candidate for that office to be voted upon at the next election; 106 107 and that, if filing via a designated agent, I will be out of the state of Utah during the entire 108 candidate filing period, and I hereby request that my name be printed upon the official ballot 109 for that election. 110 (Signed) Subscribed and sworn to (or affirmed) before me by \_\_\_\_\_ on this \_\_\_\_ day 111 112 of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_. 113 (Signed) \_\_\_\_\_ (Clerk or Notary Public)". 114 115 (f) An agent designated under Subsection (5)(c) may not sign the form described in 116 Subsection (5)(e). (g) Each individual wishing to become a valid write-in candidate for an elective special 117 118 district board position is governed by Section 20A-9-601. 119 (h) If at least one individual does not file a declaration of candidacy as required by this 120 section, an individual shall be appointed to fill that board position in accordance with 121 the appointment provisions of Section 20A-1-512. 122 (i) If only one candidate files a declaration of candidacy and there is no write-in 123 candidate who complies with Section 20A-9-601, the board, in accordance with Section 20A-1-206, may: 124 125 (i) consider the candidate to be elected to the position; and 126 (ii) cancel the election. 127 (6)(a) A primary election may be held if: 128 (i) the election is authorized by the special district board; and 129 (ii) the number of candidates for a particular local board position or office exceeds

130	twice the number of persons needed to fill that position or office.
131	(b) The primary election shall be conducted:
132	(i) on the same date as the municipal primary election or the regular primary election,
133	as applicable; and
134	(ii) according to the procedures for primary elections provided under Title 20A,
135	Election Code.
136	(7)(a) Except as provided in Subsection (7)(c), within one business day after the
137	deadline for filing a declaration of candidacy, the special district clerk shall certify
138	the candidate names to the clerk of each county in which the special district is located.
139	(b)(i) Except as provided in Subsection (7)(c) and in accordance with Section
140	20A-6-305, the clerk of each county in which the special district is located and the
141	special district clerk shall coordinate the placement of the name of each candidate
142	for special district office in the nonpartisan section of the ballot with the
143	appropriate election officer.
144	(ii) If consolidation of the special district election ballot with the municipal general
145	election ballot or the regular general election ballot, as applicable, is not feasible,
146	the special district board of trustees, in consultation with the county clerk, shall
147	provide for a separate special district election ballot to be administered by poll
148	workers at polling places designated under Subsection (2).
149	(c)(i) Subsections (7)(a) and (b) do not apply to an election of a member of the board
150	of an irrigation district established under Chapter 2a, Part 5, Irrigation District Act.
151	(ii)(A) Subject to Subsection (7)(c)(ii)(B), the board of each irrigation district
152	shall prescribe the form of the ballot for each board member election.
153	(B) Each ballot for an election of an irrigation district board member shall be in a
154	nonpartisan format.
155	(C) The name of each candidate shall be placed on the ballot in the order specified
156	under Section 20A-6-305.
157	(8)(a) Each voter at an election for a board of trustees member of a special district shall:
158	(i) be a registered voter within the district, except for an election of:
159	(A) an irrigation district board of trustees member; or
160	(B) a basic special district board of trustees member who is elected by property
161	owners; and
162	(ii) meet the requirements to vote established by the district.
163	(b) Each voter may vote for as many candidates as there are offices to be filled.

164	(c) The candidates who receive the highest number of votes are elected.
165	(9) Except as otherwise provided by this section, the election of special district board
166	members is governed by Title 20A, Election Code.
167	(10)(a) Except as provided in Subsection 17B-1-303(8), a person elected to serve on a
168	special district board shall serve a four-year term, beginning at noon on the January 1
169	after the person's election.
170	(b) A person elected shall be sworn in as soon as practical after January 1.
171	(11)(a) Except as provided in Subsection (11)(b), each special district shall reimburse
172	the county or municipality holding an election under this section for the costs of the
173	election attributable to that special district.
174	(b) Each irrigation district shall bear the district's own costs of each election the district
175	holds under this section.
176	(12) This section does not apply to an improvement district that provides electric or gas
177	service.
178	(13) Except as provided in Subsection 20A-3a-605(1)(b), the provisions of Title 20A,
179	Chapter 3a, Part 6, Early Voting, do not apply to an election under this section.
180	(14)(a) As used in this Subsection (14), "board" means:
181	(i) a special district board; or
182	(ii) the administrative control board of a special service district that has elected
183	members on the board.
184	(b) If a board desires to hold elections for membership on the board at a regular general
185	election instead of a municipal general election, or at a municipal general election
186	instead of a regular general election, the board may submit an application to the
187	lieutenant governor that:
188	(i) requests permission to change the election year for membership on the board in a
189	manner described in this Subsection (14)(b);
190	(ii) indicates that a change in the election year is beneficial, based on potential cost
191	savings, a potential increase in voter turnout, or another material reason; and
192	(iii) if a change in the election year may result in shortening a board member's term
193	of office, indicates that the members of the board unanimously support the
194	lieutenant governor taking that action.
195	(c) Upon receipt of an application described in Subsection (14)(b), the lieutenant
196	governor may approve the if:
197	(i) the lieutenant governor concludes that changing the election year is beneficial

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198	based on the criteria described in Subsection (14)(b)(ii); and
199	(ii) for an application that may result in shortening a board member's term of office,
200	the application satisfies the unanimity requirement described in Subsection
201	(14)(b)(iii).
202	(d) If the lieutenant governor approves a board's application described in this section:
203	(i) all future elections for membership on the board shall be held at the time of the
204	general election specified in the application; and
205	(ii) the board may not hold elections at the time of an election other than the general
206	election specified in the application, unless the board receives permission from the
207	lieutenant governor to change the election under the same procedure, and by
208	applying the same criteria, described in this Subsection (14).
209	(15)(a) This Subsection (15) applies to a special district if:
210	(i) the special district's board members are elected by the owners of real property, as
211	provided in Subsection 17B-1-1402(1)(b); and
212	(ii) the special district was created before January 1, 2020.
213	(b) The board of a special district described in Subsection (15)(a) may conduct an
214	election:
215	(i) to fill a board member position that expires at the end of the term for that board
216	member's position; and
217	(ii) notwithstanding Subsection 20A-1-512(1)(a)(i), to fill a vacancy in an unexpired
218	term of a board member.
219	(c) An election under Subsection (15)(b) may be conducted as determined by the special
220	district board, subject to Subsection (15)(d).
221	(d)(i) The special district board shall provide to property owners eligible to vote at
222	the special district election:
223	(A) notice of the election; and
224	(B) a form to nominate an eligible individual to be elected as a board member.
225	(ii)(A) The special district board may establish a deadline for a property owner to
226	submit a nomination form.
227	(B) A deadline under Subsection (15)(d)(ii)(A) may not be earlier than 15 days
228	after the board provides the notice and nomination form under Subsection
229	(15)(d)(i).
230	(iii)(A) After the deadline for submitting nomination forms, the special district
231	board shall provide a ballot to all property owners eligible to vote at the special

232	district election.
233	(B) A special district board shall allow at least five days for ballots to be returned
234	(iv) A special district board shall certify the results of an election under this
235	Subsection (15) during an open meeting of the board.
236	Section 2. Section 17B-1-416 is amended to read:
237	17B-1-416. Automatic annexation to a district providing fire protection,
238	paramedic, and emergency services or law enforcement service.
239	(1) An area outside the boundaries of a special district that is annexed to a municipality or
240	added to a municipality by a boundary adjustment under Title 10, Chapter 2, Part 4,
241	Annexation, is automatically annexed to the special district if:
242	(a) the special district provides:
243	(i) fire protection, paramedic, and emergency services; or
244	(ii) law enforcement service;
245	(b) the special district is located in a county of the first class, but not otherwise, an
246	election for the creation of the special district was not required because of Subsection
247	17B-1-214(3)(d); and
248	(c) before the municipal annexation or boundary adjustment, the entire municipality that
249	is annexing the area or adding the area by boundary adjustment was included within
250	the special district.
251	(2) The effective date of an annexation under this section is governed by Subsection
252	17B-1-414(3)(b).
253	Section 3. Section 17B-1-643 is amended to read:
254	17B-1-643. Imposing or increasing a fee for service provided by special district.
255	(1)(a) Before imposing a new fee or increasing an existing fee for a service provided by
256	a special district, each special district board of trustees shall first hold a public
257	hearing at which:
258	(i) the special district shall demonstrate its need to impose or increase the fee; and
259	(ii) any interested person may speak for or against the proposal to impose a fee or to
260	increase an existing fee.
261	(b) Each public hearing under Subsection (1)(a) shall be held in the evening beginning
262	no earlier than 6 p.m.
263	(c) A public hearing required under this Subsection (1) may be combined with a public
264	hearing on a tentative budget required under Section 17B-1-610.
265	(d) Except to the extent that this section imposes more stringent notice requirements, the

266 special district board shall comply with Title 52, Chapter 4, Open and Public 267 Meetings Act, in holding the public hearing under Subsection (1)(a). 268 (2)(a) Each special district board shall give notice of a hearing under Subsection (1) as 269 provided in Subsections (2)(b) and (c) or Subsection (2)(d). 270 (b) The special district board shall publish the notice described in Subsection (2)(a) for 271 the special district, as a class A notice under Section 63G-30-102, for at least [30] 272 seven days. 273 (c) The notice described in Subsection (2)(b) shall state that the special district board 274 intends to impose or increase a fee for a service provided by the special district and 275 will hold a public hearing on a certain day, time, and place fixed in the notice, which 276 shall be not less than seven days after the day the notice is first posted as provided in 277 Subsection (2)(b) for the purpose of hearing comments regarding the proposed 278 imposition or increase of a fee and to explain the reasons for the proposed imposition 279 or increase. 280 (d)(i) In lieu of providing notice under Subsection (2)(b), the special district board of 281 trustees may give the notice required under Subsection (2)(a) by mailing the 282 notice to those within the district who: 283 (A) will be charged the fee for a district service, if the fee is being imposed for the 284 first time; or 285 (B) are being charged a fee, if the fee is proposed to be increased. 286 (ii) Each notice under Subsection (2)(d)(i) shall comply with Subsection (2)(c). 287 (iii) A notice under Subsection (2)(d)(i) may accompany a district bill for an existing fee. 288 289 (e) If the hearing required under this section is combined with the public hearing 290 required under Section 17B-1-610, the notice required under this Subsection (2): 291 (i) may be combined with the notice required under Section 17B-1-609; and 292 (ii) shall be posted or mailed in accordance with the notice provisions of this section. 293 (f) Proof that notice was given as provided in Subsection (2)(b) or (d) is prima facie 294 evidence that notice was properly given. (g) If no challenge is made to the notice given of a hearing required by Subsection (1) 295 296 within 30 days after the date of the hearing, the notice is considered adequate and 297 proper. 298 (h) After holding a public hearing under Subsection (1), a special district board may:

(i) impose the new fee or increase the existing fee as proposed;

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300	(ii) adjust the amount of the proposed new fee or the increase of the existing fee and
301	then impose the new fee or increase the existing fee as adjusted; or
302	(iii) decline to impose the new fee or increase the existing fee.
303	(i) This section applies to each new fee imposed and each increase of an existing fee that
304	occurs on or after July 1, 1998.
305	(j)(i) This section does not apply to an impact fee.
306	(ii) The imposition or increase of an impact fee is governed by Title 11, Chapter 36a
307	Impact Fees Act.
308	Section 4. Section 17B-2a-1106 is amended to read:
309	17B-2a-1106. Municipal services district board of trustees Governance.
310	(1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law regarding the membership of a special
311	district board of trustees, the initial board of trustees of a municipal services district shall
312	consist of the county legislative body.
313	(2)(a) If, after the initial creation of a municipal services district, an area within the
314	district is incorporated as a municipality as defined in Section 10-1-104 and the area
315	is not withdrawn from the district in accordance with Section 17B-1-502 or
316	17B-1-505, or an area within the municipality is annexed into the municipal services
317	district in accordance with Section 17B-2a-1103, the district's board of trustees shall
318	be as follows:
319	(i) subject to Subsection (2)(b), a member of that municipality's governing body;
320	(ii) one member of the county council of the county in which the municipal services
321	district is located; and
322	(iii) the total number of board members is not required to be an odd number.
323	(b) A member described in Subsection (2)(a)(i) shall be designated by the municipal
324	legislative body.
325	(c) A municipal or county legislative body may appoint a member of the municipality's
326	or the county's legislative body to act as an alternate member of the municipal
327	services district board of trustees, to serve in place of the regular board member
328	selected pursuant to Subsection (2)(a) or (b) during any period of time when the
329	regular board member is absent, unable, or refuses to act as a member of the
330	municipal services district board of trustees, provided that:
331	(i) the municipal or county legislative body adopts a resolution to make the
332	appointment;
333	(ii) the alternate member meets all applicable statutory requirements to serve on the

334	board of trustees;
335	(iii) the alternate member takes the oath of office and is covered by crime insurance
336	as provided in Section 17B-1-303; and
337	(iv) the term of the alternate member will be identical to that of the board member
338	described in Subsection (2)(a) who is appointed by the municipality's or the
339	county's legislative body.
340	(d) Should a member of the board of trustees who is appointed pursuant to Subsection
341	(2)(a) or (b) and the alternate board member selected as provided in Subsection (2)(c)
342	both be present at a meeting or other official event of the municipal services district,
343	the alternate board member may not act as a member of the board of trustees during
344	the meeting or event.
345	(e) An alternate board member designated as provided in Subsection (2)(c) may not
346	chair a meeting of the board of trustees unless only alternate board members are
347	present at the anchor location.
348	(f) Compensation under Section 17B-1-307 may equitably be apportioned between a
349	regular board member and an alternate board member.
350	(3)(a) As used in this Subsection (3):
351	(i) "District participant" means:
352	(A) the county that created a municipal services district under Section
353	17B-2a-1105; or
354	(B) a municipality that is part of the municipal services district.
355	(ii) "Proportionate amount" means, for each district participant, the amount that is
356	attributable to the district participant in proportion to the total amount attributable
357	to all district participants.
358	(iii) "Trigger date" means the earliest of:
359	(A) the effective date of an annexation of an unincorporated island, as defined in
360	Section 10-2-429, that occurs under Title 10, Chapter 2, Part 4, Annexation,
361	excluding an automatic annexation under Section 10-2-429;
362	(B) the effective date of an incorporation of a community council area, as defined
363	in Section 10-2a-102; and
364	(C) the effective date of an automatic annexation under Section 10-2-429.
365	(b) For a board of trustees described in Subsection (2), each board member's vote is
366	weighted:
367	(i) until the trigger date, using the proportion of the municipal services district

368	population that resides:
369	(A) for each member described in Subsection (2)(a)(i), within that member's
370	municipality; and
371	(B) for the member described in Subsection (2)(a)(ii), within the unincorporated
372	county; and
373	(ii) beginning the trigger date:
374	(A) 60% according to the proportionate amount of the combined total of sales tax
375	revenue and revenue for B and C roads under Section 72-2-108;
376	(B) 30% according to the proportionate amount of weighted mileage, as defined in
377	Section 72-2-108; and
378	(C) 10% according to the proportionate amount of population.
379	(4) The board may adopt a resolution providing for future board members to be appointed,
380	as provided in Section 17B-1-304, or elected, as provided in Section 17B-1-306.
381	(5) Notwithstanding Subsections 17B-1-309(1) or 17B-1-310(1), the board of trustees may
382	adopt a resolution to determine the internal governance of the board.
383	(6) The municipal services district and the county may enter into an agreement for the
384	provision of legal services to the municipal services district.
385	Section 5. Section <b>20A-1-512</b> is amended to read:
386	20A-1-512 . Midterm vacancies on special district boards Notice.
387	(1)(a) When a vacancy occurs on any special district board for any reason, the following
388	shall appoint a replacement to serve out the unexpired term in accordance with this
389	section:
390	(i) the special district board, if the person vacating the position was elected; or
391	(ii) the appointing authority, as that term is defined in Section 17B-1-102, if the
392	appointing authority appointed the person vacating the position.
393	(b) Except as provided in Subsection (1)(c) or (d), before acting to fill the vacancy, the
394	special district board or appointing authority shall:
395	(i) give public notice of the vacancy for at least two weeks before the special district
396	board or appointing authority meets to fill the vacancy by publishing the notice, as
397	a class A notice under Section 63G-30-102, for the special district; and
398	(ii) identify, in the notice:
399	(A) the date, time, and place of the meeting where the vacancy will be filled;
400	(B) the individual to whom an individual who is interested in an appointment to
401	fill the vacancy may submit the individual's name for consideration; and

402	(C) any submission deadline.
403	(c) An appointing authority is not subject to Subsection (1)(b) if:
404	(i)(A) the appointing authority appoints one of the appointing authority's own
405	members; and
406	(B) that member meets all applicable statutory board member qualifications; or
407	(ii) the vacancy is on the board of trustees of an infrastructure financing district with
408	no residents within the district's boundary.
409	(d) When a vacancy occurs on the board of a water conservancy district located in more
410	than one county:
411	(i) the board shall give notice of the vacancy to the county legislative bodies that
412	nominated the vacating trustee as provided in Section 17B-2a-1005;
413	(ii) the county legislative bodies described in Subsection (1)(d)(i) shall collectively
414	compile a list of three nominees to fill the vacancy; and
415	(iii) the governor shall, with the advice and consent of the Senate, appoint an
416	individual to fill the vacancy from nominees submitted as provided in Subsection
417	17B-2a-1005(2)(c).
418	(2) If, 90 days after a vacancy occurs, the special district board has failed to appoint an
419	individual to complete an elected board member's term, the vacancy shall be filled:
420	(a) in accordance with the procedure for a special district described in Subsection (1)(b);
421	and
422	(b) by, as applicable:
423	(i) the legislative body of the county or municipality that created the special district;
424	or
425	(ii) for a vacancy on a board of trustees of an infrastructure financing district, the
426	legislative body of the county whose unincorporated area contains or the
427	municipality whose boundary contains more of the area within the infrastructure
428	financing district than is contained within the unincorporated area of any other
429	county or within the boundary of any other municipality.
430	(3) If the body identified in Subsection (2)(b) has failed to appoint an individual to
431	complete an elected board member's term within 90 calendar days after becoming the
432	appointing authority under Subsection (2)(b) and a board quorum, as defined in
433	Subsection 17B-1-310(1), exists, the vacancy shall be filled by the special district board
434	in accordance with the procedure described in Subsection (1)(b).
435	Section 6. Effective Date.

This bill takes effect on May 7, 2025.