

CHAPTER 452

MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP

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452.01 DEFINITIONS. Subdivision 1. **Words, terms, and phrases.** Unless the language or context clearly indicates that a different meaning is intended, the words, terms, and phrases defined in subdivision 2, for the purposes of sections 452.02 to 452.07, shall be given the meaning subjoined thereto; and the words, terms, and phrases defined in subdivision 3, for the purposes of sections 452.08 to 452.14, shall be given the meaning subjoined thereto.

Subdivision 2. **Public utilities.** "Public utilities" shall include street railways, telephones, water-works, gas works, and electric light, heat or power works.

Subdivision 3. **Public utilities.** "Public utilities" shall include street railways, telephones, water-works, gas works, electric light, heat or power works, public docks, union depots and terminal systems, ice plants, stone quarries, creosoting works, and public markets.

[1907 c. 452 s. 1; 1913 c. 310 s. 1] (1311, 1484)

452.02 CITIES MAY OWN AND OPERATE OR LEASE. Every city of this state shall have the power to own, construct, acquire, purchase, maintain, and operate any public utility within its corporate limits, and to lease the same, or any part of the same, to any company incorporated under the laws of this state, for the purpose of operating such public utility for any period not longer than 20 years, on such terms and conditions as the council shall deem for the best interests of the public. No city shall proceed to operate any public utility unless the proposition to operate shall first have been submitted to the electors of the city as a separate proposition and approved by three-fifths of those voting at the election. Any city now owning and operating its own water-works, or other public utilities, may continue to own and operate the same in the same manner as is now authorized by law to own and operate the same, without submitting any proposition so to do to the electors thereof, and no lease thereof for any term shall be made until confirmed by the voters of the city, as herein provided. It shall be lawful for the city to incorporate in any grant of the right to construct or operate a public utility, a reservation of the right on the part of the city to take over all or part of the public utility, at or before the expiration of the grant upon such terms and conditions as may be provided in the grant; it shall also be lawful to provide in a grant, that in case the reserved right be not exercised by the city and it shall grant a right to another company to operate the public utility in the streets and parts of streets occupied by its grantee under the former grant, the new grantee shall purchase and take over the public utility of the former grantee, upon the terms that the city might have taken it over, and it shall be lawful for the council of any city to make the grant containing such a reservation for either the construction or operation, or both the construction and operation of the public utility, in, upon, and along any of the public streets, alleys, or ways therein, or portions thereof, in which the public utility is already located at the time of making the grant, without the petition or consent of any of the owners of the land abutting or fronting upon any street, public alley, or way, or portion thereof, covered by the grant. No ordinance authorizing the lease for a longer period than five years, nor any ordinance renewing this lease, shall go into effect until the expiration of 60 days from and after its passage. If, within the 60 days, there is filed with the clerk of the

city a petition signed by ten per cent of the voters voting at the last preceding election for mayor, in the city, asking that the ordinance be submitted to a popular vote, then the ordinance shall not go into effect unless the question of its adoption shall first be submitted to the electors of the city and approved by a majority of those voting thereon. The signatures of the petition need not all be appended to one paper, but each signer shall add to his signature, which shall be in his own handwriting, his place of residence, giving the street and number. One of the signers of each paper shall make oath before an officer competent to administer oaths that each signature to the paper appended is the signature of the person whose name purports to be thereto subscribed. The council of any city which shall decide by popular vote, as provided in sections 452.02 to 452.07, to operate a public utility shall have the power to make all needful rules and regulations respecting the operation of same, including the power to fix and prescribe rates and charges, but these rates and charges shall be high enough to produce a revenue sufficient to bear all the costs of maintenance and operation and to meet interest charges on all bonds or certificates issued on account of the public utility and to permit the accumulation of a surplus or sinking fund that should be sufficient to meet all the outstanding bonds or certificates at maturity. For the purpose of acquiring any public utility, either by purchase or construction, as provided for in sections 452.02 to 452.07, or for the equipment of any public utility, any city may borrow money and issue its negotiable bonds therefor, pledging the faith and credit of the city; but no such bonds shall be issued, unless the proposition to issue the same shall first have been submitted to the electors of the city and approved by three-fifths of those voting thereon, nor in any amount in excess of the cost to the city of the property for which the bonds were issued, as ascertained as elsewhere provided in sections 452.02 to 452.07, and ten per cent of that cost in addition thereto. In exercise of any of the powers granted by sections 452.02 to 452.07, any city shall have power to acquire, take, and hold any and all franchises and necessary property, real, personal, or mixed, for the purposes specified in sections 452.02 to 452.07, either by purchase or condemnation in the manner provided by law for the taking and condemning of private property for public use, but in no valuation of public utility property for the purpose of any such acquisition, except of public utilities now operating under existing franchises shall any sum be included as the value of any earning power of the utility, or of the unexpired portion of any franchise granted by the city. In case of the leasing by any city of any public utility owned by it, the rental reserved shall be based on both the actual value of the tangible property and of the franchise contained in the lease, and this rental shall not be less than a sufficient sum to meet the annual interest upon all outstanding bonds or certificates issued by the city on account of the public utility.

[1907 c. 452 s. 2] (1312)

452.03 CERTIFICATES IN LIEU OF BONDS. In lieu of issuing bonds pledging the faith and credit of the city, as provided for in section 452.02, any city may issue and dispose of interest-bearing certificates, to be known as the "street railway certificates," "telephone certificates," "water-works certificates," "gas works certificates," "electric light, heat or power works certificates," as the case may be, which shall, under no circumstances, be and become an obligation or liability of the same, or payable out of the general fund thereof, but shall be payable solely out of the specified portion of the revenues or income to be derived from such public utility property, for the acquisition of which they were issued. These certificates shall not be issued and secured on any public utility property in an amount in excess of the cost to the city of the property and ten per cent of the cost in addition thereto. In order to secure the payment of the public utility certificates and the interest thereon the city may convey, by way of mortgage or deed of trust, any or all of the property thus acquired or to be acquired through the issue thereof; which mortgage or deed of trust shall be executed in such a manner as directed by the council and acknowledged and recorded in the manner provided by law for the acknowledgment and recording of mortgages of real estate, and may contain conditions and provisions not in conflict with the provisions of sections 452.02 to 452.07, as may be deemed necessary to fully secure the payment of the certificates described therein. Any such mortgage or deed of trust may carry the grant of a privilege or right to maintain and operate the property covered thereby, for a period not exceeding 20 years from and after the date the property may come in the possession of any person or corporation as a result of foreclosure proceedings;

which privilege or right may fix the rates which the person or corporation securing the same as a result of the foreclosure proceedings shall be entitled to charge in the operation of the property, for a period not exceeding 20 years. When, and as often as default shall be made in the payment of the certificate issued or secured by mortgage or deed of trust or in the payment of the interest thereon when due, and any such default shall have continued for the space of 12 months after notice thereof has been given to the mayor and financial officer of the city issuing the certificates, it shall be lawful for any mortgagee or trustee, upon the request of the holder or holders of a majority in amount of the certificates issued and outstanding under the mortgage or deed of trust, to declare the whole of the principal of all the certificates as may be outstanding, to be at once due and payable, and to proceed to foreclose the mortgage or deed of trust in any court of competent jurisdiction. At a foreclosure sale, the mortgagee or the holders of these certificates may become the purchaser or purchasers and the rights and privileges sold, if he or they be the highest bidders. Any public utility acquired under foreclosure shall be subject to regulation by the corporate authorities of the city to the same extent as if the right to construct, maintain, and operate the property had been acquired through a direct grant without the intervention of foreclosure proceedings; provided, that no public utility certificates or mortgage shall ever be issued by any city under the provisions of sections 452.02 to 452.07, unless and until the question of the adoption of the ordinance of the council making provision of the issue thereof shall have first been submitted to a popular vote and approved by a majority of the qualified voters of the city voting upon the question.

[1907 c. 452 s. 3] (1313)

452.04 ACCOUNTS, HOW KEPT. Every city owning or owning and operating a public utility shall keep the books of account for the public utility distinct from other city accounts, and in such manner as to show the true and complete financial results of the city ownership or ownership and operation, as the case may be. These accounts shall be so kept as to show the actual cost to the city of the public utilities owned; all cost of maintenance, extension, and improvement; all operating expenses of every description, in case of city operation; the amount set aside for sinking fund purposes. The council shall cause to be printed annually, for public distribution, a report showing the financial results of the city ownership, or ownership and operation.

[1907 c. 452 s. 4] (1314)

452.05 ADOPTION. Sections 452.02 to 452.07 shall not be in force in any city until the question of adoption in such city shall first have been submitted to the electors of such city, at the general or city election or at a special election called for that purpose, and approved by the affirmative vote of three-fifths of those voting at such election. The council of any such city named, may by ordinance, direct that the question of the adoption of sections 452.02 to 452.07 in the city be submitted to popular vote at any general or city election called for that purpose in and for the entire city, coming not sooner than 30 days from and after the passage of the ordinance. If the council in any city shall incorporate in any grant to a private company of the right to construct or operate any public utility, a provision reserving to the city the right to take over the property at or before the expiration of the grant, in case the people of the city shall later adopt sections 452.02 to 452.07, the provision shall be as valid and effective for all purposes, in case the city shall later adopt sections 452.02 to 452.07, as if the provision were made a part of this grant after the adoption of sections 452.02 to 452.07 by the city.

[1907 c. 452 s. 5] (1315)

452.06 ORDINANCE FOR SUBMISSION. In all cases provided in sections 452.02 to 452.07 for the submission of questions or propositions to popular vote the council shall pass an ordinance stating the substance of the proposition or question to be voted upon and designating the election at which the question or proposition is to be submitted, which may be at any general or city election or special election called for that purpose; provided, that the election shall not be held sooner than 30 days from and after the passage of the ordinance. Notice of a special election which shall be held in any city under sections 452.02 to 452.07 and all proceedings respecting the same shall conform, as nearly as may be, to the law governing other special elections therein. All ballots as to any proposition or question submitted pursuant to the terms of sections 452.02 to 452.07 shall be

delivered to the election judges, deposited in a separate box, and counted, canvassed, and returned as is provided by law in case of other ballots, and the tally sheets and return blanks shall contain suitable columns and spaces therefor.

[1907 c. 452 s. 6] (1316)

452.07 TIME LIMIT OF GRANT OR LEASE. Nothing contained in sections 452.02 to 452.06 shall be construed to authorize any city to make any grants or to lease any public utility for a period exceeding 20 years from the making of the grant or lease; provided, that when a right to maintain and operate a public utility for a period not exceeding 20 years is contained in a mortgage or deed of trust to secure any of the certificates mentioned in those sections (and no such right shall be implied), the period shall commence as provided in section 452.03.

[1907 c. 452 s. 7] (1317)

452.08 ACQUISITION AND OPERATION. Every city of the first class in this state shall have the power to own, construct, acquire, purchase, maintain, and operate any public utility within its corporate limits, and to lease the same, or any part of the same, to any company incorporated under the laws of this state, for the purpose of operating such public utility for any period not longer than 20 years, on such terms and conditions as the council shall deem for the best interests of the public.

Any city of the first class now owning and operating its own water-works, or other public utilities, may continue to own and operate the same in the same manner as if now authorized by law to own and operate the same, without submitting any proposition so to do to the electors thereof, and it may by a three-fifths vote of the council or other governing body and without submission to the electors thereof issue bonds and certificates of indebtedness in the manner and proportions provided in sections 452.08 to 452.14 for the purpose of refunding all bonds issued for the construction and creation of the utility, and the remainder of the proceeds thereof, if any, shall be covered into the treasury of the city as a sinking fund for the redemption of any existing bonds, or for the purchase and acquisition of any new bonds of the city offered by the city.

It shall be lawful for any city of the first class to incorporate in any grant of the right to construct or operate any public utility, a reservation of the right on the part of the city to take over all or part of the public utility, at or before the expiration of the grant upon such terms and conditions as may be provided in the grant; it shall also be lawful to provide in the grant, that in case the reserved right be not exercised by the city and it shall grant a right to another company to operate the public utility in the streets and parts of streets occupied by its grantee under the former grant, the new grantee shall purchase and take over the public utility of the former grantee, upon the terms that the city might have taken it over, and it shall be lawful for the council of the city to make the grant containing such a reservation for either the construction or operation or both the construction and operation of the public utility, in, upon, and along any of the public streets, alleys, or ways therein, or portions thereof, in which the public utility is already located at the time of making the grant, without the petition or consent of any of the owners of the land abutting or fronting upon any street, public alley, or way, or portion thereof, covered by the grant.

No ordinance authorizing the lease of any public utility for any period, nor any ordinance renewing any lease, shall go into effect until the expiration of 60 days from and after its passage. If, within these 60 days, there is filed with the clerk of the city a petition signed by ten per cent of the voters voting at the last preceding election for mayor, in the city, asking that the ordinance be submitted to a popular vote, then the ordinance shall not go into effect unless the question of the adoption of the ordinance shall first be submitted to the electors of the city and are approved by a majority of those voting thereon.

The signatures of the petition need not all be appended to one paper, but each signer shall add to his signature, which shall be in his own handwriting, his place of residence, giving the street number. One of the signers of each paper shall make oath before an officer competent to administer oaths that each signature to the paper appended is the signature of the person whose name purports to be thereto subscribed. The council of any city which shall decide by vote of its electors to acquire or construct any public utility, shall have the power, unless otherwise provided by law, to make all needful rules and regulations respecting the operation of the same, including the power to fix and prescribe rates and charges. For the

purpose of acquiring a public utility either by purchase or construction, as provided for in sections 452.08 to 452.14, or for the equipment of any such public utility, and in addition to the certificates of indebtedness provided for in section 452.09, any city may borrow money and issue its negotiable bonds to an amount not exceeding one-fifth the cost thereof, pledging the faith and credit of the city therefor; but no such bonds shall be issued until the question of the issuance of certificates of indebtedness shall have been approved by a majority of the electors voting thereon as provided for in section 452.09, and then only upon a three-fifths vote of the council or other governing body. In the exercise of any of the powers, granted by sections 452.08 to 452.14, any city shall have power to acquire, take, and hold any and all franchises and necessary property, real, personal, or mixed, for the purposes specified in sections 452.08 to 452.14, either by purchase or condemnation in the manner provided by law for the taking and condemning of private property for public use, but in no valuation of public utility property for the purpose of any such acquisition, except of public utilities now operating under existing franchises shall any sum be included as the value of any earning power of the utility, or of the unexpired portion of any franchise granted by the city.

In case of the leasing by any city of any public utility owned by it, the rental reserved shall be based on both the actual value of the tangible property and of the franchise contained in the lease, and the rental shall not be less than a sufficient sum to meet the annual interest upon all outstanding bonds or certificates issued by the city on account of any such public utility.

[1913 c. 310 s. 2] (1485)

452.09 LIMIT OF BONDS AND CERTIFICATES. In addition to the bonds pledging the faith and credit of the city, as provided for in section 452.08, any city of the first class may issue and dispose of interest-bearing certificates, which shall be a lien or charge against the public utility property for the acquisition or construction of which they were issued and shall be payable out of the specified portion of the revenues or income to be derived therefrom, but which shall under no circumstances be or become an obligation or liability of the city or payable out of the general funds thereof, nor shall the certificates be deemed a part of the indebtedness of the city for any purpose. The certificates, together with the bonds provided for in section 452.08, shall not be issued on the public utility property in an amount in excess of the cost to the city of the property as provided in section 452.08, and ten per cent of the cost in addition thereto. In order to secure the payment of the public utility certificates and the interest thereon, the city may convey, by way of mortgage or deed of trust, any or all of the property thus acquired or to be acquired through the issue thereof; which mortgage or deed of trust shall be executed in such a manner as directed by the council and acknowledged and recorded in the manner provided by law for the acknowledgment and recording of mortgages of real estate, and may contain such conditions and provisions, not in conflict with the provisions of sections 452.08 to 452.14, as may be deemed necessary to fully secure the payment of the certificates described therein. The mortgage or deed of trust may carry the grant of a privilege or right to maintain and operate the property covered thereby, for a period not exceeding 20 years from and after the date the property may come in the possession of any person or corporation as a result of foreclosure proceedings; which privilege or right may fix the rates which the person or corporation securing the same as a result of the foreclosure proceedings shall be entitled to charge in the operation of the property, for a period not exceeding 20 years. When, and as often as default shall be made in the payment of the certificate issued or secured by mortgage or deed of trust, or in the payment of the interest thereon when due, and the default shall have continued for the space of 12 months after notice thereof has been given to the mayor and financial officer of the city issuing the certificates, it shall be lawful for the mortgagee or trustee, upon the request of the holder or holders of a majority in amount of the certificates issued and outstanding under the mortgage or deed of trust, to declare the whole of the principal of all the certificates outstanding to be at once due and payable, and to proceed to foreclose the mortgage or deed of trust in any court of competent jurisdiction. At a foreclosure sale, the mortgagee or the holders of the certificates may become the purchaser or purchasers and the rights and privileges sold, if he or they be the highest bidders. Any public utility acquired under the foreclosure shall be subject to regulation by the corporate authorities of the city to the same extent as if the right to construct, maintain, and operate the property

had been acquired through a direct grant without the intervention of foreclosure proceedings; provided, that no such public utility certificates or mortgage shall ever be issued by any city under the provisions of sections 452.08 to 452.14, unless and until the question of the adoption of the ordinance of the council making provision of the issue thereof shall have first been submitted to a popular vote and approved by a majority of the qualified voters of the city voting upon the question.

[1913 c. 310 s. 3] (1486)

452.10 BOOKS; REPORT. Every city of the first class owning and operating a public utility shall keep the books of account for the public utility distinct from other city accounts, and in such manner as to show the true and complete financial results of the city ownership, or ownership and operation, as the case may be. These accounts shall be so kept as to show the actual cost to the city of the public utilities owned; all cost of maintenance, depreciation, extension, and improvement; all operating expenses of every description, in case of city operation; the amount set aside for sinking fund purposes. The council shall cause to be printed annually, for public distribution, a report showing the financial results of the city ownership, or ownership and operation.

[1913 c. 310 s. 4] (1487)

452.11 SUBMISSION TO VOTERS. No city of the first class shall acquire or construct any public utility under the terms of sections 452.08 to 452.14 unless the proposition to acquire or construct same has first been submitted to the qualified electors of the city at a general city election or at a special election called for that purpose, and been approved by a majority vote of all electors voting upon the proposition.

The question of issuing public utility certificates as provided in section 452.09 may, at the option of the council, be submitted at the same election as the question of the acquisition or construction of the public utility.

[1913 c. 310 s. 5] (1488)

452.12 SUBMISSION; ELECTION. In all cases provided in sections 452.08 to 452.14 for the submission of questions or propositions to popular vote the council shall pass an ordinance stating the substance of the proposition or question to be voted upon and designating the election at which the question or proposition is to be submitted, which may be at any general or city election or special election called for that purpose; provided, that the election shall not be held sooner than 30 days from and after the passage of the ordinance.

Notice of special election which shall be held in any city of the first class under sections 452.08 to 452.14 and all proceedings respecting the same shall conform as nearly as may be to the law governing other special elections therein.

All ballots, as to any proposition or question submitted pursuant to the terms of sections 452.08 to 452.14 shall be delivered to the election judges, shall be deposited in a separate box and shall be counted, canvassed, and returned, as is provided by law in case of other ballots, and the tally sheets and return blanks shall contain suitable columns and spaces therefor.

No defect or omission in the calling, giving notice, or holding of any election under sections 452.08 to 452.14 shall in any manner affect the validity of the election unless it shall affirmatively appear that the defect or omission changed the result of the election.

[1913 c. 310 s. 6] (1489)

452.13 TERM OF GRANT OR LEASE. Nothing in sections 452.08 to 452.14 contained shall be construed to authorize any city of the first class to make any grants or to lease any public utility for a period exceeding 20 years from the making of the grant or lease; provided, that when a right to maintain and operate a public utility for a period not exceeding 20 years is contained in a mortgage or deed of trust to secure any of the certificates (and no such right shall be implied), the period shall commence as provided in section 452.09.

[1913 c. 310 s. 7] (1490)

452.14 UNION DEPOT AND TERMINAL SYSTEM; BONDS. When any city of the first class shall decide, by a vote of the electors thereof in the manner provided in sections 452.08 to 452.14 to acquire a union depot and terminal system, it may, upon a three-fifths vote of its council or other governing body, issue the

bonds provided for therein at such rate and for such period as the council may prescribe notwithstanding any provision in the charter of the city limiting the amount of the bonded indebtedness thereof; provided, that such issue of bonds shall never be for an amount which, together with all other net bonded indebtedness, shall exceed ten per cent of the assessed valuation of the city as of the time of the issue.

[1913 c. §10 s. 8] (1491)

452.15 [Renumbered 454.041]

452.16 [Renumbered 454.042]

452.17 [Renumbered 454.043]

452.18 INSPECTORS OF GAS, ELECTRIC LIGHT, HEAT AND WATER METERS. In addition to the powers heretofore granted by law to the cities and villages in this state, which power shall not be limited or abridged by the provisions of sections 452.18 to 452.20, there is hereby granted to the council or governing board of any city or village the power and authority to appoint inspectors of gas, electric light, heat and water meters.

[1907 c. 343 s. 1] (1861)

452.19 POWERS AND DUTIES; TERM; SALARY. The inspector shall have power and authority to, at all reasonable hours, inspect and read any gas, electric light, heat or water meters, whether the same be connected with a plant owned by the municipality, or owned or operated by any person, corporation, or association in the city or village. The inspection may be made either under the direction of the council or governing board of the city or village, or at the request of any private owner or patron of any such gas, electric light, heat or water plant, and the inspector, when requested or required so to do, shall report upon the condition of these meters and in reference to other matters concerning the same as shall be required of the inspector, that the term of office of the inspector shall not be for a longer period than two years and that the inspector's salary shall not exceed \$1,500 annually.

[1907 c. 343 s. 2] (1862)

452.20 COMPENSATION AND TERM, HOW FIXED. The council or governing board of any city or village shall have the power and authority to fix and determine the compensation to be paid to or received by the inspector, and his term of office.

[1907 c. 343 s. 3] (1863)

452.21 [Renumbered 454.045]