



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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MWRD installs four commissioners to protect water resources and defend public health



(From L to R): MWRD Commissioners Yumeka Brown, Patricia Theresa Flynn, Mariyana Spyropoulos and Daniel Pogorzelski were formally sworn into office during their installation ceremony on Dec. 6.

Welcoming in a new wave of leadership to advocate for the region's water environment, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) installed four commissioners to govern the agency tasked with protecting public health, improving area water quality and promoting sustainable operations in the midst of climate change and a pandemic.

Returning Commissioner Mariyana Spyropoulos was joined at the installation ceremony on Dec. 6 by first time elected commissioners Yumeka Brown, Patricia Theresa Flynn and Daniel Pogorzelski to serve on the nine-member Board. The commissioners are responsible for providing financial oversight and establishing policies and procedures which meet the MWRD's objective of protecting the water environment for the citizens of Cook County.

Commissioner Spyropoulos is now the longest serving commissioner on the Board, having been first elected in 2010. She was introduced by former Gov. Pat Quinn at the installation ceremony, and her swearing-in was presided over by Cook County Circuit Court Anthony C. Kyriakopoulos.

"As I embark on a third term at the MWRD, I can tell you that our work is as critical as ever," said Commissioner Spyropoulos. "Equipped with new knowledge, innovation and tools, it is time to apply our talents to best protect our water resources. I thank the voters and Cook County taxpayers for their support and trust."

Commissioner Spyropoulos has served as the MWRD's chairperson of finance from 2013 to 2015 and president from 2015 to 2019. During her 12 years at *(continued)*

MWRD installs four commissioners to protect water resources, *cont.*

the MWRD, Commissioner Spyropoulos has championed fiscal responsibility, transparency, strong labor support, environmentally progressive policies and international partnerships to foster knowledge exchanges among partnering governmental agencies. In 2021, Commissioner Spyropoulos was awarded the Public Officials Award from the Water Environment Federation, and in 2022 the University of Illinois School of Law recognized her with the Alumni Public Service Award.

Commissioner Brown and her family reside in Matteson, where she has been the Village Clerk since 2017. In addition, she serves as president of the Rich Township Democratic Organization. She is also a 20+ year non-profit Certified Association Executive (CAE) employed as the Senior Director, Governance and Operations for the American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine (AAHPM). She is a small business owner of The Iron Pearl Banquet Facilities. While working in the Environment, Energy, and Resources Section with the American Bar Association, she developed an interest in environmental law, resources, and the Clean Water Act. Commissioner Brown was introduced at the installation ceremony by Matteson Trustee Adam Shorter III and sworn in by Cook County Circuit Court Judge Nichole C. Patton.

“I appreciate the opportunity to represent the Southland and now the entire county in support of our water environment and the more than five million residents who rely on our essential services,” said Commissioner Brown. “Clean water supports public health, and in my capacity as commissioner of the MWRD, I will strive to promote equitable and healthy communities across every corner of Cook County.”

Commissioner Flynn was introduced by former MWRD President Kathleen Therese Meany. Illinois Appellate Court First District Justice Sanjay T. Tailor swore her into office. Now in her third term as trustee for the village of Crestwood, Commissioner Flynn became the first woman elected to the Crestwood Board of Trustees in 2011 following a drinking water scandal that plagued the community. As a mother of three young children feeling her choice was to relocate or engage in local government, Commissioner Flynn ran for office and was elected. At Crestwood, she has worked to deliver an annual balanced budget, develop local policy and procedure, and served as chair of both the Finance and Water/Sewer departments. In her position as trustee, she has worked with the MWRD to protect the Cal-Sag Channel and other lo-



A new MWRD Board of Commissioners is now officially in place for the next two years. Commissioners (from L to R) include: Cameron Davis, Yumeka Brown, Patricia Theresa Flynn, Chairman of Finance Marcelino Garcia, President Kari K. Steele, Eira L. Corral Sepúlveda, Mariyana Spyropoulos, Kimberly Du Buclet and Daniel Pogorzelski.

cal waterways and implement stormwater management projects to mitigate area flooding. Prior to being elected, Commissioner Flynn worked in the MWRD’s Monitoring and Research Department in Pollution Control as well as in the laboratory of the Calumet Water Reclamation Plant.

“It is my oath and my promise to work in the best interest of this noble agency as well as the taxpayers of Cook County,” said Commissioner Flynn. “I am ready for the opportunity to serve our citizens and our water environment by combining my experience as an MWRD employee and Crestwood trustee with new expanded goals of protection for our region’s most precious natural resource.”

Commissioner Pogorzelski was elected to serve a two-year term to complete the six-year term of former Commissioner Debra Shore, who was appointed by President Joe Biden to serve as administrator of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5. A son of immigrants, Commissioner Pogorzelski has committed a lifetime to linking people to needed resources. He served as executive director of the Avondale Chamber of Commerce where he was titled the “unofficial Mayor of Avondale,” merging economic development opportunities with public art engagement and green infrastructure improvements. Transitioning to government, Commissioner Pogorzelski worked for 38th Ward Ald. Tim Cullerton, state Sen. Robert F. Martwick Jr. (10th Dist.) while he was in the Illinois House, and since 2018 with Illinois Treasurer Michael Frerichs’ office of Civic Engagement, connecting Illinoisans with the services and programs they offer. Commissioner Pogorzelski serves as vice president of the 38th Ward Democrats, co-chair of the Diversity Subcommittee of the Community Outreach (*continued*)

MWRD installs four commissioners to protect water resources, *cont.*



Elected to a third term, Commissioner Mariyana Spyropoulos was sworn in by Cook County Circuit Court Judge Anthony C. Kyriakopoulos.



Commissioner Patricia Theresa Flynn was sworn in by Illinois Appellate Court First District Justice Sanjay T. Taylor who facilitated the oath of office.



Commissioner Yumeka Brown was sworn in by Cook County Circuit Court Judge Nichole C. Patton with her husband Corey Brown by her side.



At the installation ceremony of Commissioner Daniel Pogorzelski, Cook County Circuit Court Judge Stephanie D. Saltouros presided over the oath of office.

Committee of the Cook County Democratic Party, and as member of the DRIVE Committee for Teamsters Local 916. At the installation ceremony, it was Treasurer Frerichs who introduced the new commissioner. He was sworn in by Cook County Circuit Court Judge Stephanie D. Saltouros.

“It is my great honor to serve the taxpayers of Cook County to protect our vital water resources and health and economy as a commissioner at the MWRD,” said Commissioner Pogorzelski. “I strive to continue connecting our residents to resources, while this time also serving as a defender of our water environment to develop new strategy and innovation to assure clean water.”

MWRD commissioners are elected at large and serve on a salaried, part-time basis to govern the MWRD. Three Commissioners are elected every two years for six-year

terms. Biannually, the Board elects from its membership a President, Vice President, and Chairman of the Committee on Finance.

“We welcome back Commissioner Spyropoulos and welcome new commissioners Brown, Flynn and Pogorzelski to our dedicated, talented and diverse Board of Commissioners,” said President Kari K. Steele. “We are inspired by their willingness to lead and take on the difficult decisions required to protect our water environment and the millions of people across Cook County impacted by our essential services. We thank them and their families for their commitment and I look forward to their collaboration.”

To watch the ceremony, visit:
<https://mwrld.legistar.com/calendar.aspx>.

Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

Established in 1889, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) is an award-winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois. Learn more at mwrld.org.