



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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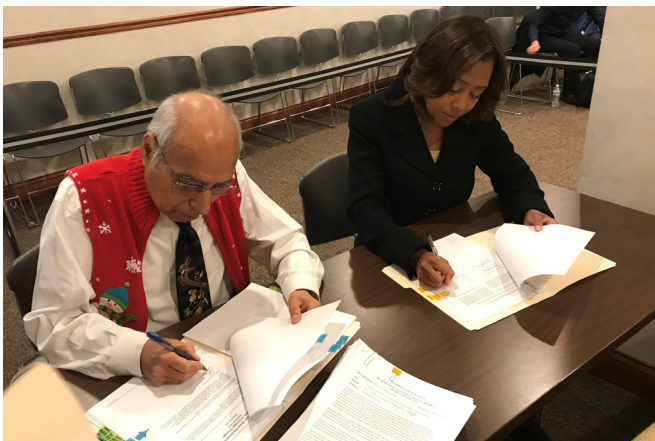
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For immediate release

December 20, 2019

MWRD Board of Commissioners approve 2020 budget



MWRD Chairman of Finance Frank Avila and President Kari K. Steele formally sign the MWRD's 2020 budget following its approval on Dec. 19.



The MWRD's Stickney Water Reclamation Plant transforms as much as 1.2 billion gallons of water per day, serving 2.3 million people from central Chicago and 46 suburban communities.

The Board of Commissioners for the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) have approved a fiscally responsible budget for 2020 that will help the MWRD meet its mission to treat the region's wastewater, increase flood control initiatives and protect both the local water environment and the public's health.

The \$1.15 billion budget presents a 5.7 percent reduction from the 2019 adjusted budget of \$1.22 billion, a savings of more than \$70.3 million.

"This sustainable financial plan will effectively maintain our critical facilities to deliver essential services to more than 5 million residents and support local flood control and stormwater management initiatives," said MWRD Chairman of Finance Frank Avila. "We look forward to providing the same excellent services in 2020, and we thank our commissioners and staff for developing a budget that protects our taxpayers and our environment."

Tasked with serving Chicago and 128 suburban communities across nearly all of Cook County, the MWRD treats an average of 1.4 billion gallons of water each day, with a total treatment capacity of more than 2 billion gallons per day at seven water reclamation plants (WRPs). In addition, the MWRD

controls 76.1 miles of navigable waterways, and owns and operates 34 stormwater detention reservoirs to provide regional flood protection. The MWRD's Tunnel and Reservoir Plan, which includes 109 miles of tunnels and three major reservoirs, protects area waterways from pollution and mitigates flooding in communities served by combined sewer systems across 375 square miles.

In keeping up with these wide-ranging responsibilities that protect the health and safety of the public, the MWRD continues to demonstrate financial security. The MWRD maintains a AAA bond rating from Fitch Ratings and a AA+ bond rating from Standard & Poor's. The MWRD's funding policies for both its Retirement Fund and Other Postemployment Benefits (OPEB) Fund underscore a commitment to long-term fiscal management and contribute to strong credit ratings. The OPEB fund is on pace to reach 100 percent funding by 2027. \$20 million of accumulated interest income was transferred into the Retirement Fund to illustrate the MWRD's commitment to stable pension reserves. In May 2019, the MWRD took an important step in promoting transparency and efficiency by entering into an intergovernmental agreement with Cook County to allow the Office of the Independent Inspector General to provide additional oversight to the MWRD.

(continued)

MWRD Board of Commissioners approve 2020 budget, *cont.*



Lockport Controlling Works and Powerhouse



Addison Creek Reservoir

The MWRD's 2020 budget is highlighted by the following initiatives:

- The Stormwater Management Fund budget is increasing by \$24.8 million over the 2019 appropriation to expand the MWRD's investment in flood control projects and continue to support local stormwater issues. Among the many projects, the MWRD will continue the construction of the Addison Creek Reservoir and Addison Creek Channel improvements to reduce overbank flooding conditions. These critical stormwater management projects will reduce flooding to approximately 2,200 structures along Addison Creek and protect the Bellwood, Broadview, Melrose Park, Northlake, Stone Park and Westchester communities.
- There are \$10 million in projects that are currently underway to rehabilitate the MWRD's Lockport Controlling Works and Powerhouse to ensure continued reliable operation well into the future. Constructed in 1907, the Lockport Powerhouse generates approximately 40 million kilowatt hours of electrical energy annually, generating \$1.2 million in revenue for the MWRD.
- In 2020, the MWRD will begin a \$10 million rehabilitation of the steel spandrel beams in the pump and blower house at the O'Brien WRP. The pump and blower building was placed into service in 1928.
- The MWRD plans to upgrade its WRPs with new technology, such as an enhanced Distributed Control Systems to optimize work distribution processes and workflow, while also installing a new state-of-the-art Laboratory Information Management System.
- Funds will go toward the preservation of critical infrastructure, such as the rehabilitation of digesters, centrifuges and gas piping at Stickney WRP, and the installation of new filters to optimize energy intensive processes at other WRPs. Other rehabilitation work will take place on intercepting sewers, pumps, boilers, motors, pipe liners, and conveyer installations and railroad track improvements.
- The MWRD plans to invest in the marketing and development of biosolids and compost distribution.
- And the Monitoring and Research Department plans to further develop odor control systems, complete a climate action plan and sustainability and resiliency plans, complete an ammonia-based aeration control system for energy savings and biosolids planning study both at the Hanover Park WRP, begin a phosphorus assessment for the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS), test real-time monitoring of CAWS water quality data, work with farmers at the MWRD's Fulton County site to advance best management practices, and lead and partner with various agencies to address chlorides and protect river ecology.

Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

Established in 1889, the MWRD (www.mwrld.org) is an award winning, special purpose government agency responsible for wastewater treatment and stormwater management in Cook County, Illinois.