



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Press Release

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MWRD ethics ordinance promotes transparency, responsible government

At its January 23, 2020 Board of Commissioners meeting, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD) Board formally approved an amended ethics ordinance designed to ensure responsible operations with the best intention of taxpayers in mind.

The amended ordinance expounds upon the provisions of the MWRD's 2004 Ethics Ordinance by adopting new provisions and expanding others that collectively represent best practices in all aspects of MWRD work to protect the water environment for the 10 million people it serves each day.

"This is a crucial step in providing assurances to taxpayers that the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago has established defined guidelines that promote responsible and transparent governance as we watch over our region's water environment," said MWRD President Kari K. Steele. "We thank our commissioners and Law Department for coming together to support an ethics ordinance that guides the MWRD and protects the taxpayers we serve."

Under the ethics ordinance, the Board of Commissioners will continue to regulate political activities and acceptance of gifts by the commissioners, officers, and employees of the MWRD "in a manner no less restrictive" than the provisions of the Illinois Ethics Act of 2003. Amended provisions address lobbyist registration requirements and heightened conflict of interest provisions for the MWRD's commissioners, officers, employees, and other specified individuals and entities. To learn more about the ordinance, visit <https://mwrdd.org/rules-and-ordinances>.

The ethics ordinance is another step made by the MWRD to promote better government accountability. 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 (OIIG) to provide additional oversight to the MWRD.



The MWRD not only protects the regional water environment, but the taxpayers as well. An amended ethics ordinance was passed by the MWRD Board of Commissioners on Jan. 23, 2020.

"The Office of the Independent Inspector General was grateful for the opportunity, during the MWRD legislative process, to offer input regarding both similar ordinances and best practices. We believe the newly amended MWRD Ethics Ordinance represents a positive step forward for the MWRD," said Andrew Jester, OIIG Supervisor.

The MWRD serves Chicago and 128 suburban communities across nearly all of Cook County, treating an average of 1.4 billion gallons of wastewater each day at seven water reclamation plants (WRPs). In addition, the MWRD controls 76.1 miles of navigable waterways, manages an emerging resource recovery program, and owns and operates 34 stormwater detention reservoirs and the Tunnel and Reservoir Plan, which includes 109 miles of tunnel and three major reservoirs to protect waterways and mitigate flooding in communities served by combined sewer systems across 375 square miles. Despite 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.

Recovering Resources, Transforming Water

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