**LWVCC Annual Meeting Report 5-2-2022**

**Metropolitan Water Reclamation District**

**Overview**

The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District was created 130 years ago, and serves 129 communities including Chicago totaling 5.6 million residents.

* Its primary responsibilities are the treatment of waste water within its legislated boundary and management of stormwater [flood control] for all of Cook County.
* The MWRD’s Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP) includes more than 110 miles of tunnels and three major reservoirs that are designed to protect area waterways from pollution and mitigates flooding in communities served by combined sewer systems across 375 square miles.
* It is governed by a Board of 9 Commissioners elected district-wide with 6-year staggered terms.  An Executive Director, chosen by the Board, manages the day-to-day operations. The racially diverse board is comprised of 7 woman and 2 men.
* The 2022 operating budget is $1.294 billion and FTE’s are 1,971. $97 million of this is dedicated to carrying out its regional authority for stormwater management.
* In-person Board and Committee meetings have resumed.

**Highlights 2021-22**

* On average, treated more than two billion gallons of waste water per day.
* Provided flood control projects to a number of communities across the District and approved contracts and Intergovernmental Agreements with diverse communities for green and gray projects to reduce flooding.
* Approved a board-driven Strategic Plan for 2022-2025 that states, *“equity* *is not an issue area but a framework for equity across all responsibility areas.”* A new Environmental Justice Section was created to monitor progress across the MWRD.
* Participated in a COVID-19 sewage study to see if early detection is possible.
* Deborah Shore left the Board after being appointed as Region 5 Director for the EPA. Her position and three others are on the 2022 primary ballot. Commissioners are either retiring [McGowan], leaving to run for another office [Morita], or requesting another term [Spropoulos]. Appointed Commissioner Perry is running for the remainder of Shore’s term [2 years].
* As part its 2022 Legislative Agenda, the Board approved requesting the IL General Assembly amend the MWRD ordinance to allow for an in-house Insp. General Office.

**Challenges 2022-23**

* Water treatment challenges include Potassium reduction which kills life downstream into the Mississippi River.
* A major challenge is the development of a contingency plan for energy neutrality at the MWRD by 2030 given the delays already caused by COVID and supply chain issues.
* The Board has also challenged staff to reach out to non-affluent communities to engage with the MWRD in intergovernmental Agreements on flood-control projects and provide more financial support.
* Due to climate change, prioritizing increased flood control measures is imperative.

**LWVCC - Observe, Educate, Advocate**

* Ten committed Leaguers covered 22 bi-weekly board meetings and submitted reports for the LWVCC website and for board members. Quarterly Inspector General Reports were also monitored with feedback to the LWVCC Board.
* Observed and reported on several study sessions covering land use and budget issues.
* Conducted a virtual meeting with Commissioner Garcia who is now the Chair of Finance.
* Successfully advocated for moving Executive Sessions to the end of the board meetings to save public speakers and good government observers up to 2 hours of empty time waiting in the lobby for the board meeting to resume.
* Put on hold until 2023 a Stormwater Management education project for local Leagues and their communities.

***Diane Edmundson, MWRD Observer Coordinator & member of the Budget & Structure Interest Group***