

Frank Avila – 6 year term

IVI-IPO GENERAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

DATE: 01/16/04

CANDIDATE FOR: Commissioner of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago **PARTY** Democratic

NAME: Frank Avila

VOTING ADDRESS: 2011 W. 18th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60608

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CAMPAIGN ADDRESS: 6201 W. Touhy Ave. Chicago, IL 60646

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CAMPAIGN MANAGER: Ivan Tomic

NUMBER OF PETITION SIGNATURES FILED 13,000 **NUMBER REQUIRED** 5,278

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Background Information:

a. Elective or appointive public and/or party offices previously held including dates.

I have not held any elective or appointive public and/or party office previously.

b. Other elective offices for which you have been a candidate.

I have been a candidate for Alderman of the 25th Ward, city of Chicago, 1995.

c. Principal business, educational, professional and civic activities of the past ten years.

Business

- Attorney at Law, Avila & Tomic, LLC; Law Offices of Frank Avila, LTD.

Educational

- B.A. Eckerd College, 1993.
- J.D., DePaul College of Law, 2000.
- Graduate level coursework, University of Chicago, no degree completed.
- Certificate in Mexican Legal Studies, University of Houston, TX at the Universidad Pan Americana (could be applied to PhD or LLM).

Professional Registrations

- Licensed Attorney at Law in Illinois, Minnesota, Washington DC, pending in Florida.
- Limited Insurance License in Illinois.

Civic

- Legal Counsel, Illinois Committee for Honest Government
- Member, IVI-IPO
- Current or past memberships in Knights of Columbus, Phi Beta Sigma fraternity
- Old Neighborhood Italian American Club
- Mexican American Chamber of Commerce
- Numerous other Chambers of Commerce

d. What subjects have you studied and what experience have you had which will be most helpful to you in the office you seek?

- Environmental and Science Courses
- Law Degree from DePaul University

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e. Activities for other candidates. Please be specific.

I have worked on a number of campaigns including:

- Attorney for Alderman Manuel Flores 2003.
- Campaign Manager for M. Frank Avila 2002.
- Hispanic Professional Chair for Dorothy Brown 2000.
- Chairman, Hispanics for Poshard 1998

f. Please list all endorsement you have received so far.

Illinois Committee for Honest Government; Jewish Political Alliance of Illinois; Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr.; Senator James Meeks; Alderman Howard Brookins; Alderman Theodore Thomas; Representative John Fritchey; Alderman Manuel Flores.

g. As concisely as possible, state why you feel you should be endorsed over the other candidate(s). What goals for this office you seek are most important to you personally?

For years I have been on the forefront of government reform. I have represented clients pro-bono to ensure access on the ballot; I have publicly spoken on numerous occasions against corruption and malfeasance in the public sector. I am one of the most reform minded candidates running for this office. I will work hard to make certain that the MWRD operates as efficiently and justly as possible.

I am also an Attorney. If elected, I will be the only Attorney serving on the nine-member board. The Board of Commissioners is a very technical body – the Board primarily deals with issues that I, as an Attorney, deal with on an everyday basis; the Board approves contracts and forges agreements, they review and set ordinances and policies.

h. Please outline the place of patronage, personnel codes, race, gender and sexual orientation in establishing criteria for hiring and promoting public employees.

It is imperative to provide equal opportunity to all applicants regardless of race, color, sex, religion, or national origin. Equal opportunity and equal consideration should be given to all applicants and employees in personnel actions, which include hiring, training, promoting, determining rates of pay and transfer. Yet, the MWRD should reach out and make a concerted effort to ensure MWRD employees are representative of the District at large.

i. What is your campaign budget? How much have you raised to date?

My campaign budget is \$60,000. We should have \$30,000 before the end of the month.

j. How many people are on your campaign staff? How many volunteers are on your list?

My campaign staff consists of 7 volunteer staff members and presently 73 volunteers.

**Independent Voters of Illinois- Independent Precinct Organization
2004 METROPOLITAN WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT QUESTIONNAIRE**

- 1) Should the Water Reclamation District be separate special government unit or should it be subordinate to the County Board?**

The Water Reclamation District is operating under the statutes of the State of Illinois as a Municipal Government and should remain as such. Given the financial and bureaucratic difficulties facing the Cook County Board, the MWRD is much better off as an independent municipal government.

- 2) Should Commissioner be elected at-large, by district or cumulative voting?**

I am open to Commissioner's being elected by district, but given the rather technical, not legislative, nature of the position, I do not feel it is a pressing issue.

- 3) Do you have a business relationship with any entity doing business with the MWRD or other governmental bodies in Cook County?**

No.

- 4) Will you accept or have accepted campaign donations from current or potential suppliers or employees of the District?**

I have not accepted campaign donations from current or potential suppliers of the District, although I may, however I will never accept contributions from employees of the District.

- 5) In what circumstances should the District contract for outside professional services?**

Outside contracts for professional services should be only used if District's technical staff does not have the expertise or enough available personnel to handle a particular project. The District has an excellent group of professionals to handle a variety of assignments, and most of the jobs can be in-house.

In what circumstances should competitive bidding for contracts be required?

Competitive bidding for contracts should be required under all circumstances except in emergency situations where time is critical or where only one contractor has the ability to handle a specialized project.

Please comment on existing abuses.

Current abuses at the District include, contracts being rewarded for work that is not necessary and contracts being rewarded to sub-par contractors.

6) Should MWRD trade persons be paid the prevailing wage rate?

Yes.

7) Do you favor permitting MWRD employees to hold other public sector employment concurrently?

No.

8) Do you favor permitting MWRD employees to have outside employment and contracts with entities, which do business with the District?

No.

9) Is the District in good financial condition? Please comment on both expenditures and sources of revenues.

Currently, the District is in good financial condition, primarily because the MWRD relies mainly on property assessments which have sharply increased over the years. The District should, however prepare for any change in assessments. Moreover, the District should continuously look to decrease unnecessary expenditures and increase efficiency while expanding sources of income from land rental and investments.

10) What should be the MWRD's role in policy on lakefront, riverfront and canal development? What responsibility should it have for planning or monitoring such development?

MWRD's role in development is generally limited to District owned land and waterways – in those cases, I favor preserving undeveloped MWRD owned land and ensuring public access. I fully support preservation and beautification efforts along the lakefront and riverfront, additionally I think the MWRD be on the forefront of environmental and wildlife protection.

11) Do you support public access to the Chicago River and should access be a priority for MWRD?

Yes, public access and recreation should be priority for the District.

12) Are present systems for monitoring and eliminating water pollution from industrial and domestic waste adequate and appropriate?

Yes, current systems for monitoring and eliminating the pollution from industrial and domestic waste are adequate and appropriate for our time. Yet, an issue of major concern of mine, which is only starting to gain attention, is the release of active ingredients in our pharmaceuticals not being eliminated during the treatment process and being released in our waterways. Studies have indicated that these compounds have already adversely impacted aquatic life and potentially humans as well. I would make this a top priority in my office, and push to have the MWRD investigate ways to further eliminate these pharmaceuticals during the treatment process. Additionally, the District's Research and Development Department should constantly look for the best state-of-the-art alternatives, based on cost/benefit analysis to improve the operation to better serve the public.

13) Should the MWRD assume responsibility for solid and other waste in addition to its current responsibilities to prevent water pollution? If so, what should be the scope of the responsibility and how should it be exercised?

At this point the MWRD is not in a position to assume the additional responsibility. I would always be open to exploring different responsibilities of the District, as long as sources of funding and staff were properly addressed and the additional task did not distract the MWRD from its current obligations.

14) How do you propose to address issues of flooding and pollution in the 15 years before TARP is completed?

I would like to see MWRD institute and oversee a Cook County Flood Management Authority to coordinate flood control activities within Cook County. This has been discussed and length for some time and I would like to see this implemented; currently each municipality is responsible for flood control without a comprehensive regional plan.

15) What precautions, if any, do you believe should be implemented to protect the environment surrounding the TARP waster water reservoirs?

It is essential to continuously monitor and test around these reservoirs, and provide impermeable liners to and maintain appropriate water levels in the reservoir.