

IVI-IPO 2012 WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT QUESTIONNAIRE – Section 1

DATE: December 16, 2011

PARTY: Democratic

NAME: Patricia Young

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CAMPAIGN MANAGER: Myself

NUMBER OF PETITION SIGNATURES FILED: 8500 **NUMBER REQUIRED:** 5586

A) Elective or appointive public or party offices previously held including dates. *Commissioner, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago - December 1992 through January 2009. As commissioner, I represented the district on the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) from 1993 through 2009.*

B) Other elective offices for which you have been a candidate. *Clerk of the Circuit Court, Cook County Democratic Committeeman and Clerk.*

C) What is your primary occupation? *Retired. I retired at the end of September to seek election again to the Board of Commissioners. I worked for the district nearly 35 years.*

D) Briefly list your civic activities of the past ten years. *Prior to moving to LaGrange Park I lived in Chicago's South Loop area and was active in the South Loop Neighbors' Association and the Ping Tom Park Advisory Committee. Since moving to the suburbs I volunteer with my 9 year-old son's activities. We have a new dog and we just began training him to (hopefully) become a certified therapy dog.*

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

I hold an undergrad degree in communications, and a master's degree in public administration. Each of those areas of study have served me well in the past as an elected official since a huge part of the job is communicating with the people we serve, and analyzing budgets and establishing operational policies to provide service to the tax payers in the most cost-effective manner.

F) What candidates have you supported in past elections? Please be specific in describing your role in each campaign. *I have supported a number of candidates financially, and through endorsement and mailing of "Friend to Friend" cards, and distribution of campaign literature.*

G) Please list all endorsements you have received so far. This is the first endorsement questionnaire that is being submitted.

H) As concisely as possible, please state why you feel you should be endorsed over the other candidate(s). What goals for the office you seek are most important to you personally? *Experience. No other candidate has anywhere near the experience I have working at or serving on the board at the district. There are a number of critical issues that are ongoing: budgetary, regulatory and environmental.*

When I served on the Board I worked full time representing Cook County residents. I rarely missed a Board meeting (Only missed when I traveled to Russia to adopt my son, and two more meetings after we returned home.) I didn't hold another job, and during my tenure there I spoke to hundreds of civic, community and educational and fraternal and professional organizations explaining the operations of the district and its mission to protect Lake Michigan and county waterways from pollution.

I had a reputation for paying attention to the issues and not being afraid to speak up when I didn't agree with a plan or proposal. I was the only board member to vote against a pelletizer project (often referred to as the "Black Bo") because I felt was an unnecessary expenditure of taxpayer money. It was very uncomfortable for me to go against other board members, but it was a project I didn't think we needed. This was my opinion based upon my years of experience working there, and being familiar with our operations. This project has never been successful because of the expenses related to heating the biosolids to the degree needed to convert it to the pellets.

A commissioner needs to serve the people of Cook County with conviction, and not be afraid to voice an opinion or vote that may be contrary to their colleagues on the board, and to remember that they work for the people of Cook County.

I) What is your campaign budget? How much have you raised to date? *I plan to spend about \$30,000.00 to \$50,000.00. I have not had a fundraiser yet but plan to do so after the holidays.*

J) How many people are on your campaign staff? How many volunteers are on your list? *I have no paid campaign staff (as yet). I have about 80 volunteers, and I'm always happy to add more to the list and increase that number. If any IVI/IPO members would like to volunteer - your assistance would be most welcom! I'd love to have you on board.*

IVI-IPO 2012 WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT QUESTIONNAIRE – Section 2

1. Should Commissioners be elected at-large or by district? *The water reclamation district is a regional agency responsible for the collection and treatment of wastewater from residents and industries in the county. It is important that commissioners serve the ENTIRE Cook County area. Having commissioners elected from single-member districts promotes the "not in my backyard" mentality. As the storm water management agency for Cook County, projects are selected based upon how cost-effectiveness they are and those that will have the most beneficial impact on the region.*

2. Should cumulative voting be used to elect commissioners? No.

3. Do you have a business relationship with or financial interest in any entity doing business with the MWRD or other governmental bodies in Cook County? *No.*

4. Will you accept or have you accepted campaign donations from current or potential suppliers, employees or outside contractors of the district? *Contracts are competitively bid and generally awarded to the lowest bidder. Most employees are hired through the civil service process. Only the most qualified employees are selected. Employees must demonstrate their expertise in their field through their ranking in the top category on civil service exams prior to appointment to the position by the executive director. Since I worked for the district for many years prior to my election to the board, many employees were friends and happy to support me. Although I greatly appreciated support from co-workers, donations over \$150.00 were returned. Any staff member who wanted to attend an event of mine was always welcome to stop by and never asked to purchase any tickets or pay at the door.*

5. a. In what circumstances should the District contract for outside professional services? *In cases where there is insufficient staffing to keep up with the work demand.*

b. In what circumstances should competitive bidding for contracts be required? *Our fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayers is to provide our services in the most cost-effective manner. Competitively bidding materials and services helps taxpayers get the best value for their dollars.*

c. Please comment on any existing abuses. *Abuses should be reported to the appropriate authority.*

6. Do you support Patronage in hiring and promoting public employees?

The majority of district employees are hired through the civil service process, which I believe is one of the reasons the district has earned its place as an internationally-recognized leader in the field of wastewater treatment and flood control. (Please refer to the answer to question # 4.)

7. Will you support public postings of all permanent and temporary jobs at the District? *I have always supported the public notification of our positions, as a commissioner I used to mail the job postings to various community organizations to ensure that members of the public were notified of the opportunity to seek employment with the district.*

8. Do you support Affirmative Action? *Yes.*

9. Do you favor permitting MWRD employees to hold other public sector employment concurrently? *No.*

10. Do you favor permitting MWRD employees to have outside employment or contracts with entities that do business with the district? *No. And after retirement/separation there should be an established moratorium on working for a company who has contracts with or provides materials and supplies to the district.*

11. Is the District in good financial condition? Please comment on both expenditures and sources of revenues. *Management and staff at the district work diligently to maintain a balanced budget,*

including withholding a cost of living pay increase for employees for the past three years. It is one of the few government agencies to maintain a balanced budget, and despite the weak economic conditions we have been experiencing the past several years, staff members continuously strive to be prudent and conservative in managing the district's operations without any reduction of the services we provide to the people of Cook County.

A large portion of the district's revenue is derived from real estate taxes, and with reduced revenues, board members and staff must investigate other revenue sources such as:

- increasing user fees and perhaps offering rebates for utilizing green technology to reduce rainwater flows into treatment plants;*
 - securing federal dollars and community grants to implement environmental projects;*
 - establishing a moratorium on new hires in support positions that are considered non-essential to maintenance and operation;*
- limiting the hiring outside firms for work that district staff can handle, and settling ongoing litigation that has been costing tax payers millions of dollars in outside legal fees.*

12. Under what circumstances would you support sale of MWRD property? *The district is one of the largest landowners in the state. We have a policy (which I supported and would continue to support) of not selling land that is along the waterways. If other property is not being used for our corporate purposes, we could investigate the sale. We should also continue to offer it to local communities for public recreational use if we do not want to sell it. Our property is owned by the residents of the county, and they should have as much access to it as possible.*

13. a. What should be the MWRD's role in policy on lakefront, riverfront and canal development? *Since its establishment in 1889 the district has been a leader in improving the quality of our waterways and Lake Michigan, the stewardship offered by board members and staff have earned them a seat at the table. District officials should have and continue to have a role in establishing public policy relating to environmental improvements and land use that is beneficial to the people who own it – the taxpayers.*

b. What responsibility should it have for planning or monitoring such development? *The waterways are a treasure and the improved water quality is a direct result of the district's efforts and investment over the years to eliminate pollution and implement on-going pollution control projects. Today there is an ever-increasing interest in recreating in and along the waterways. Private development such as the Trump Tower may not have occurred if it weren't for the commitment and efforts of the district.*

Given the significant financial investment the tax payers have made over the years through the district, and the millions of dollars that have been spent by local tax payers to build the Tunnel and Reservoir Project (TARP), the district should continue this leadership role and participate in the development and implementation of policies relating to the public use land along the waterways. A blue ribbon committee comprised of stakeholders representing the municipalities within Cook County should be convened to ensure that there is public participation and that their interests are considered as well. I believe that the desire for even more access will increase when Mayor Emmanuel's proposed boathouses along Chicago waterways are built, and the public can actually see the results of the vision so many of us have had for the waterways for so many years.

14. a. Do you support expansion of the MWRD's role into areas of habitat restoration and conservation and creation of public parks and trails? *Absolutely – we have worked with Openlands for many years to build trails along the waterways. The district is recognized worldwide for its environmental stewardship and that responsibility carries over to beneficial public use of property owned by the district (Cook County tax payers.)*

15. Do you support the existing agreement between the district and the property owners on the North Branch of the Chicago River? *Yes – provided that public access to the waterways is not restricted or hindered, and that the homeowners secure adequate insurance indemnifying the district and protecting the Cook County taxpayers from liability.*

16. Do you think the MWRD should be required to remove phosphorus and nitrogen from the effluent it releases into our waterways? *This is an ongoing national issue of concern for protection of our waterways within the United States. The district is researching the engineering design and costs of phosphorous removal facilities at its treatment plants and is considering its implementation. Implementation of these technologies will take time given the huge financial burden. As part of the district's commitment to continuously improve the quality of our waterways it is our obligation to the public that we move forward and gradually implement these facilities with established pre-determined milestones.*

17. a. Are you for or against using green technologies to manage storm water?

I am absolutely in favor of utilizing green technology to manage storm water, and supported this when I served as the chairman of storm water management at the district.

b. Do you think storm water should be preserved and protected?

Definitely.

c. Please explain your answers. *We know that water is a valuable commodity. The district has been working since its formation to protect this precious resource. A continuation of this commitment could be to capture and return storm water to Lake Michigan rather than sending it to the Mississippi river system. This can be done by gradually instituting green technologies to separate storm water collection from wastewater collection and adding tertiary treatment for a portion of the wastewater flows.*

18. What can the MWRD do to exceed minimal requirements for permitting under the Clean Water Act?

Exceeding the requirements of the Clean Water Act is an honorable and admirable goal, yet extremely costly to tax payers. At present the district is diligently working to keep its expenditures in check. However, given the national interest in protecting public waterways, the district could seek federal grants to fund additional water quality improvement projects.

19. What can be done to alleviate flooding in Chicago and the suburbs which persists despite the construction of TARP? *Additional tunnels could be built for faster conveyance of combined sewer overflows to the reservoirs. This would help relieve the burden placed on the local sewer systems by providing additional capacity for the rainwater. Additional conveyance tunnels may*

already be included in the initial TARP Phase II reservoir plans. Oftentimes, when there is a reversal of the Chicago River system back to Lake Michigan it occurs at Wilmette. The North Shore Channel is not as wide as the Cal-Sag or Sanitary and Ship Canal.

We should consider developing open space into wetlands.

20. How should the MWRD implement the disinfection of effluent? *This has been a longtime on-going issue for many years. In my mind it was not the question of whether or not the effluent from district facilities should be disinfected prior to discharge into the waterways, but when it would be implemented. My concern is that the disinfection of the effluent from the Stickney plant, which reclaims approximately 800 million gallons of wastewater each day - 24/7 - is not included in the plans to disinfect.*

Currently the engineering department is considering various technologies, and once this decision is made, implementation should begin immediately.

I always thought that the oxygen-enhancing facilities built along the Cal-Sag channel known as the Sidestream Elevated Pool Aeration (SEPA) stations were a very cost-effective (and beautiful) way to add oxygen to the waterways and improve the water quality and aquatic life.

Additional storm water treatment and sedimentation-removal projects should also be considered.