



Response to Tribune Editorial Board Candidate Questionnaire

October 8, 2026

1. Can you please describe your tenure at the MWRD? When did it begin and end, and was your title the same throughout? Did you have a bad experience? Also, are you a first-time candidate for public office?

I started at MWRD in September 2007, after five months of various qualifying tests, grading and four interviews, one with 28 people in leadership from across the agency. The job was called Public Information Manager. After a required probation period my role changed to reporting directly to the Executive Director. We redefined the nature and extent of the position to Public Affairs Manager which was my title when I departed in December 2010.

My department budget was nearly \$4 million with eight direct employees. My duties included oversight of public education, legislative communications, FOIA, law related public communications, and the library. I crafted integrated communications, media relations, crisis communications, educational materials and events.

As MWRD's main spokesperson, I explained the agency's engineering, policy and financial decisions to the media and the public in easy-to-understand messaging.

I served as co-chair of the Public Communications and Education Committee for the Water Environment Federation, (WEF) the international water technical and education association. That committee helped direct communications as leadership guidance to 30,000 water quality professionals and 75 agencies throughout the world. It was at that time that I received two awards in Public Education Communications and Legislative messaging from WEF for my MWRD work.

Throughout my career outside of MWRD my consulting firm served as advisors to many campaigns from both sides of the aisle. I was the regional director Chief of Staff, of 500 people, for a presidential campaign in the 1990's. I also ran state and federal campaigns. This, however, is the first time my name is on the ballot. But, like the clients I chose, I am deeply passionate about the mission of this campaign of righting the MWRD's behemoth ship.

2. I suspect the incumbent candidates would agree with the priorities you cite in your campaign website to stop the flooding, protect taxpayers and bring accountability. Why would you be better at achieving those goals than they are, considering their years of experience in their positions?

With experience as the measure, I served MWRD full time for longer than two of the incumbents have served, internally and representing it externally with nationally recognized work. Agreement on goals is easy. Delivering results and the methods to reach them is how competing candidates differ. Years in office does not define experience. An incumbent should

be judged by what was done, how much it cost and whether residents can see the results. The incumbents can list as experience spending nearly \$2B annually to maintain MWRD. Were they good stewards of taxes? Much of that spending must happen, or the results would be devastating.

I would push for a single, easily navigable public project dashboard showing projects and programs original and current costs, deadlines, progress and reasons for delays. During extreme weather events I would like to install interactive maps for residential reporting. After major storms, I would seek After-Action reviews of what worked, what failed and what needs to change. Use that input to keep long-range planning current. Residents deserve answers they can understand. With such a dashboard, the people of Harvey would have a course to prevent the devastation of their community. This also aids and directs commissioners to craft resources and vision responsive to taking care of the 5 million people they serve.

I have great reverence and awe for the MWRD, its staff and most of its history. I see and know, that a cutting-edge vision to reality is not currently there. This board holds little accountability for languishing projects, distorted financial realities. A real review shows a hard disregard for people in the communities. This agency cannot be partisan same ol 'we've always done it this way' oversight.

I bring experience inside MWRD and a career of results of repeated success connecting government, technical experts and the public, locally to globally. (Refer to my LinkedIn profile for broader professional background). I understand the agency's mission and the commissioners' responsibility to define priorities, spending, and hold themselves accountable. I have done it.

3. Among the three Democratic candidates, is there one who you would be most eager to replace?

I am running to change how the board does its job. I welcome replacing any incumbent whose record shows primarily political driven careers and substantially less experience in proven success on a job of this scale. I would welcome a conversation/debate with all three to publicly discuss their record. The complementary skills of Pennington (real estate & finance), Rueckert (infrastructure, contracts, cost and planning), and me bring a level of sophistication taxpayers can trust. While we are on a party ticket, it is important to note this agency cannot, and must not be partisan or political.

4. Your Republican colleague Michelle Pennington (who I'm also contacting, as well as Tim Rueckert) has published a detailed website describing what she considers wasteful spending on DEI programs, ERGs, cultural events and internships. Do you agree those MWRD programs should be cut as she proposes? She also proposes halving the legislative and intergovernmental affairs team, who I presume you worked with in your role at MWRD. Should they be cut too?

I would begin with a comprehensive analysis of projects, programs and staffing to ensure that each advances MWRD's statutory mission and delivers measurable value to taxpayers. Taxpayer funding would not support activities or positions outside that mission. Legislative and intergovernmental diplomacy must efficiently drive outcomes that benefit taxpayers and the agency. These positions demand expertise in navigating and building productive external government relationships. The analysis would determine whether current practices meet these standards. Any restructuring would follow three clear standards: mission, efficiency and results.

Internships should provide useful training and introduce students to careers in water management, environmental science, communications, technology and public finance. Illinois's reading and math proficiency results raise serious concerns about preparation for these careers. I would pursue mentoring and apprenticeships coordinated with unions and schools to strengthen those skills and develop the qualified workforce MWRD will need.