

FOUR RIVERS SANITATION AUTHORITY

**Report For Compliance
with the Decennial Committees
on Local Government Efficiency Act**



December 16, 2024

REPORT FOR COMPLIANCE WITH DECENNIAL COMMITTEES ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY ACT

FOUR RIVERS SANITATION AUTHORITY

3501 Kishwaukee Street
Rockford, IL 61109

REPORT PURPOSE

In June 2022, and subsequently amended in February 2023, Public Act 102-1088, titled “The Decennial Committees on Local Government Efficiency Act”, was signed into state law. The Act requires local governmental units (excluding local municipalities and counties) to form a public committee to review efficiencies and accountability within their own organization.

The Act requires the Committee to consist of the Trustees of Four Rivers Sanitation Authority (Authority), the Executive Director of the Authority and two residents who reside within the territory served by the Authority. The two residents must be appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Trustees. The committee must meet a minimum of three times, and the meetings are required to comply with Open Meetings Act.

Ultimately, the committee must prepare and submit a report to the administrative office of the Winnebago County Board. The report shall provide the recommendations in respect to increased accountability and efficiency. After the report is filed, the committee is dissolved for the next ten years. The Decennial Efficiency Committee of Four Rivers Sanitation Authority was formed on April 24, 2023, to study efficiencies and report recommendations regarding those efficiencies and increased accountability pursuant to 50 ILCS 70/1, et seq. (the “Committee”).

ORGANIZATIONAL NAME AND PURPOSE

Four Rivers Sanitation Authority (Authority) was originally incorporated in 1926 as Rockford Sanitary District as a separate unit of local government under the Sanitary District Act of 1917 (70 ILCS 2405). In 1990, Sanitary District of Rockford changed its name to Rock River Water Reclamation District and, on June 23, 2021, Rock River Water Reclamation District changed its name to Four Rivers Sanitation Authority. The name change represents the mission of returning fresh, clean water to our environment. This water is discharged into the watershed that feeds into the Rock, Kishwaukee, Pecatonica and Sugar Rivers.

The Sanitary District Act of 1917 provides the guidelines and procedures to operate a sanitary district in Illinois. According to the Act, the purpose of a sanitary district is, in part, “...*the construction and maintenance of a plant or plants for the purification and treatment of sewage and the maintenance of one or more outlets for the drainage thereof, after having been so treated and purified by and through such plant or plants will conduce to the preservation of the public health, comfort and convenience*”. (70 ILCS 2405/1)

HISTORY

Shortly after the Sanitary District’s formation in 1926, construction began on the wastewater treatment plant located at 3333 Kishwaukee St, Rockford, IL 61109. The primary treatment plant was completed and began operation in 1932. The grounds consisted of an administration building, main pumping station, two primary clarifiers, two digesters, two storage tanks and sludge drying beds. A secondary treatment plant and additional treatment facilities were added at the site in 1958.

During the 20-year period beginning in 1958, several technological advancements in wastewater treatment took place. For instance, chlorination commenced in May 1967 to disinfect the final treated water before it was discharged to the Rock River. Vacuum filtration of sludge replaced sand filter drying beds and sludge drying lagoons in 1968. The activated sludge process was started in May 1969 as a replacement for trickling filters. Further expansion of the Kishwaukee Street plant during that time included adding four sludge thickening tanks, six additional primary clarifiers and expansion of the activated sludge process to accommodate daily wastewater flows of greater than 50 million gallons each day.

Industrial expansion necessitated much of the expansion, as much flow coming from manufacturers contained high concentrations of toxins such as cyanide and heavy metals like zinc, cadmium and copper. The Authority worked with the State, Rockford Area Chamber of Commerce and local industrial plating manufacturers to have much of the plating wastes collected in a common facility and hauled to a cyanide destruction plant.

New Federal regulations, including the Water Pollution Control Act of 1972 and the Water Pollution Control Act of 1977, better known as the “Clean Water Act,” raised the standards of treatment for wastewater and implemented new pollution control methods. In 1972, local industry produced about 50% of the Authority’s flow, and 25% of that share came from metal finishing and electroplating companies. The metal plating process produced wastewater with dangerous concentrations of cyanides and heavy metals. To comply with Federal regulations, the Authority began an Industrial Protection Program by creating a formal industrial waste surveillance department and establishing local limits for heavy metals and cyanide discharge. In 1984, The Authority’s pretreatment program became the first in Illinois to achieve United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) approval.

Several additional plant upgrades have been made to meet expanding regulatory requirements and to improve efficiency. For instance, an additional biological process called “nitrification” was added in 1997 to reduce ammonia in our discharged waters. The activated sludge process was also expanded by 33% and mechanical aeration was replaced by fine bubble diffusion that same year. In 2000, Vacuum filtration for biosolids drying was replaced by higher efficiency centrifuges.

Also in 2000, anaerobic digestion was brought online to stabilize biosolids and reduce the amount sent to the centrifuges. Due to the success of our industrial pretreatment program, and with added efficiencies, Four Rivers Sanitation Authority now creates and applies super-clean biosolids to farm fields as fertilizers. It burns and converts methane to energy, meeting 70% of its electricity needs with three co-generation engines producing two megawatts in total. Using this technology alone, the Authority saved \$800,000 in one year. The Authority made several upgrades to the plant in 2019, including the installation of two new 3mm perforated influent bar screens and a new three-meter gravity belt thickener used for dewatering primary sludge.

Continued regulatory requirements defined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) mandate that the Authority meet the standards defined by the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy by January 1, 2030. These requirements demand that the Authority significantly reduce nutrient flows to the four watersheds it influences: Rock River, Sugar River, Kishwaukee River and the Pecatonica River. To achieve these goals, the Authority is currently expanding the Kishwaukee plant to include better phosphorus removal, replace aging infrastructure, and to reduce Four Rivers’ carbon footprint. Additionally, the Authority has accepted expansions of its sewer system as development has occurred within its service area.

SERVICE AREA

The Authority covers approximately 105 square miles of Winnebago County and serves over 240,000 people in the communities of Rockford, Loves Park, Machesney Park, Roscoe, Cherry Valley, New Milford, Village of Winnebago, a small part of Rockton and several unincorporated areas throughout Winnebago County. By agreement, the Authority also accepts wastewater from certain areas of Boone and Ogle Counties.

SERVICES

Every day, the Authority treats 40 million gallons of contaminated wastewater – totaling 1.5 billion gallons each year. The Authority cleans the wastewater in accordance with its Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) Permit before effluent is released back into the environment. This process safeguards public health and protects aquatic life in the

waterway that receives the effluent. Staff regularly inspects and evaluates the health of the aquatic ecosystem in the receiving waterway to ensure compliance with state and federal water quality standards.

The Authority owns and maintains a majority of the wastewater collection sewers within the service area. The Authority's approximately 1200-mile-long network of buried sewers conveys wastewater from residential, commercial, and industrial sites to the treatment plant in southeast Rockford. The collection facilities consist of gravity sewers, as well as 33 pumping stations and pressure sewers. The gravity system consists of large and small diameter sewer lines. The largest gravity lines are interceptor and trunk sewers of diameters up to six feet that often follow rivers, creeks, and drainage ways. Eight and ten-inch diameter lateral (neighborhood) sewers flow to larger interceptors and trunks.

Once the wastewater is collected, the Authority provides treatment at its treatment plant located on Kishwaukee Street in Rockford.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Four Rivers Sanitation Authority is governed by a by a five (5) member Board of Trustees and has operated continuously since its first meeting on November 15, 1926. Each Trustee is appointed by the Winnebago County Board Chair, with the advice and consent of the County Board, for a staggered three-year term. Each year, the Board of Trustees elects a Board President, Vice President, Clerk/Treasurer, Assistant Clerk, and Hearing Officer. The Board of Trustees has the authority to enact ordinances as needed to define policies, services, and fees for the Authority.

The Authority has a Committee of Local Improvements, consisting of a President, Vice President, Clerk, Secretary, and Collector, each appointed by the Authority's Board of Trustees for a one-year term. The Committee of Local Improvements reviews and recommends improvements to the sewer collection system, new sewer service and sewer extensions.

AUTHORITY STAFF

The Authority currently employs 115 full-time and part-time staff and is led by an Executive Director who oversees all operations. With the support of the department directors and managers, the Executive Director plans, organizes, and directs all activities of the Authority, including long-range planning, budget, personnel development, and capital improvements. The Executive Director oversees all administrative functions, plant operations and maintenance, collection systems, customer service, and engineering. The Executive Director is hired by and reports to the Board of Trustees.

Collection Systems

Collection Systems is responsible for maintaining Four River Sanitation Authority's extensive sewage system, which collects wastewater from the Authority's customers. The sewer lines are repaired, cleaned, and inspected by the department. This department is also in charge of maintaining all Authority vehicles and equipment and responding to sewer backups into homes, businesses and other structures.

Engineering

The Engineering Department oversees and manages all sewage service development for the Authority, ensuring that new subdivisions, industrial and commercial facilities and other developments have access to service. All new sewers, pumping stations, and treatment plant operations must be designed by, or the design must be coordinated by, Engineering.

Internal Services

Internal Services consists of Authority's Legal Department and Information and Technology Services.

Legal: The Authority's General Counsel provides the legal expertise to allow the Authority to achieve its business goals. The Authority's General Counsel covers a broad range of responsibilities including risk management, claims, land acquisition, business contracts and agreements, employment law, and compliance with various State and Federal regulations such as the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Open Meetings Act (OMA).

Information & Technology Services: The Information and Technology Services Department supports the many Four Rivers Sanitation Authority departments by providing data infrastructure and applications. Information and Technology manages various programs and applications such as Utility Billing, EPA Reporting, a Geographic Information System (GIS), Geospatial Positioning System (GPS), a Continuously Operating Reference Station (CORS) and Sewer Inspection and manages the almost 200 computers, 60 miles of fiber optic cabling, and approximately 400 programs the Authority uses. A majority of the Authority's communication infrastructure, including a digital phone system, cell phones, radio telemetry, and web servers, are supported by the department.

Management Services

Management Services includes the departments of Financial Services, Purchasing and Human Resources.

Financial Services: General accounting, accounts payable, and payroll operations are all part of Financial Services.

Human Resources: Human Resources facilitates employment, health benefits, establishes human resources policies, advises Authority departments and Department Heads on human resources matters, ensures a fair and equitable hiring process, and directs the creation of programs that promote employee development and enhance management skills for employees and supervisors throughout the organization.

Purchasing: Bids, proposals, and quotations for services, supplies, capital goods, and building projects are handled by the Purchasing department. Requests for proposals, ongoing bids, and other information is posted to the Four Rivers website - Bids and Proposals page. This information is provided for contractors, consultants and vendors that may be interested.

Plant Operations

Plant Operations includes Customer Service, Plant Operations & Plant Maintenance and the Industrial Waste Surveillance program (IWS).

Customer Service: Customer Service is in charge of billing the Authority's more than 75,000 customers. This involves examining water billing data from the Authority's six supported municipalities. This department is also in charge of residential and commercial bill collection, which includes the filing of liens and the cutoff of water service. They also handle all billing and payments for special assessments.

Industrial Waste Surveillance: Technicians from the Industrial Waste Surveillance (IWS) Program collect wastewater samples from Authority customers. These samples are used to check that businesses follow all applicable rules and regulations. These samples are also used to compute each company's Wastewater Characteristics, which are used to determine the amount billed. The IWS department is also in charge of coordinating the Authority's response to dangerous chemical spills or leaks that might end up in the sewers.

Laboratory: Using a modern, sophisticated environmental laboratory, Four Rivers Sanitation Authority's laboratory staff examines wastewater from Authority customers and the facility itself. This testing is used to confirm that the Authority's treated wastewater meets or exceeds all EPA criteria before being discharged into the Rock River.

Plant Operations and Maintenance: This department manages the operation and maintenance of the Authority's 100-acre treatment plant at 3333 Kishwaukee Street. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) requires treatment plant operators to be licensed. Mechanics, electricians, and technicians make up the Maintenance Department.

BUDGET AND RATES

The Authority aims to operate and maintain its system efficiently and effectively, as well as fund necessary capital improvements. The fiscal year 2025 budget for operating and maintenance expenditures is \$31,052,927, an 8.9% increase from the prior year. The planned outlay for capital projects is \$84,377,508, primarily for rehabilitation, upgrade and replacement of assets at the Authority's water reclamation facilities, as well as new sewer extensions. Capital projects that were carried over comprise \$13,276,530 of the capital project outlay. User charges are budgeted at \$50,958,427, an increase of approximately 2.9% from fiscal year 2024 to cover capital project requirements due to unfunded mandates. The 2023 (collected FY 2025) property tax levy revenue remains flat, with the rate declining to \$0.1425 from the prior year's \$0.1593.

The Authority's Board of Trustees took several factors into account when determining the user rates and property tax levy for the fiscal year 2024. One of the considerations was the local economy. The population of the Authority has been decreasing in recent years, leading to a decline in wealth. Although the unemployment rate in Winnebago County slightly increased in 2023 after showing improvement in 2022, job opportunities in the metro area are mainly in the service industry, which generally pays lower wages. On the other hand, property valuations in the tax year 2023 increased by approximately 11.6%, following an 8.9% increase in 2022.

When establishing user rates, the Board of Trustees must consider the aging infrastructure of the Authority and its environmental responsibilities as defined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These factors have necessitated the modernization of our facilities, leading to extensive upgrades to the plant campus. Throughout the fiscal year 2024, the Authority and its staff remained committed to reducing expenses and seeking the best value for planned capital projects.

Credit for maintaining a fair and equitable user rate can be attributed to the 115 employees at Four Rivers Sanitation Authority. Daily, interdepartmental teams work together to ensure that the highest quality of service is offered to our residents. Each member of the Authority's team focuses on ensuring that services are both efficient and cost-effective.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Household Hazardous Waste: Through a joint effort between Four Rivers Sanitation Authority, the City of Rockford, and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, area residents are able to dispose of their household hazardous waste instead of pouring it down the drain or disposing of it in the regular trash. A material is considered hazardous if it's toxic, flammable, corrosive or an irritant. Most of these items are products are used for cleaning, controlling insects,

improving plants and grass or for various other home improvement and repair projects. Household hazardous wastes cannot be disposed of at regular trash collection sites, they must be handled safely and disposed of in a manner that will not result in environmental exposure.

Renewable Energy: Establishing the wastewater treatment plant function as a net-zero energy facility is a major goal of the Authority. The Authority currently uses renewable energy sources, a Co-Gen Combined Heat and Power Plant and CHP Plant biosolids reuse to name a few. The Authority is currently looking at ways to incorporate solar energy, battery storage and more efficient generation into its operations.

Lower greenhouse gas emissions: An aging CHP Power Plant and more restrictive emissions standards create challenges for the Authority. The Authority has maintained its commitment to reducing emissions by meeting or exceeding the levels set by the Bureau of Air, both Illinois and Federal levels.

Conservation and Reuse Programs: Biosolids used as fertilizer saves 16,000 tons per year from being disposed of in a landfill. The Authority also uses effluent water for irrigation purposes at the treatment plant, nutrient rich fertilizers for grassy areas, effluent water for heating and cooling needs of the plant, recycles cans and paper, and uses double-sided printing to limit paper use and waste.

Energy Reduction: Voluntary energy load reduction programs with NRG, Voltus and others, climate controls and lighting setbacks for office space and plant buildings, low energy lighting fixtures, and VFD turndown equipment are some of the current programs the Authority uses for energy reduction. The Authority is currently working on VFD turndown programs that look at real time water sample data like Dissolved Oxygen, Ammonia Nitrate, and BOD/COD to set blower turndown. This program has the potential to not only save hundreds of thousands of dollars annually but also reduce greenhouse emissions.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

On April 13, 2023, the Authority received the “Outstanding Corporate Friend of the Environment” Award at the Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful Annual Banquet. This award is given each year to one outstanding corporate partner that embodies every element of an environmentalist business model.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

The Authority partners or has Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA) with the following other governments: the City of Rockford, Rockford Airport Authority, Rockford Park District, City of

Loves Park, Village of Machesney Park, Roscoe, Cherry Valley, New Milford, Village of Winnebago, Rockton, Winnebago County, Boone County, Harlem Township, North Park Water District and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT).

These IGAs cover such topics as wastewater discharges and treatment, sewer ownership, extensions, maintenance, and repair, property annexations, right-of-way, roadway and property use, data sharing, water shutoff, project reimbursement and shared services, well discharges, reciprocity and permits.

The Authority's efficiency has increased through intergovernmental cooperation such as coordinating capital improvement projects with the various municipalities, regional planning, and local communities for economic development. Some of these partnerships are highlighted below:

Aqua-Aerobics: Aqua-Aerobic Systems and Four Rivers Sanitation Authority have entered into a long-term agreement allowing for Aqua-Aerobics to build an on-site research facility located at Authority's central treatment plant. This facility will be used for the purpose of applied research and demonstration of new products. The Four Rivers Sanitation Authority will be able to benefit from the new Research and Technology Center through information sharing and technological developments.

Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful: Four Rivers Sanitation Authority and Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful are working together to keep the area's water supply safe from unused medications. Each spring Four Rivers co-sponsors the medication collection drive held by Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful. Unfortunately, ninety percent of all unused medications are flushed down the toilet and can become a source of dangerous pollution in wastewater. Because sewage treatment plants are not designed to deal with drugs, these chemicals can be released into streams, lakes, and groundwater where they affect fish and other aquatic wildlife. If medicines are reaching streams, rivers, and lakes, organisms living in these habitats can be continuously exposed to such drugs. Some aquatic organisms living in waters downstream from wastewater treatment plants are showing signs of developmental and reproductive problems. Researchers are working to determine whether pharmaceuticals are causing these effects.

Illinois Division of Water Pollution: Working together to ensure clean, safe effluent discharge of treated wastewater.

Illinois Department of Energy in conjunction with the Bureau of Clean Air: Ensuring compliance assurance that all emissions of the combined heat and power plant (CHP) are at or below permit limits.

Illinois Department of Weights and Measurements: Ensuring all loads received and delivered into or out of the Plant are weighed and invoiced properly.

USEPA Pre-Treatment Programs Region 5: In support of effective Pre-Treatment Programs for industrial users.

NRG Energy: Partnership efforts include Energy Demand Response/Energy Curtailment Program within the Plant, resulting in valuable energy resource savings during high demand periods during the year.

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville: Working together to ensure all Illinois Plant Operators receive quality IEPA Certification Training, including the Continuing Education Units Program.

Illinois Association of Wastewater Agencies (IAWA): Addresses issues of mutual concern of public-owned wastewater collection and treatment agencies located within the State of Illinois and assists in their efforts to provide cost-effective treatment of wastewater so that sound public health and environmental goals may be achieved.

Rock River Watershed Group (RRWG): The Rock River Watershed Group works to preserve and enhance water quality along the Rock and Kishwaukee Rivers in Northern Illinois. The Watershed includes the counties of Winnebago, Boone, McHenry, Ogle, Lee, and Whiteside in Illinois. By engaging the partnerships of 13 municipal entities and three engineering consulting groups, the RRWG has representatives across the entirety of the watershed. The RRWG is currently developing a Nutrient Assessment Reduction Plan as well as a plan to preserve and/or enhance the water quality of the Rock River through water quality monitoring.

ILLINOIS LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY ACT (PUBLIC ACT 102-1088) COMPLIANCE

Information about Our Committee

Committee Members:

Trustee:	Richard T. Pollack, Chairman
Trustee:	Elmer Jones
Trustee:	Benjamin W. Bernsten
Trustee:	Ginger Haas
Trustee:	Richard Mowris
Executive Director:	Tim Hanson
Resident:	Julia Scott-Valdez
Resident:	Ashley Bernard

Note: Per 50 ILCS 70/10(b), the committee membership must include all appointed members of the Board, the Executive Director and two residents appointed by the Board.

Dates that our Committee Met (50 ILCS 70/20)

First (Organizational) Meeting:	April 24, 2023
Second Meeting:	August 24, 2023
Third Meeting:	September 23, 2024
Fourth Meeting:	December 16, 2024

Review of Laws, Authority Policies, Authority Rules and Procedures, Authority Training Materials, and other Documents

The Committee reviewed the following, non-exhaustive list of laws, policies, training materials, and other documents applicable to the Authority to evaluate compliance and to determine if any of the foregoing should be amended. No issues were identified.

- State laws applicable to Sanitary Districts, including, but not limited to the Sanitary District Act of 1917 (70 ILCS 2405)
- Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120)
- Policy on public comment (14GEN23)
- Designation of OMA officer (5 ILCS 120/1.05(a))
- All of Appointed Officials have completed OMA Training (5 ILCS 120/1.05(b))
- Schedule of All Authority Regular Meetings for Calendar or Fiscal Year (5 ILCS 120/2.03)
- Illinois Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140)
- Designation of FOIA officer (5 ILCS 140/3.5(a))
- FOIA Officer Training (5 ILCS 140/3.5(b))
- Computation and Retention of FOIA Requests (5 ILCS 140/3.5(a))
- Posting Other Required FOIA Information (5 ILCS 140/4(a); 5 ILCS 140/4(b))
- List of Types or Categories of FOIA Records under Authority's Control (5 ILCS 140/5)
- Periodic Meetings to Review Closed Meeting Minutes (5 ILCS 120/2.06(d))
- IMRF Total Compensation Postings (5 ILCS 120/7.3)
- Designation of Whistleblower Auditing Official (50 ILCS 105/4.1)
- All appointed officials and designated employees have filed statement of economic interests (5 ILCS 420/4A-101; 5 ILCS 420/4A-101.5)
- Sexual harassment prevention training (775 ILCS 5/2-109(c))
- Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA)
- Budget and financial documents

- State Ethics Laws, including, but not limited to the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (5 ILCS 430/1-1)

WHAT HAVE WE DONE WELL?

Quality Improvement Process

The Authority has implemented a Quality Improvement Process (QIP) that ensures transparency and focus on accountability. The main essence of QIP is to identify areas that need improvement, implement changes, and always monitor outcomes to ensure constant improvement. It's driven by a commitment to meet or exceed customer expectations, comply with industry standards, and achieve organizational goals. QIP ensures clear communication, setting expectations and reducing frustration. This clarity builds trust, enhances teamwork, and promotes collaboration.

Transparency to the Community

The Authority operates and maintains a robust website that provides citizens and customers with a wealth of information such as: financial and rate information, the Authority's Code of Ordinances, board meeting dates agendas and minutes, billing information, bid announcements and awards, career opportunities and provides various ways to contact the Authority. The Authority also responds to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests in a timely manner.

Quarterly to Monthly Billing

This improvement helps the Authority's customers by aligning the timing of a sewer bill with the freshwater bill, thereby helping to discover any issues earlier. It also matches timing with other utility bills customers may pay. The Authority is simplifying its residential billing format by combining the four wastewater characteristics into one rate called "Pollutants", making the bill easier to understand. Additionally, there is an automatic e-billing option available.

Online Permit Portal

The Four Rivers Online Permit Portal offers a convenient way to manage sanitation permits, licenses and related tasks. The features provided in the Portal include: the ability to search for existing permits, plans, inspections, code cases, requests, and licenses, submit applications for new permits, plans, or licenses with ease, along with a calendar to stay informed about important events such as public hearings and holidays, conveniently pay individual invoices, and quickly estimate the required fees for your permits or plans.

Innovative Sewer Replacement Projects

For several years, the Authority has employed a state-of-the-art trenchless technique known as “Cured in Place Pipe” (CIPP) for sewer rehabilitation without the disruption which otherwise would be required for excavation, removal, and replacement of old sewer. CIPP allows an epoxy-laden felt liner to be inserted into the existing pipe and heat-cured in place, using the existing pipe as the exterior form for the new pipe.

Collection Systems Operations Facility Relocation

Collections Systems operations moved from the north facility in Loves Park to the main treatment plant on South Kishwaukee Street in Rockford. This project reduces fueling time for trucks and equipment and provides a heated garage for all trucks and equipment so that this equipment can start and function properly in the winter. Additional benefits are reduced mechanic travel and response time due to mechanics no longer needing to travel to the north facility to repair trucks and equipment, and reduced garbage pickup and material delivery wait times. Now, with all Collection Systems employees at the main plant, time spent for meetings, Human Resources issues, changes of equipment and training is greatly reduced.

Collection Systems Equipment Purchases

- With the Board-approved purchase of “Mr. Manhole”, the time/resources needed to replace a manhole casting has been greatly reduced.
- The Board-approved purchase of a Curtain grouting system has removed the need for an outside contractor in all but the most extreme cases. This system eliminates I&I in manholes that can overwhelm the system during heavy rain events contributing to backups and decreasing the useful lifespan of the manhole. By reducing I&I, the cost of treatment at the plant is reduced, as only wastewater is being treated and not clearwater. Having the staff and equipment to do this allows the Authority to react at need to emergencies without the need for Engineering to put together a contract, seek bids and provide for inspection. This frees up valuable staff hours and allows the task to be done at a third of the cost of an outside contractor.
- The Board-approved purchase of a Manhole Lining Trailer affords the same benefits as the Curtain Grouting System. The work completed has already paid for the initial investment.
- The purchased of each size excavator reduces the cost of renting equipment.
- Working with Engineering, Collection Systems has been able to complete tasks that were initially going out for bid. Completing these tasks in-house has saved the Authority well over \$1M, and those savings will only increase in the future.

- To improve “time cleaning” for vactor operations, permitted hydrants were increased in areas near each year’s basin cleaning. This reduces the time spent traveling for water. Previous hydrant locations which proved difficult due to proximity to driveways or other obstacles have been removed from the list.

FOUR RIVERS SANITATION AUTHORITY DECENNIAL COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING INCREASED ACCOUNTABILITY AND EFFICIENCY

The current management and operations of the Authority are well-focused on the provision and delivery of efficient, effective, fiscally sound, and environmentally conscious services to the benefit of its customers and its communities that it serves. In keeping with this commitment to fulfilling the mission of the Authority, several recommendations are presented below:

Recommendation 1

Intergovernmental Fees and Charges

Eliminate fees and charges assessed by other units of government. Governmental units should be discouraged or prohibited from charging more than their out-of-pocket costs associated with the activities covered by a fee that is assessed to another unit of local government with the same taxpayers. Put another way, one unit of local government should not profit by taxing another. Local government best serves the people when it cooperates and works together. Some communities recognize this and do not charge fees to other units. All units of government should be encouraged to follow that model to receive the best results for local taxpayers and to promote governmental efficiency.

Recommendation 2

Unfunded Mandates

Unfunded state and federal mandates place a tremendous financial burden on its taxpayers. While the Authority recognizes that there are benefits to some of these mandates, providing clear funding sources or low interest loans could help alleviate some of the burden on the Authority.

Recommendation 3

Newspaper Publication

With fewer newspapers and limited circulation, the newspaper is no longer an effective way to provide notice. Websites are cheaper and reach more people. Permitting the Authority to post the information on its website instead of newspaper would reduce costs and provide proper notice.

Recommendation 4

Opportunities for Additional Intergovernmental Agreements

- 1) Increase joint purchasing with other local governments and/or sanitary districts for commodities or services (including healthcare, retirement plans, software, and technology)
- 2) Consistent communication with municipalities informing the Authority of upcoming CIPs in a manner that allows the Authority sufficient time to review the plans and either get an IGA, seek outside contractor for work or complete in house.

Recommendation 5

Research New Sewer Repair Techniques

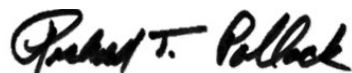
Demo CUE's Lock System, which allows small point repairs to be completed, without digging, by sleeving pipe with a locking stainless steel sleeve. This would vastly improve the time and resources needed for small repairs. The Authority already has the equipment needed to implement this process and would just need to purchase supplies specific to each repair.

CONCLUSION

This report represents the ongoing commitment of the Four Rivers Sanitation Authority to environmental sustainability, energy efficiency, sound resource management, fiscal responsibility, outstanding customer service, and overall operational efficiency and effectiveness.

The Authority's compliance with the Decennial Committees on Local Government Efficiency Act and its focus on innovative practices, transparency, and community engagement demonstrate its ongoing dedication to fulfilling its mission in the best interests of its customers and the surrounding community. By maintaining these core values and embracing continuous improvement, the Authority is well-positioned to navigate future challenges, attract and retain top talent, and uphold its reputation as a leader in public service and environmental stewardship.

Submitted by:



Richard T. Pollack, Chairman
Decennial Efficiency Committee of Four Rivers Sanitation Authority
Date: December 16, 2024