



Financial Services Audit Committee Communication

Date: November 20, 2020

To: Great Lakes Water Authority Audit Committee

From: Jon Wheatley, Public Finance Manager

Re: Water Residential Assistance Program Evaluation - Project Update

Background: The Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) engaged Public Sector Consultants (PSC) to serve as the WRAP Advisor to evaluate the current Water Residential Assistance Program (WRAP). PSC is an objective, nonpartisan research and consulting firm based in Lansing and Detroit. They have been conducting program evaluations for more than 20 years and are well versed in a variety of process and impact evaluation methods, including developing theories of change and logic models, qualitative and quantitative data collection using tools such as focus groups and multimode surveys, in-depth informant interviews, cost-effectiveness analyses, and comprehensive data analyses to yield deep insights and actionable findings.

PSC began work on July 6, 2020 and since that time has completed meetings with GLWA's Chief Financial Officer and Finance staff, Detroit Water and Sewerage Department's (DWSD) Chief Financial Officer and Finance staff, Wayne Metro, GLWA's Chief Executive Officer and DWSD's Director and their General Counsel, individual GLWA Board Members and a focus group for GLWA Member Partners. These meetings, and the feedback gathered, were the basis for PSC's report and recommendations which was presented at the October 23, 2020 Audit Committee meeting and to the GLWA Board on October 28, 2020.

The PSC report included fourteen recommended program changes that should be considered by GLWA to improve the delivery and reporting of WRAP. Over the next several months, GLWA will coordinate with Wayne Metro and the other community action agencies that help administer WRAP, to implement the recommended changes.

Analysis: GLWA extended its engagement with PSC to help support the implementation of the recommended program changes through June 2021. Included with this memorandum is the November 4, 2020 PSC proposal to provide this support. A driver of this added resource is to facilitate quick wins to foster expanded utilization of WRAP funds in the current fiscal year throughout areas where funds have traditionally been under-utilized, namely Oakland, Macomb, and Wayne County outside of the City of Detroit.

As outlined in its proposal, PSC will provide support with three critical tasks 1) prioritizing the recommended WRAP changes; 2) developing an implementation plan; and 3) providing implementation support through June 2021. The not to exceed budget for this support service is \$56,305 and will be billed hourly.

Based on preliminary discussions, it is anticipated that the full implementation of all recommendations may take at least twelve months, depending on the final priority list and feedback from the community action agencies. A report on the prioritization of the recommended changes and proposed implementation plan will be provided to the GLWA Audit Committee at its December 18, 2020 meeting.

Budget Impact: None.

Proposed Action: Receive and file this report.