



Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
Executive Director Performance Evaluation Process

Issue Date: June 25, 2025

Responses Due: 11:00 a.m., CDT, Tuesday, July 22, 2025

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Introduction

Established in 1930 to protect the lakes and streams of the upper Yahara watershed, the District is a wastewater collection and treatment utility serving about 435,000 people in 24 Madison-area owner communities covering about 190 square miles. Organized as a municipal corporation, the District is governed by a nine-member Commission appointed by the communities we serve.

The District owns and operates 150 miles of pipe and 18 regional pumping stations that convey approximately 37 million gallons of wastewater to the Nine Springs Wastewater Treatment Plant daily. Through the treatment process, we recover valuable resources from the wastewater we receive before returning clean water to the environment.

Our mission is to protect public health and the environment. The District is dedicated to service, reliability, and sustainability, and our tradition of innovation has positioned us as a leader among clean water utilities.

Learn more at www.madsewer.org.

Background

The District is led by an Executive Director, who is appointed by and reports to the District's Commission. In April 2024, the District's Executive Director retired, and the Commission engaged in a national search and competitive hiring process for their next Executive Director. In December, the District's Principal Engineer Eric Dundee was selected by the Commission and appointed/promoted to Executive Director effective January 6, 2025.

The Commission is responsible for overseeing the performance of the Executive Director. Their current performance evaluation process, which was established in 2017 and revised in 2018 and 2023, includes an annual comprehensive evaluation and quarterly progress updates.

The Commission has identified several opportunities for improvement:

- The current annual process is time-intensive and consultant-dependent.
- The quarterly progress updates have historically focused more on organizational outcomes than leadership effectiveness.
- Goal-setting components could be strengthened to clarify expectations and enhance accountability.

- An annual leadership evaluation cadence is not ideal for giving timely feedback, recognizing accomplishments, or adjusting goals to address emerging issues and opportunities.

Additionally, the Commission faces three specific challenges that the redesigned process should address:

1. Limited direct interaction with the Executive Director
Most Commissioners interact with the Executive Director primarily during Commission meetings (approximately two meetings per month), creating challenges for comprehensive performance assessment.
2. Potential conflict of interest with staff-administered process
There is a potential conflict of interest if staff are engaged in gathering data or administering an evaluation process for someone they report to.
3. Limited Commissioner time for administering a process
Commissioners have work and/or other commitments in addition to their governance and oversight of the District.

The Commission is interested in developing an efficient, leadership-focused process that could be self-administered by Commissioners in the future with limited staff support. The redesigned process should also clarify evaluation criteria and include more frequent performance touchpoints than the current annual review.

Qualifications

Required Qualifications:

- 5 years of experience designing executive-level leadership performance evaluations
- Successfully designed and implemented at least three (3) performance evaluation processes for a utility, municipal government, or nonprofit executive overseen by a Board or Commission
- Demonstrated expertise in working with board/commission governance and board-executive relationships
- Familiarity with evidence-based performance management practices

Desired Qualifications:

- Experience with Policy Governance® or similar board governance frameworks
- Knowledge of Wisconsin Open Meetings Law and Open Records requirements

Project Scope and Deliverables

The selected consultant will work closely with the Commission's Executive Director Performance Evaluation Subcommittee to design and document a new evaluation process for

approval by the Commission as a whole. They will also implement the review process for at least one year, beginning in early 2026.

The Commission must have full ownership of the performance evaluation process and the flexibility to potentially self-administer the performance evaluation in future years. This requires the selected consultant to design the process for efficiency and avoid any sole-source dependencies.

Assessment and Research (September 2025)

Key tasks:

- Review documentation, including the Executive Director's job description, Commission Policy Book, and the District's Strategic Plan.
- Initial meeting with the Executive Director Performance Evaluation Subcommittee
- Interview the Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, and HR Director about the strengths and weaknesses of the current approach.
- Interview representative(s) from the District's ERP Project Team about process design considerations for future integration with Workday Talent Optimization (TLO).
- Consult with the District's legal counsel on records management practices for performance evaluation materials and data.
- Compare current process with evidence-based practices in executive leadership performance evaluation, accounting for the unique dynamics of Commission-led processes.
- Identify appropriate leadership competencies and evaluation criteria specific to the Executive Director's role and context.

Deliverable: Summary report of findings and preliminary recommendations presented to Subcommittee

Process Design (October-November 2025)

Key tasks:

- At least two meetings with the subcommittee to discuss recommendations and process design considerations
- Design a process that could be primarily self-administered by a Commission subcommittee with minimal consultant or staff support. Include:
 - Frequency and format of performance evaluations (more frequent than annual but no more than quarterly)
 - Leadership competency framework focused on Executive Director effectiveness
 - Synergy between Executive Director performance measures and organizational mission and performance
 - Goal-setting methodology that creates clear, measurable expectations
 - Self-assessment components
 - Staff and other stakeholder performance feedback components
 - Documentation requirements

- Timeline for implementation
- Create an implementation guide for Commission use.
- Present the process design to the Commission subcommittee; revise (if applicable) and present it to the whole Commission.

Deliverables:

- Presentation of initial process design and policy revision recommendations to Commission subcommittee
- Proposed revisions to Commission Policy ATT-4
- Presentation of final recommendations to Commission subcommittee
- Presentation to full Commission
- Draft implementation guide for Commissioners

First-Year Implementation (January- December 2026)

Key tasks:

- Develop all necessary templates, forms, and other implementation resources
- Establish implementation timeline
- Facilitate evaluation process on the Commission's behalf
- Meet with Commission to debrief findings

Deliverables:

- Final implementation guide for Commission use
- Materials and resources required to implement the process
- Training(s) delivered to Commission members and key staff (if applicable)
- Implementation timeline
- Documentation of data gathered, analyzed and synthesized on the Commission's behalf for their performance evaluations
- Meeting with the Commission to debrief each cycle

Continuous Improvement (Fall 2026)

Key tasks:

- Evaluate process effectiveness
- Gather feedback from Commission, Executive Director, staff and other stakeholders
- Recommend process refinements to Commission

Deliverable: Summary report to Commission with recommended process refinements

Optional Services: Second and Third-Year administration support (2027 and 2028, to be priced separately)

Key tasks:

- Facilitate process on the Commission's behalf for two additional years
- Meet with Commission to debrief findings

Deliverable:

- Implementation timeline
- Documentation of data gathered, analyzed and synthesized on the Commission's behalf for their performance evaluations
- Meeting with the Commission to debrief each cycle

RFP Timetable

The RFP timetable is tentative only and may be changed by the District at any time.

Target Date	Step	Notes
June 25	RFP Issuance	
July 11	Deadline for Respondent Questions	
July 17	Respondent Questions Answered	Answers will be posted on the District website.
July 22 at 11 am	Respondent Proposals Due	
August 4	District Proposal Review Completed	
Week of August 11 (tentative)	Commission Subcommittee Interviews with Candidates	Interviews would be conducted as a virtual public meeting.
August 15	District Selection Made and Candidates Notified	Selection and notification may be delayed depending on District staff availability
August 28	Commission Transaction Approval	The District may omit this step if costs are below the threshold for Commission approval.
September 1	Engagement begins	

Evaluation of Proposals, Consultant Selection, and Contracting

A scoring committee will evaluate proposals. Proposals will be scored based on 100 possible points, with the evaluation criteria weighted as follows:

- Relevant experience and qualifications- (20%)
- Quality and relevance of references/ case studies (10%)
- Quality and appropriateness of proposed methodology and approach (40%)
- Proposed budget of overall project cost and any additional expenses (30%)

Following the review of proposals, the District may, at its discretion, further evaluate applicants through virtual interviews. Interviews will potentially be scheduled for the period in the timetable above.

The District does not have a set budget for this work; however costs should be in line with the scope and timeline of the engagement. The proposing consultant may wish to consider providing pricing estimates in tiers if some services would be beneficial but considerably drive up the total cost of the engagement.

The scoring committee's recommendation will be for the consultant deemed to be in the best interest of the project based on both the proposal and interview, if interviews are conducted. The District reserves the right to contract for all or part of the project. The contract and associated scope of work will be a "not-to-exceed" contract. The selection process is expected to be completed and the selected consultant informed in August 2025. Work is expected to start by September 1, 2025. The District desires to have the evaluation design completed and approved by the Commission by December 18, 2025.

Award shall be made to the consultant determined to be the best qualified by the review committee, based on the evaluation criteria set forth in the Request for Proposals and upon negotiation of compensation determined to be fair and reasonable. If compensation cannot be agreed upon with the best qualified consultant, negotiations may be conducted with such other consultant or consultants in the order of their respective ranking; and the contract may be awarded to the consultant then ranked as best qualified.

Proposal Submittal

Written proposals are to be submitted by email before 11:00 a.m. CDT on Tuesday, July 22. All parts of the proposal submittal shall not exceed **10 pages**, and this includes a cover letter, qualifications, references, pricing structure, and description of work. (A cover page and table of contents will not count against the 10-page limit.) Send proposals to: rfp@madsewer.org. The email should clearly state "Executive Director Performance Evaluation Process" in the subject line.

Proposals must note the respondent's ability to meet requirements and proposed modifications to District requirements, if any. (For MMSD insurance requirements please see our standard [Professional Services Agreement \(PSA\)](#).)

The proposing firm **must provide**:

- Certificate of Insurance (COI). If awarded the contract.
- Fee schedule for all employees to be included in the project.
- Fee schedule for all subcontractors to be included in the project.
- Fees for assessment tools used (if applicable)

The proposals shall include the following sections:

- **Consultant profile:** Include firm/individual background and qualifications, relevant experience with similar projects, proposed team composition (if applicable) and qualifications of key personnel
- **References and/or case studies:** Include at least three (3) references within the last 5 years from similar evaluation process design projects for comparable organizations.
- **Project understanding and approach:** Include a detailed methodology for completing the scope of services, approach to stakeholder engagement, and description of how the proposed process will address the Commission's goals.
- **Schedule:** Show how and when key tasks and deliverables will be completed. Include timelines and key meetings.
- **Tasks, Hours, and Proposed Budget:** Provide estimated hours and budget for each part and its associated tasks included in your approach as well as an overall project budget. Include billable rates for each team member; indicate any expenses (e.g., travel, food, etc.) that are billed outside of salaries and account for any expected adjustments. Include separate pricing for optional second and third-year administration. If there are additional services recommended that could improve evaluation outcomes but are out of scope, they can be included as separate pricing as well.

Additional Documentation

- [Current Commission Policy Book](#)
(The current Executive Director evaluation process is outlined in ATT-4)
- [Executive Director job description](#)
- [District Strategic Plan](#)
- [District Professional Services Agreement \(PSA\)](#)

Additional Provisions

Equal Employment Opportunity Requirements

In connection with the performance of work for this project and under the related contract, the Proposer agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of age, race, religion, color, disability, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other status protected by law. This provision shall include, but not be limited to, the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer; recruitment or recruitment advertising; layoff or termination; rates of pay or other forms of compensation; and selection for training, including apprenticeship.

Professional Services Contract

Following the selection of a qualified firm for the work of this RFP, the District and the firm will begin a good faith effort to negotiate a Professional Services Contract for the work. The District will supply our contract template for the basis of negotiations, which will include Terms & Conditions as well as the Scope of Services for performance. District Professional Services Agreement (PSA) Proposers should notify the Project manager of any questions or concerns about the standard Terms & Conditions during the request for proposal process.

Use, Disclosure, and Confidentiality of Information

The information supplied by a Proposer as part of an RFP response will become the property of the District. Proposals will be available to interested parties and other requestors in accordance with the Wisconsin Public Records Law. None of the proposal responses will be made available to the public until after negotiation and award of a contract or cancellation of the procurement.

To the extent allowed by law, the District will treat trade secrets as confidential (if designated as confidential and submitted separately in a sealed envelope). If a Proposer wishes for a proposal to remain confidential, the Proposer must, before submitting a proposal, establish to the District's satisfaction that the proposal be given confidential status. The District reserves the right to make any final disclosure determinations in accordance with the law. (Note: Pricing information will not be considered confidential.)

Use of the District's Name

Upon entering an agreement, the successful Contractor agrees not to use the name of the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District in relation to the agreement in commercial advertising, trade literature, or press releases to the public without the prior written approval of the District. The District has the right to enjoin the Contractor from any such use in violation of this provision, and the Contractor shall be responsible for damages and reimbursement of actual reasonable legal fees incurred with regard to legal evaluation and/or legal action taken by the District because of the Contractor's violation of this provision, including fees incurred to obtain an injunction.

Confidentiality

Subject to Wisconsin's Public Records law, any data or other information regarding the District's customers, operations, or methods obtained by the Contractor during the course of the project shall remain confidential and shall not be released to third parties without the express written consent of the District.