



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

100 East Erie Street
Chicago, IL 60611

Legislation Text

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RESOLUTION FOR BOARD MEETING OF JUNE 1, 2023

RESOLUTION sponsored by the Board of Commissioners recognizing the 150th anniversary of the Chicago Public Library

WHEREAS, prior to 1871, libraries in the City of Chicago (City) were either privately owned, were social organizations, or existed as subscription libraries. There were no public libraries; and

WHEREAS, following the Great Chicago Fire, which occurred in October of 1871, A.H. Burgess of London suggested donating books for use in a public library to aid the city in its recovery as a symbol of brotherly kindness. As a result, more than 8,000 books were shipped from Great Britain to Chicago; and

WHEREAS, on March 7, 1872, Governor John M. Palmer signed the Public Library Act authorizing municipalities throughout the State of Illinois to establish and maintain tax-supported libraries for use by the residents. Thereafter, on April 3, 1872, Chicago became the second city in Illinois to establish a public library; and

WHEREAS, with books in hand but no space to house them, the first Chicago Public Library opened on January 1, 1873 in an old iron water tank located at the southeast corner of LaSalle and Adams, one of the few structures that survived the Great Chicago Fire; and

WHEREAS, until 1897, the Chicago Public Library was housed in various buildings throughout the City, including City Hall. However, on October 11, 1897, the Central Library was opened. Located on Michigan Avenue between Washington and Randolph, the building was designed to be virtually fire-resistant; and

WHEREAS, in 1904, the first library branch was constructed. Funded by the widow of Timothy Beach Blackstone in her late husband's honor, the library still serves the Hyde Park and Kenwood neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, having grown immensely since its humble beginning, the Chicago Public Library now consists of 80 locations throughout the City. In addition to providing books for use free of charge, the Chicago Public Library offers numerous invaluable services to the residents of Chicago including English language resources, citizenship workshops, homework assistance, and rooms for meetings, studying, and music practice; and

WHEREAS, the Chicago Public Library began commemorating its 150th anniversary at the beginning of the year and plans to host a total of 150 events; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Board of Commissioners of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, on behalf of ourselves and our staff, do hereby recognize the 150th anniversary of the Chicago Public Library; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution be spread upon the permanent Record of Proceedings of the Board of Commissioners of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago.

Dated: June 1, 2023