

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-21

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SAN BENITO COUNTY WATER DISTRICT APPROVING AND ADOPTING A DEBT MANAGEMENT POLICY

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors (the “Board”) of San Benito County Water District (the “District”) recognizes that cost-effective access to the capital markets depends on prudent management of the District’s debt program; and

WHEREAS, SB 1029 (amending Government Code section 8855) has been signed into law and imposes a new requirement on California local government agencies who will issue municipal debt; and

WHEREAS, Government Code section 8855(i) requires any issuer of public debt to provide to California Debt and Investment Advisory Commission (CDIAC) no later than 30 days prior to the sale of any debt issue a report of the proposed issuance (the “Report of Proposed Debt Issuance”), and must certify on the Report of Proposed Debt Issuance that they have adopted local debt policies concerning the use of debt and that the proposed debt issuance is consistent with those policies (the “CDIAC Requirements”); and

WHEREAS, the District expects to be an issuer of new debt in 2021 and thereafter within the meaning of SB 1029 and the CDIAC Requirements; and

WHEREAS, the Board wishes to set parameters for issuing debt, managing the debt portfolio and providing guidance to decision makers; and

WHEREAS, the Board hereby finds and determines that adoption of the attached Debt Management Policy (the “Debt Management Policy”) will help ensure that debt is issued and managed prudently in order to maintain sound fiscal policy, and is intended to also satisfy the requirements of SB 1029 and the CDIAC Requirements; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED AND ORDERED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SAN BENITO COUNTY WATER DISTRICT THAT:

Section 1. Recitals and Findings. The Board hereby specifically finds and declares that all of the facts in the Recitals of this Resolution are true and correct.

Section 2. Adoption of Debt Management Policy. The Board hereby finds and declares that the proposed Debt Management Policy attached as Exhibit “A” hereto, is hereby approved as the official San Benito County Water District Debt Management Policy to be effective December 16, 2020.

Section 3. Authorized Official Actions. The President, Vice President, General Manager and any other person authorized by the General Manager to act on behalf of the District are hereby authorized and directed, jointly and severally, to do any and all things to effectuate the purposes of this Resolution and to implement and administer the Debt Management Policy.

Section 4. Effective Date. This Resolution shall take effect from and after the date of its passage and adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Directors of the San Benito County Water District at a meeting thereof on the 16th day of December 2020, by the following vote:

AYES: Tobias, Flores, Tonascia, Williams and Shelton

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

/s/ John Tobias
John Tobias,
President

ATTEST:

/s/ Sara Singleton
Sara Singleton
Assistant Manager

EXHIBIT A

DEBT MANAGEMENT POLICY

SAN BENITO COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

**Adopted by the Board of Directors of the
San Benito County Water District**

Pursuant to Resolution No. 2020-21

December 16, 2020

SAN BENITO COUNTY WATER DISTRICT DEBT MANAGEMENT POLICY

Section 1: Policy

This Debt Management Policy sets forth debt management objectives for the San Benito County Water District (the “District”), and any other entity for which the Board of Directors of the District (the “Board”) acts as legislative body, and the term “District” shall refer to each of such entities, and the term “Board” shall refer to the governing boards of each such entity.

This Debt Management Policy establishes general parameters for issuing and administering debt. Recognizing that cost-effective access to the capital markets depends on prudent management of debt incurred by the District (or any of its controlled entities), the Board has adopted this Debt Management Policy by resolution.

This Debt Management Policy is intended to comply with California Government Code Section 8855(i).

Section 2: Scope

The guidelines established by this policy will govern the issuance and management of all debt funded for long-term capital financing needs and not for general operating functions. When used in this policy, “debt” refers to all forms of indebtedness, including bonds, notes, loans, certificates of participation, installment sale agreements and lease obligations.

The District recognizes that changes in the capital markets and other unforeseen circumstances may require action that deviates from this Debt Management Policy. In cases that require exceptions to this Debt Management Policy, approval from the Board will be necessary for implementation.

Section 3: Objectives

The purpose of this Debt Management Policy is to assist the District in pursuit of the following equally important objectives, while providing full and complete financial disclosure and ensuring compliance with applicable state and federal laws:

- Minimize debt service and issuance costs
- Maintain access to cost effective borrowing
- Preserve financial flexibility while assuring public transparency
- Achieve the highest practical credit rating
- Ensure full and timely repayment of debt
- Maintain full and complete financial disclosure and reporting
- Ensure compliance with debt covenants
- Ensure compliance with applicable state and federal laws

Budget Integration – The decision to incur new indebtedness should be integrated with the policy decisions embedded in the Board-adopted budget (the “Budget”). Annual debt service payments shall be included in the Budget.

The District will integrate its debt issuances with the goals of its Capital Improvement Program by timing the issuance of debt to ensure that projects are available when needed in furtherance of the District’s public purposes. The District will seek to issue debt in a timely manner to avoid having to make unplanned expenditures for capital improvements or equipment from its general fund.

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Biennial Review – Recognizing that cost-effective access to the capital market depends on prudent management of the District’s debt program, a biennial review of this Debt Management Policy should be performed. This Debt Management Policy will be included as an Appendix in the annual Budget adopted by Board. Any substantive changes to this Debt Management Policy shall be brought to the Board for consideration and approval.

Section 4: Delegation of Authority

This Debt Management Policy grants the General Manager the authority to select the Financing Team, coordinate the administration and issuance of debt, communicate with the rating agencies, and fulfill all of the pre-issuance and post-issuance requirements imposed by or related to state law, federal tax law and federal securities law.

Financing Team Definitions and Roles – The financing team is the working group of District staff and outside consultants necessary to complete a debt issuance proposal for presentation to the San Benito County Water District Board, including, but not limited to, bond counsel, disclosure counsel, underwriter, municipal advisor, trustee, pricing consultant and/or arbitrage analyst.

Typically, the General Manager and Assistant General Manager forms the District staff portion of the Financing Team. As needed, other staff members or designees (such as a standing committee of the District) may be appointed to the Financing Team.

Consultant Selection –The District will consider the professional qualifications and experience of consultants as it relates to the specific bond issue or other financing under consideration. In certain instances, the District will conduct a request for proposal/qualification process to select such consultants. The General Manager may, however, decide to select such consultants without having to undertake a request for proposal/qualification process, on an as-needed basis.

Section 5: Policies

A. Purposes for which Debt may be Issued

1. **Long-Term Debt**. Long-term debt may be issued to finance the construction, acquisition, and rehabilitation of capital improvements and facilities, equipment and land to be owned and operated by the District.
 - a. Long-term debt financings are appropriate when the following conditions exist:
 - When the project to be financed is necessary to provide basic services.
 - When the project to be financed will provide benefit to constituents over multiple years.
 - When total debt does not constitute an unreasonable burden to the District and its taxpayers and/or ratepayers, as applicable.
 - When the debt is used to refinance outstanding debt in order to produce debt service savings or to realize the benefits of a debt restructuring.
 - b. Long-term debt financings will not generally be considered appropriate for current operating expenses and routine maintenance expenses.

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- c. The District may use long-term debt financings subject to the following conditions:
- The project to be financed must be approved by the Board.
 - The weighted average maturity of the debt (or the portion of the debt allocated to the project) will not exceed the average useful life of the project to be financed by more than 20%.
 - The District estimates that sufficient revenues will be available to service the debt through its maturity.
 - The District determines that the issuance of the debt will comply with the applicable state and federal law.

2. Short-Term Debt. Short-term debt may be issued to provide financing for the District’s operational cash flows in order to maintain a steady and even cash flow balance. Short-term debt may also be used to finance short-lived capital projects; for example, the District may undertake lease-purchase financing for equipment.

B. Methods of Financing

The General Manager will investigate all possible financing alternatives including, but not limited to, bonds, notes, loans, certificates of participation, installment sale agreements, lease obligations, state bond pools, and grants, which may be structured and consummated under any of the below described methods of financing.

1. Cash Funding. The District funds a significant portion of capital improvements from reserves accumulated from one-time revenues, which have been set aside for investment in the District’s infrastructure.

2. Bank Loans / Lines of Credit. The District will evaluate lines of credit as a possible method of financing.

3. Other Loans. The District will evaluate other financing programs, including but not limited to federal “loans” from the United States Department of Agriculture.

4. Bond Financing. The District may issue any bonds which are allowed under federal and state law including but not limited to general obligation bonds, certificates of participation, revenue bonds, land-secured (assessment and special tax) bonds, refunding bonds and other obligations (see below for detail).

- ***General Obligation Bonds.*** General Obligation Bonds (GO Bonds) may only be issued with two-thirds approval of the District’s registered voters. The California State Constitution (Article XVI, Section 18) limits the use of the proceeds from GO Bonds to “the acquisition or improvement of real property.”

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- ***Lease Revenue Bonds, Certificates of Participation (COPs) and Lease-Purchase Transactions.*** Lease financings may take a variety of forms, including certificates of participation, lease revenue bonds and direct leases (typically for equipment). When the District finances acquisition or construction of capital improvements or equipment with a lease financing, the District agrees to lease either the financed asset or a different asset and, most commonly, the District's lease payments are securitized in the form of certificates of participation or lease revenue bonds. This type of financing requires approval of Board.
- ***Revenue Bonds.*** Revenue Bonds are generally issued by the District for enterprise funds that are financially self-sustaining without the use of taxes and therefore rely on the revenues collected by the enterprise fund to repay the debt. This type of financing requires approval of Board.
- ***Assessment Bonds.*** The Improvement Bond Act of 1915 (Streets and Highways Code Section 8500 et seq.) and other state laws, subject to Article XIIIID of the California Constitution, allow the District to issue bonds to finance improvements that provide "specific benefit" to the assessed real property. Installments are collected on the secured property tax roll of the County. This type of financing is secured by the lien upon and assessments paid by the real property owners and does not obligate the District's general fund or other funds. This type of financing requires approval of Board.
- ***Special Tax Bonds.*** Under the Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act of 1982, the District may issue bonds on behalf of a Community Facilities District (CFD) to finance capital facilities, most commonly in connection with new development. These bonds must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the qualified electors in the CFD, which the Mello-Roos Act defines to mean registered voters if there are 12 or more registered voters in the CFD and, if there are fewer than 12 registered voters, the landowners in the CFD. Bonds issued by the District under the Mello-Roos Act are secured by a special tax on the real property within the CFD. Board will approve any special tax bonds prior to placement on a ballot for voter consideration. The financed facilities do not need to be physically located within the CFD. As this type of financing is secured by the special tax lien upon the real property it does not obligate the District's general fund or other funds.
- ***Refunding Obligations.*** Pursuant to the Government Code and various other financing statutes applicable in specific situations, the Board is authorized to provide for the issuance of bonds for the purpose of refunding any long-term obligation of the District. Absent any significant non-economic factors, a refunding is required to meet the following test: 1) the refunding must produce a minimum net debt service savings (net of reserve fund earnings and other offsets, and taking transaction costs into account) of at least 3% of the par value of the refunded bonds on a net present value basis, using the refunding issue's True Interest Cost (TIC) as the discount rate, unless the General Manager determines that a lower savings percentage is acceptable for issues or maturities with short maturity dates, and 2) the final

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maturity of the original bonds cannot be extended unless expressly determined otherwise by the Board. Additionally, the General Manager may determine that there are other, compelling “non-economic” reasons (i.e. removal of onerous covenants, terms or conditions).

- ***Other Obligations.*** There may be special circumstances when other forms of debt are appropriate and may be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Such other forms include, but are not limited to: bond anticipation notes, grant anticipation notes, lease revenue bonds, pension obligation bonds, etc.

Section 6: Structure and Term

Term of Debt – Debt will be structured for the shortest period possible, consistent with a fair allocation of costs to current and future users. The standard term of long-term debt borrowing is typically 10-40 years.

Consistent with its philosophy of keeping its capital facilities and infrastructure systems in good condition and maximizing a capital asset’s useful life, the District will make every effort to set aside sufficient current revenues to finance ongoing maintenance needs and to provide reserves for periodic replacement and renewal. Generally, no debt will be issued for a period exceeding the useful life or average useful lives of projects to be financed.

Debt Repayment Structure – In structuring a bond issue, the District will manage the amortization of the debt and, to the extent possible, match its cash flow to the anticipated debt service payments. In addition, the District will seek to structure debt with aggregate level debt service payments over the life of the debt. Structures with unlevel debt service will be considered when one or more of the following exist:

- Such structuring is beneficial to the District’s aggregate overall debt payment schedule.
- Such structuring will allow debt service to more closely match project revenues during the early years of the project’s operation.

Bond Maturity Options – For each issuance, the District will select serial bonds or term bonds, or both.

Interest Rate Structure – The District currently issues securities on a fixed interest rate basis only. Fixed rate securities ensure budget certainty through the life of the issue and avoid the volatility of variable rates. The use of variable rate securities may be issued if authorized by the Board on a case-by-case basis.

Credit Enhancement – Credit enhancement may be used to improve or establish a credit rating on a District debt obligation. Types of credit enhancement include letters of credit, bond insurance and surety policies. The General Manager will recommend the use of a credit enhancement if it reduces the overall cost of the proposed financing or if the use of such credit enhancement furthers the District’s overall financial objectives.

Debt Service Reserve Fund – Debt service reserve funds are typically held by a Trustee to make principal and interest payments to bondholders in the event the pledged revenues are insufficient to do so. The District will fund debt service reserve funds when it is in the District’s overall best financial interest. The District may decide not to utilize a reserve fund if the General Manager, in consultation with Bond Counsel and municipal advisor, determines there would be no adverse impact to the District’s relevant existing legal provisions, credit rating and/or interest rates.

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Per Internal Revenue Service rules, the maximum size of the reserve fund on tax-exempt bond issuance is the lesser of

- 10% of the initial principal amount of the debt;
- 125% of average annual debt service; or
- 100% of maximum annual debt service.

In lieu of holding a cash funded reserve, the District may substitute a surety bond or other credit instrument in its place. The decision to cash fund a reserve fund rather than to use a credit facility is dependent upon the cost of the credit instrument and the investment opportunities.

Call Options / Redemption Provisions – A call option or optional redemption provision gives the District the right to prepay or retire debt prior to its stated maturity date. This option may permit the District to achieve interest savings in the future through the refunding of the bonds. Often the District will pay a higher interest rate as compensation to the buyer for the risk of having the bond called in the future. In addition, if a bond is called, the holder may be entitled to a premium payment (call premium). Because the cost of call options can vary depending on market conditions, an evaluation of factors will be conducted in connection with each issuance. The General Manager shall evaluate and recommend the use of a call option on a case by case basis.

Section 7: Method of Issuance and Sale; Disclosure

Debt issues are sold to a single underwriter or to an underwriting syndicate, either through a competitive sale or a negotiated sale. A negotiated sale may involve the sale of securities to investors through an underwriter or the private placement of the securities with a financial institution or other sophisticated investor. The selected method of sale will be that which is most beneficial to the District in terms of lowest net interest rate, most favorable terms in financial structure, and market conditions. The General Manager will review conditions in conjunction with information and advice presented by the District's Financing Team.

Competitive Sales of Bonds – In a competitive sale, the terms of the debt will be defined by the District and the District's finance team, and the price of the debt will be established through a bidding process amongst impartial underwriters and/or underwriting syndicates. The issue is awarded to the underwriter judged to have submitted the best bid that offers the lowest true interest cost taking into account underwriting spread, interest rates and any discounts or premiums.

Negotiated Sale of Bonds – A method for sale for bonds, notes, or other financing vehicles in which the District selects in advance, based upon proposals received or by other means, one or more underwriters to work with it in structuring, marketing and finally offering an issue to investors. The negotiated sale method is often used when the issue is: a first-time sale by an issuer (a new credit), a complex security structure, such as variable rate transaction, an unusually large issue, or in a highly volatile or congested market where flexibility as to bond sale timing is important.

Private Placement – A private placement is a variation of a negotiated sale in which the District, usually with the help of a placement agent will attempt to place the entire new issue directly with a single investor. The investor will negotiate the specific terms and conditions of the financing before agreeing to purchase the issue. Private placements are generally undertaken because the transaction is complex or unique, requiring direct negotiations with the investor, or because the issue is small or of a shorter duration and a direct offering provides economies of scale, lower interest costs and reduced continuing disclosure.

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Derivative Products – Because of their complexity, unless otherwise amended, Derivative Products such as interest rate swaps, interest floaters, and other hybrid securities are prohibited by this Debt Management Policy.

Initial Disclosure Requirements – The District acknowledges its disclosure responsibilities. Under the guidance of Disclosure Counsel, the District will distribute or cause an underwriter to distribute its Preliminary Official Statement and final Official Statement (neither is typically required in a private placement, although in some cases a “private placement memorandum” may be required by the investor).

The Financing Team shall be responsible for soliciting “material” information (as defined in Securities and Exchange Board Rule 10b-5) from District departments and identifying contributors who may have information necessary to prepare portions of the Official Statement or who should review portions of the Official Statement. In doing so, the Financing Team shall confirm that the Official Statement accurately states all “material” information relating to the decision to buy or sell the subject bonds and that all information in the Official Statement has been critically reviewed by an appropriate person.

In connection with an initial offering of securities, the District and other members of the Financing Team will:

- Identify material information that should be disclosed in the Official Statement;
- Identify other persons that may have material information (contributors);
- Review and approve the Official Statement; and
- Ensure the District’s compliance, and that of its related entities, with federal and state security laws, including notification to the California Debt and Investment Advisory Board (“CDIAC”) of the proposed debt issue no later than 30 days prior to the sale of any debt issue, and submission of a final report of the issuance to the CDIAC by any method approved by the CDIAC.

The Financing Team shall critically evaluate the Official Statement for accuracy and compliance with federal and state securities laws. The approval of an Official Statement shall be placed on the Board agenda, and shall not be considered as a Consent Calendar item. The staff report will summarize the Board’s responsibilities with respect to the Official Statement and provide the Board the opportunity to review a substantially final Official Statement. The Board shall undertake such review as deemed necessary by the Board to fulfill the Board’s securities law responsibilities.¹

For any privately placed debt with no Official Statement, the final staff report describing the issue and such other documents will be provided to the Board for approval.

Section 8: Creditworthiness Objectives

Ratings are a reflection of the general fiscal soundness of the District and the capabilities of its management. Typically, the higher the credit ratings are, the lower the interest cost is on the District’s debt issues. To enhance creditworthiness,

¹ The Securities and Exchange Board (the SEC), the agency with regulatory authority over the District’s compliance with the federal securities laws, has issued guidance as to the duties of the Board with respect to its approval of the POS. In its “Report of Investigation in the Matter of County of Orange, California as it Relates to the Conduct of the Members of the Board of Supervisors” (Release No. 36761 / January 24, 1996) (the “Release”), the SEC stated that, if a member of the Board has knowledge of any facts or circumstances that an investor would want to know about prior to investing in the bonds, whether relating to their repayment, tax-exempt status, undisclosed conflicts of interest with interested parties, or otherwise, he or she should endeavor to discover whether such factors are adequately disclosed in the Official Statement. In the Release, the SEC stated that the steps that a member of the Board would take include becoming familiar with the POS and questioning staff and consultants about the disclosure of such facts.

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the District is committed to prudent financial management, systematic capital planning, and long-term financial planning; however, the District also recognizes that external economic, natural, or other events may, from time to time, affect the creditworthiness of its debt.

The most familiar nationally recognized bond rating agencies are Standard and Poor's, Moody's Investors Service, and Fitch Ratings. When issuing a credit rating, rating agencies consider various factors, including, but not limited to:

- District's fiscal status;
- District's general management capabilities;
- Economic conditions that may impact the stability and reliability of debt repayment sources;
- District's general reserve levels;
- District's debt history and current debt structure;
- Project(s) being financed; and
- Covenants and conditions in the governing legal documents.

Bond Ratings – The Financing Team will assess whether a credit rating should be obtained for an issuance. The District typically seeks a rating from at least one nationally recognized rating agency on new and refunded issues being sold in the public market. The General Manager, working with the Financing Team, shall be responsible for determining which of the major rating agencies the District shall request provide a rating. When applying for a rating on an issue, the District and Financing Team shall prepare a presentation for the rating agency when the District determines that a presentation is in the best interests of the District.

Rating Agency Communications – The General Manager is responsible for maintaining relationships with the rating agencies that assign ratings to the District's various debt obligations. This effort shall include providing the rating agencies with the District's financial statements, if applicable, as well as any additional information requested.

Section 9: Post Issuance Administration

Notification to the CDIAC – The District shall work with Bond Counsel to submit a report of final sale to the CDIAC by any method approved by the CDIAC. The report shall include the information required by CDIAC.

Investment of Proceeds – The General Manager shall oversee the investment of bond proceeds and reserve funds in accordance with each issue's indenture or trust agreement, utilizing competitive bidding when appropriate. All investments will be made in compliance with the District's investment policy objectives of safety, liquidity and then yield. The investment of bond proceeds and reserve funds shall comply with federal tax law requirements specified in the indenture or trust agreement and the tax certificate. Whenever reasonably possible, unexpended bond proceeds and reserve fund monies shall be held by the bank trustee. The trustee will be responsible for recording all investments and transactions relating to the proceeds and providing monthly statements regarding the investments and transactions.

Use of Bond Proceeds – The General Manager is responsible for ensuring debt proceeds are spent for the intended purposes identified in the related legal documents and that the proceeds are spent in the time frames identified in the tax certificate prepared by Bond Counsel. Whenever reasonably possible, proceeds of debt will be held by a third-party trustee and the District will submit written requisitions for such proceeds. The District will submit a requisition only after obtaining the signature of the General Manager. In those cases where it is not reasonably possible for the proceeds

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of debt to be held by a third-party trustee, the General Manager shall retain records of all expenditures of proceeds through the final payment date for the debt.

Continuing Disclosure – When required by Securities Exchange Board Rule 15c2-12(b)(5) (the “Rule”) the General Manager or designee will ensure the District’s annual financial statements and associated reports are posted on the District’s web site, and will also comply with the Rule by filing its annual financial statements, other financial and operating data and notices of enumerated events for the benefit of its bondholders on the Electronic Municipal Market Access (EMMA) website of the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board (MSRB). The District shall submit an annual report to the CDIAC in compliance with the requirements of Government Code Section 8855 and related regulations.

Arbitrage Rebate Compliance and Reporting – The use and investment of bond proceeds must be monitored to ensure compliance with arbitrage restrictions. Existing regulations require that issuers calculate rebate liabilities related to any bond issues, with rebates paid to the Federal Government every five years and as otherwise required by applicable provisions of the Internal Revenue Code and regulations. The General Manager shall contract with a specialist to ensure that proceeds and investments are tracked in a manner that facilitates accurate complete calculations, and if necessary timely rebate payments.

Compliance with Other Bond Covenants – In addition to financial disclosure and arbitrage, the General Manager is also responsible for verifying compliance with all undertakings, covenants, and agreements of each bond issuance on an ongoing basis. This typically includes ensuring:

- Annual appropriation of revenues to meet debt service payments;
- Taxes/fees are levied and collected where applicable;
- Timely transfer of debt service payments to the trustee;
- Compliance with insurance requirements;
- Compliance with rate covenants; and
- Post-issuance procedures established in the tax certificate for any tax-exempt debt.

Retention – A copy of all relevant documents and records will be maintained by the District for the term of any bonds issued (including refunding bonds, if any), plus 10 years. Relevant documents and records will include sufficient documentation to support the requirements relating to the tax-exempt status.

Investor Relations – While the District shall post its annual financial report as well as other financial reports on the District’s website, this information is intended for the citizens of the District. Information that the District intends to reach the investing public, including bondholders, rating analysts, investment advisors, or any other members of the investment community shall be filed on the EMMA system.

Additional requirements for financial statements – It is the District’s policy to hire an auditing firm that has the technical skills and resources to properly perform an annual audit of the District’s financial statements. More specifically, the firm shall be a recognized expert in the accounting rules applicable to the District and shall have the resources necessary to review the District’s financial statements on a timely basis.

Section 10: Training

To the extent that the District has outstanding debt subject to the Rule, the General Manager shall (i) ensure that the members of the District staff involved in the continuing disclosure process and the Board are properly trained to

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understand and perform their responsibilities, and (ii) arrange for disclosure training sessions conducted by the District's Disclosure Counsel. Such training sessions shall include education on the applicable federal and state securities laws and the disclosure responsibilities and potential liabilities of members of the District's staff and members of the Board.