



Press Release: 2017 NFWB Bad Debt Collection Program

October 24, 2017

Contact: James Perry 283-9770 x207

On October 23, 2017, the Niagara Falls Water Board (“Water Board”) approved a one-time program that will help the Water Board’s residential property owners bring their water and sewer accounts current. The program permits residential property owners – one account per customer, for those with multiple properties – to pay late bills in full, with late-payment penalties waived. The program applies to bills for the 2017 billing year (bills from January 1, 2017 to September 30, 2017). It does not apply to sums previously transferred to taxes.

According to Water Board Chairman Dan O’Callaghan, “everyone understands that water service is essential for daily life. Some Water Board customers experience hardships that mean they cannot pay their bills when due. Under Water Board regulations, late penalties begin to add up, and this program is a win-win because it will help people pay their outstanding balances and will help the Water Board collect some bad debt before it has to be transferred to taxes.”

Eligible property owners must complete an application form and pay their outstanding balance in full in order for late-payment penalties to be waived. The application form is available on the Water Board’s website, NFWB.org, at the Water Board’s administration building, 5815 Buffalo Avenue, Niagara Falls, and at Niagara Falls City Hall, Billing and Collection Room 109.

The Water Board is independent of the City of Niagara Falls, but its action has the support of the Niagara Falls City Council. Council Members Andrew Touma and Kristen Grandinetti sponsored a resolution adopted at the City’s October 16 meeting that “this City Council supports this NFWB program initiative as a benefit to residents and taxpayers of the City of Niagara Falls.”

The Water Board is not considering changing its regulations to eliminate the late-payment penalty altogether, because its operations rely on prompt collection of revenue. The program limitations and

eligibility requirements are designed to limit the amount of penalties waived so that there is no material effect on Water Board finances. There are no plans to offer a similar program next year, and a property owner that participates in this program will not be eligible for a discretionary bill adjustment for three years.

All 2017 NFWB Bad Debt Collection Program payments must be made either in person or by mail to Niagara Falls City Hall – Billing and Collection Room 109, P.O. Box 69, Niagara Falls, NY 14302-0069. The deadline for receipt of program payments at the Billing and Collection Room is November 10, 2017. Any balances that remain outstanding on November 21, 2017 will be transferred to taxes.

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