



# WITH THE FLOW

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## Monthly Message

This special newsletter issue is meant as a vehicle, primarily, for us to exchange holiday greetings. In that regard, I'm pleased that many board members and staff have taken the time to extend good wishes for the holiday season. This is a time of year in which we can put away our differences, no matter the source of such varying points of view, slights real or perceived, or grudges heavily carried, and tell others that we wish for them to enjoy the spirit of the holidays. It is in that spirit that I hope each of you fully enjoy the holidays and have a happy and healthy New Year.

Meanwhile, from my desk as Executive Director, I also want to take this opportunity to provide a summary of the year at the NFWB and to make a quick comment on the recent announcement of a significant and positive state action regarding our infrastructure needs.



Governor Cuomo unveils Major Investment to Accelerate Improvements at Niagara Fall WWTP. Left to right: NF Mayor Paul Dyster , NFWB Chair Dan O'Callaghan, Lt. Governor Kathy Hochul, DEC Commission Basil Seggos

The announcement, made in Niagara Falls by Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul and set out in full here: <http://on.ny.gov/2AYVnNT>, caps off, in my view, one of the most difficult years endured by any public agency in this state. Yet, through strong and decisive leadership from the board and the tireless efforts of our staff, we have overcome nearly insurmountable inherited problems (and others that Mother Nature put in our way) to convince Governor Cuomo and other relevant decision makers of the necessity of adequate financial support for a full scale, comprehensive, long range fix of

the Waste Water Treatment Plant. I extend my sincere appreciation to Governor Cuomo and to all who contributed to this effort. Now, our attention turns to digging in to the deeper layers of the consent decree that is an aspect of the Governor's announcement, making assignments for the direct management of the handful of projects that will be funded by the appropriations detailed in the announcement and addressing the remaining challenges ahead. Much needs to be done but with adequate funding soon to be in place and the continuing herculean efforts of our team, the future shines bright with promise.

After the good wishes from the Board and staff set out below, Jim Perry and I have included the following:

- A list, entitled "The Class of 2017 Presents", that shows those who have come and gone from our employment ranks. Good luck is extended to those who have moved on and condolences offered to the families of those who passed away. As for those who have joined our ranks, including yours truly, here's to a long and successful period of employment.
- A Summary of Achievements intended, not as a "pat on the back" but rather as a look back on 2017 as a reminder that we owe it to the ratepayers of this organization, and, in a broader sense to the community at large, to use our best efforts to recognize, analyze and solve problems. I think we did that effectively during this past year and I look forward to working with the Board and our entire table of organization in 2018.
- Operational charts containing sewer and water maintenance records. These "snapshots" of recent activity show substantial progress in keys areas, previously described by Board Member Nick Forster, as "neglected and ignored" for too long, and illustrate the new, positive, direction of our organization at all levels. The continuing yeoman efforts of the supervisors and crew members of the outside teams are acknowledged with appreciation.

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# Holiday Wishes



"We've weathered a year together that presented more than a fair share of difficult problems, but working cooperatively, we have made the NFWB a stronger, more responsible — and responsive — organization. I look forward to continued improvement in 2018 and wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year."

Dan O'Callaghan, Chair

To the Niagara Falls Water and Sewer Employees:

Thank you for all your hard work throughout 2017. This year will be remembered as one of transition, change and numerous challenges that you have overcome by a spirit of excellence and camaraderie.

There are better days are on the horizon. I look forward to working towards implementing more improvements at this facility with our new administration.

Have a Merry Christmas and a blessed and prosperous New Year!

Regards, Renae Kimble, Vice Chairwoman

"Happy holidays to everyone! My sincere wishes that your season is bright and spent in the company of those you love. As we look to 2018, it is my honor to continue to serve on this board and join my colleagues and the entire team in our mission to proactively meet the city of Niagara Falls water needs."

Colleen Larkin, Board Member

Holiday greetings to all and thank you for your continued service to the NFWB. We witnessed many changes in 2017, we are finally turning the corner and becoming a "Utility Company" our rate payers and elected officials can be proud of. Personally, I have enjoyed the past 11 months as a member of the Niagara Falls Water Board, and look forward to 2018. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Nick Forster, Board Member

I just want to wish everyone at the Niagara Falls Water Board a very happy and relaxing holiday season and continued success in the New Year 2018.

Thanks, Doug Williamson

I'd like all to know that I believe this organization values it's employees and is committed to ensuring that employees work safely. I'm optimistic that leadership will continue to emphasize safe work practices and support efforts to maintain a workplace free from hazards as we move through 2018. I also wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season surrounded by friends and family.

Gina Senia

To my extended family at the NFWB,

As I look back over 2017 at the Niagara Falls Water Board, I remember with appreciation the support, guidance, and patients, I received from the Board of Directors, Administration, Operations, Maintenance and Office staff. Here is to good health and your family's good health and may you all have a great holiday season.

To the men I work side by side with daily, it has been a privilege. I appreciate and respect the men who have given up their personal time with family and friend to fix the issues that have hit us this year. I have watched us reach for the stars in these last few months and I look forward to 2018 as we continue to grow in our positions. It does not go without saying that I am only as good as the men I have around me. We are in this TOGETHER! I sincerely wish each of you and your family's the very best this holiday season has.

Michael Eagler

# Holiday Wishes



Looking back over the past 10 months, I can see that we have made a lot of changes and progress toward a more modern organization, but this road is long, and we are still only at the entrance of this freeway. I know that there are many of you who have been here for a while who might feel a bit uncertain and some people have retired simply because of the changes we have been undergoing but I assure you, that the longer you stay in the workforce and the longer you stay with any organization, if it is a healthy organization, you will see many changes. The reason for this is because the needs and wants of the customers change and you must adapt to provide for those customers. Now many of you might think that because we are a utility providing a government service we don't fall into that same category but that thinking is what places our organization and us behind when it comes to effective and efficient ways to operate. And it is also a main reason that wages in an organization stay low. When I got here, I sat down with the Union leaders and we decided the first thing needed was a Collective Bargaining Agreement. Why? because, by not having one in so many years, it created a gap between the wages here and the wages of comparable organizations. There followed major workforce complaints because overtime was heavily scrutinized – but this was necessary to instill more effective work habits.

When we get things in proper alignment such as work habits and productivity we can take additional steps moving forward in receiving additional benefits. The productivity then will match what we are providing in the way of customer service. To resist the progress and changes that we are embarking on will be hurting the advancement of the organization's efficiency which will in turn hurt our own personal economic growth as well as that of the community.

I hope each associate in this organization can readily see where this is going and follows me fearlessly along the path. I have taken this journey before and I have no doubt anyone who is confident in their ability, and is a team player, will be happily surprised when we finally do get on that freeway to success. Let's go forward together as a team into 2018 and into a brighter and prosperous future together. May each and all of you have a great holiday season.

Jim Perry

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a merry Christmas and happy New Years. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the board members, directors and department heads and staff. Also, a thank you to outside water and sewer crews for a job well done. Let's have a strong finish to 2017 and an even better 2018.

Bill Wright

During the holidays we begin to reflect on what we are truly thankful for, and this year I can say with great pride that I am thankful for the extensive knowledge and guidance that I have received from the board members, directors and staff here at the Niagara Falls Water Board.

In the short 7 months that I have been an employee at the Niagara Falls Water Board, I am very grateful for the acceptance I have felt from each one of you. With all the obstacles and challenges we have faced this year, we have proved that as a team we can accomplish anything. I look forward to 2018 knowing that no matter what is thrown our way, we will prevail!

I wish you and your families a very blessed holiday season and a prosperous New Year!

Erika Schroeder

It has been an interesting year, full of new faces and great new projects - and I am looking forward to further building our teams in the new year to come!

Wishing you all a joyous holiday season and great success in the new year.

Rob Rowe

From my heart, Merry Christmas to all of you and thank you for all that you do! Looking forward to a great 2018!

-Bob Drury

# The Year in Review 2017

## CLASS OF 2017

### January

#### Welcomed

No One

#### Said Goodbye To

No One

### February

#### Welcomed

Max Greco  
Jim Perry  
Rolfe Porter

#### Said Goodbye To

Mark Drylewski  
Rhonda Grose

### March

#### Welcomed

John Loncki  
Kendra Walker

#### Said Goodbye To

Nathan Canna  
Tom Infantino  
Darren Holland

### April

#### Welcomed

John DiCarlo  
Nick D'Angelo

#### Said Goodbye To

Don Phillips, Jr  
Rick Roll  
Norm Allen  
Tammy Arnone  
Frank Rotella

### May

#### Welcomed

Bob Drury  
Erika Schroeder  
Jillian O'Connor

#### Said Goodbye To

Mark Davis  
Nick D'Angelo

### June

#### Welcomed

Carl Hubler  
Ashley Stogner  
Fred Kasper  
Cameron Flynn

#### Said Goodbye To

David Tighe  
Bill Lutey  
Rich Rotella

### July

#### Welcomed

Tim Gratto  
Nick Kindzia  
Matt Shumate

#### Said Goodbye To

Lora Daniels

### August

#### Welcomed

Tracy Maracle-Pitrello  
Matthew LaGamba  
Alex Hailey  
James Brixius  
Monica Ljiljanich  
Larry Kent  
Brandon Moll  
Patrick Conte  
Daniel Bellina  
Byron Stewart  
Michael Bradberry

#### Said Goodbye To

Steven Zaepfel  
Dan Supon

### September

#### Welcomed

Jessica Basher  
Bob Bungo  
Artez Houston  
Sandra Myrto  
Jerry Chandler  
Matthew Manera  
Curtis Conway

#### Said Goodbye To

Cameron Flynn  
Dan Talarico

### October

#### Welcomed

Dan McGovern  
Michael Moore

#### Said Goodbye To

Scott Jones  
Dan Bellina

### November

#### Welcomed

Frank DelGrosso  
Brian Majchrowicz  
David Roeser  
Martin Schebell

#### Said Goodbye To

Michael A Janese  
Tony Hahn  
Nick Emmick

### December

#### Welcomed

Nic Coyle  
Steven Schul

#### Said Goodbye To

Kim Kargatis (12/30)  
Joe LaGamba (12/29)  
Bill Milroy (12/29)  
Tony Sicurella (12/31)

# The Year in Review 2017

## SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS March, 2017 – December, 2017

### 1. USW RATIFIED NEW CONTRACT AFTER 7 YEARS WORKING WITHOUT ONE

Negotiations among all three units of the Local USW groups began almost immediately and within the first 45 days a Tentative Agreement was made between the NFWB and all three Locals.

### 2. ALL THREE BUILDING TRADES RATIFIED NEW CONTRACT

Even before the USW ratified their Agreement, the Building Trades began renegotiating their Agreement. By June the Building Trades had a Tentative Agreement with their CBA.

### 3. TIER TWO MEDICAL PLAN EXPANDED TO INCLUDE DENTAL & VISION COVERAGES

The workers covered under the Tier I medical plan were worried about losing their coverage, were now guaranteed to take it into retirement and the Tier II plan was vastly improved for the average worker. The plan included a company sponsored Health Savings Account with vision and dental coverage included at no extra cost. On average the new plan reduced the medical costs by 19% per year for each employee.

### 4. INCREASED WAGES BRINGING TIER I & TIER II CLOSER TOGETHER

With the new CBA – the hiring wages were increased along with wages as compared to predicted cost of living were also increased. With Tier II, receiving a higher increase due to the cost of the Tier I medical coverage. Additionally, Tier II will receive additional wage increases to help bring the tiers closer together and to stay ahead of the hiring rates.

### 5. ESTABLISHED TRAINING DEPARTMENT

To assist operations and Operator Trainees to receive their license faster and better train them, a training department was created. At this time, the department is still in its early stages but eventually this department will coordinate training throughout the Water Board.

### 6. SUCCESSION PLANNING

A continuing effort to recruit and maintain a well-trained workforce with the ability to step up into other positions. In the beginning of the year, we had people retiring with no back up personnel. If someone was off in an administrative position any work they had to do would sit until they returned. Now we have people to fill in so that if someone is off for an extended period of time we have people who can step in and do the job; if people retire or resign, we can continue without losing a beat.

### 7. TRAINING 2

Starting with basic CDL training, we've begun implementing an emphasis on training and development. Leadership training for present and future organization leaders has begun under the tutelage of a world-class leadership professional, this will be followed up with additional training for selected personnel in the areas of HIPPA, NYS Privacy Act, First Line Management training, and more in 2018.

Other training included technology training in 2017 with application training for technologies, included in this training were Lucity, New World, GPS technologies & Knowledge Keeper.

### 8. IMPROVED USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Improved use of technology – those technologies as mentioned above in the training module. We've also mapped out much of the water system throughout the city.

### 9. INCREASED SECURITY FOR WWTP AND LIFT STATIONS

Security guards have been hired along with security cameras installed.

### 10. IMPLEMENTATION OF A "HYDRANT TRUCK"

Working closely with the Niagara Falls Fire Department, the Water Board established a vehicle dedicated and equipped specifically for the servicing of fire hydrants in Niagara Falls. The list of inoperative hydrants dropped from 152 to 59 as of 12/11.

### 11. UPDATED VEHICLE FLEET

The fleet averaged 12.7 years old and has been updated to where now it is 8.7 years old.

### 12. NEW "AQUA TECH" COMBO. SEWER TRUCK

This Truck gives us the capability to use it 12 months of the year, and has increased ability to do jobs that in the past we would have had to contract out.

### 13. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

Customer Service improvements implemented across the board. NYS Department of Health and Department of Environmental Conservation lines of communications established and solidified. Periodic newsletter inaugurated.

### 14. GRANT PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED

In addition to the successful Bollier Avenue waterline replacement grant from the state's Water Infrastructure Improvement, plans are in place for a comprehensive, aggressive program to seek grant funding from all available sources at the state and federal level.

### 15. COOPERATION WITH CITY OF NIAGARA FALLS AND COUNTY OF NIAGARA

City and county Departments and NFWB personnel working together on matters of mutual benefit, including the exchange of equipment, cooperation on crisis management and day to day repairs, engineering and contracting collaboration, and, overall, a transparent and cordial relationship among elected officials including Mayor Dyster, city council members and local county legislators.

### 16. MISCELLANEOUS

Acquisition of new testing instrument in water treatment lab, of light towers for outside work crews and a new stand-by generator at the WWTP. Also, the creation of a workable inventory system for critical parts.

# The Year in Review 2017

## OPERATIONAL REPORTS

### Sewer Collection System O&M Report

2017	Service calls	Flushing (Feet)	UFPO	Receivers Cleaned	Bypass Pumping	CB	MH	Main	Connections	Lateral
September	37	23414	249	62	0	8	12	1	3	2
October	43	41593	237	87	30 hrs	7	2	2	3	1
November	17	5170	223	106	30 hrs.	14	3	1	1	0

#### NOTES:

11/2 Vac. - Con. Truck Down (Due to Main Pump Failure) back in service 11/23

Rain Events: 11/3, 11/5, 11/6, 11/19

Cleaned Sludge Bldg. 11/10

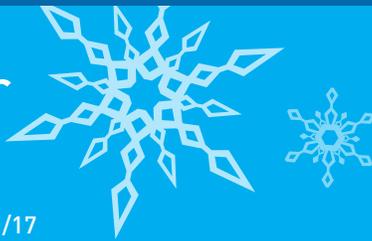
New combination Truck Delivered 11/16, Training Started 11/20

### Water Monthly O&M Report

2017	Main Breaks	Service Leaks	Valve Repair Replace	Hydrant Replace	Hydrant small repairs	Hydrant Flow\ Flush Maint.	Hydrants out of service	Misc. Service Calls	Concrete Landscape	UFPO
September	5	10	6	2	35	260	72	70	33	249
October	4	8	4	4	30	255			12	260
November	5	7	6	4	28	228 serviced	59	48	15	233

# Holiday Cheer at O'Laughlin

Festive NFWB Holiday Gathering, 12/21/17



On Target for the Holidays at O'Laughlin



Left to right, Lisa Landers, Ashley Stogner, Jessica Basher



Happy New Year to all!



"Christmas" pizza



The Yellow Jackets

## A farewell message:



So long, farewell, it has been a rather long journey for me, 35 years, 8 months and 17 days to be exact, but who's counting? Like

many professional journeys there have been twists and turns and ups and downs but overall it has made for a very rewarding career. I am especially grateful for the present Leadership team that has recognized the necessity and importance of upgrades to the Wastewater laboratory. I am confident that with such a supportive management team and continued cooperation as well as communication among Water Board departments, the Laboratory will continue to strive to produce analytical data of the highest quality.

With best wishes to all,  
Kim Kargatis

## Feedback

As always, your comments or suggestions on the subjects in this newsletter or other areas of interest are welcome and encouraged. Please contact me via email, phone or stop in to my office, if I'm not there say hello to Erika and make an appointment to come back and see me.

Thank you and best regards,

RP

