



WITH THE FLOW

Volume 2 No. 1
Feb 5, 2018

Monthly Message

Rather than look back on 2017 in this first newsletter of 2018, I'd like to look to 2018 and the challenges ahead. Not that 2017 was without notable achievements at the NFWB (and notable difficulties, need I say more?) it's just that a new year gives us optimism to look ahead, plot a course and move forward deliberately. While the precise issues that we will confront this year will no doubt morph over time, taking the broad view, my mission-oriented priorities will not change.



Those priorities remain:

- To improve our financial reporting and internal controls
- To continue to utilize technology to be more effective and efficient; (New World!)
- To redouble efforts at team-building through leadership development and focused training

I intend to continue to stress the point that we can get more done by "working smarter, not harder".

Of course, there must be a constant focus on safety overriding all our management and operational objectives. On this point, last year the Board commissioned Vanguard Systems, LLC to perform an environmental, health and safety survey of our facilities. A very comprehensive report by safety expert Chris Warren of Vanguard received in mid-January presented the survey's scope of work, methodology, observations, conclusions and recommendations on all facets of the safety question. Director of Administrative Services Jim Perry and Safety Specialist Gina Seria have thoroughly analyzed and annotated the report and will be working with me in the weeks to come on appropriate actions. Required recommendations will be made to the Board for consideration in February or March.

I'm pleased that this issue of "With the Flow" contains a report from General Counsel Sean Costello. He joins Jim Perry as another senior staffer contributing regularly to this publication. Sean's succinct explanation of our purchasing guidelines is helpful and timely. As for reader feedback, I have stated at the close of each issue that comments from any reader are welcome; I've received a few but encourage everyone to speak their mind and let me know what you think. Positive suggestions are also welcome.

Contents

- 1 Monthly Message
- 2 Review and Updates
- 3 Profile:
Cortez Bradberry
- 4 Employee Engagement
by Jim Perry
- 5 General Counsel's Report
by Sean Costello
- 5 Correspondence,
Publications and Misc.
 - 5 Res. Drinking Water
 - 6 O'Laughlin "team"
 - 6 47th St Repair
 - 6 Resolution by the
NY State Facilities
- 6 Feedback

Contact

Rolfe Porter

e-mail: rporter@nfwb.org

office: 716-283-9770 x 232

cell: 716-622-9201



Monthly Message *continued*



Chairman Dan O'Callaghan and Board member Nick Forster during a recent WGRZ Ch. 2 interview

Another area that the board and I have identified for focus in 2018 is issue of the public perception of the NFWB; that is, how is this organization perceived by the various stakeholders who we serve? I'm sure you know the answer. It is certainly no secret that the reputation of the Water Board, whether deserved or not, is not without its blemishes. How's that for understatement? I guess, in a way, it's ironic that you can work hard and do good things 23 hours and 59 minutes a day, but if that last minute doesn't go right.... well, you can figure that out. The WWTP discharge of July 2017 is obviously a factor, but it is not alone as the cause of the widely prevalent negative attitude we are faced with. The Board, as constituted since early last year, has worked hard to bring to the attention of the public the situation that had been allowed to fester here for many years; one adequately described

as benign neglect of human and mechanical assets. The radio and television presentations of Chairman O'Callaghan and board member Forster have outlined in detail the recent history of the NFWB and the aggressive efforts that have been taken in the last 12 months to address a very wide range of inherited deficiencies.

Their efforts and the support of other board members have helped counter certain published and telecast stories that were, so it seemed to us, designed as "gotcha" journalism. Matt Davison and other professionals from the Martin Group are advising us on certain aspects of our efforts, including using social media platforms to communicate with an ever-widening audience. Hopefully, more objective, fact-based stories like the one recently aired on WIBV Ch. 4, will, in time, have a positive impact. You can view the segment here: <http://wivb.com/2018/02/01/common-sewage-overflows-turn-wny-waterways-toxic/>.

While it is important to tell our story and to correct the record when necessary, it remains, in my view, that the best practice for a competently managed organization is to work hard, stay focused, do the right thing, and let others judge your performance. While, as Cortez Bradberry points out in this month's Employee Profile, there are those who just "whine", and probably always will, my hope is that our efforts this year - working together, carrying out sound board policies, understanding our unique role in the community, and always keeping in mind those whom we serve - will represent a turning point to where the community develops a respectful appreciation of our mission and enables us to point with justifiable pride to the work of the men and women of the Niagara Falls Water Board.

Review and Update

47TH STREET WATER MAIN BREAK

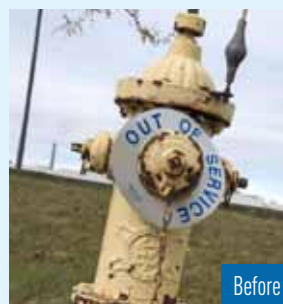


Our outside water and sewer crews and CATCO Construction moved heaven and earth to restore service after the catastrophic break of December 2017. As the pictures above reveal, this was no ordinary water main and no ordinary repair job. And, the acknowledgment from the contractor set out in the Correspondence and Publications section below is an honest testament to the cooperation among the contractor, the city engineer's office and our hardworking crews and supervisors in finishing the job.

HYDRANT REPAIR

Last month we published a full report on hydrant the repair/replace program that began in 2017. The program is continuing to reduce the number of inoperable hydrants and there is an expectation that all hydrants throughout the city will be in working order by July.

One inoperable hydrant, shown below in a photograph by Niagara Gazette staff photographer James Neisse, was featured on October 27, 2017 in a Gazette story by Rick Pfeiffer. Now, on the theory that a picture is worth a thousand words, there's this:



Employee Profile: Cortez Bradberry



Cortez Bradberry with Executive Director Rolfe Porter

I've noticed that there are some people who, when you are in their presence, almost immediately put you at ease; and, I must admit, there are other people who have the opposite effect on me. Cortez Bradberry is unquestionably one of the former. The interesting thing about that is, he seems to make you at ease

without trying. In other words, his goal may not be to make you comfortable, but he does it anyway. That's an innate talent that I'm sure we all wish we possessed. Now, don't get me wrong, Cortez is no shrinking violet, he'll stand up for himself and others when called for, but his demeanor can more generally be described as consistent with his professed taste in music: "mellow."

After graduation from Niagara Falls High School and working for the city in the DPW and purchasing departments, Cortez joined the NFWB in 2011 and is currently the Crew Leader for "outside sewer". This is a position, from what I've observed in a little less than a year as Executive Director, that, along with the foreman and others who are called upon to keep our system running - no small task - requires a combination of construction, labor relations and 'self-preservation' skills. The self-preservation aspect relates to coping with weather conditions that range from summer temperatures approaching 100 degrees F to sub-zero conditions in our WNY winters. On this point, I'm pleased to report, outside crews are now provided with an increased clothing and footwear allowance, that, along with new portable heaters and other improvements, are manifestations of the current Board's and management policy of continuously addressing the needs of the workforce. Cortez provides sound advice to new hires by strongly suggesting that they not skimp on the boots they buy. His practical, and no doubt proven theory, is that when your feet are cold or wet your body feels cold or wet all over.

Bradberry notes that the construction and teamwork aspects of the job develop over time through training and experience. Training may come in a formal setting, say, as with the recently acquired Vac truck, learning from a dealer or manufacturer representative how to operate a new piece of equipment, or, as is more frequently the case, good old "OJT". This, he suggests, is where teamwork develops, adding; "someone who knew what they were doing trained me so that I am able to train the next person and on to the person after that."

He stresses team preparedness as one of the most important aspects of the job. Such things as the proper scheduling of training programs (summer is the best time) and coordination with other outside crews can make a big difference in response time when emergency situations arise. He's pleased that a "cross-over" process has gained greater acceptance so that the so-called "outside sewer" and "outside water" crews frequently work together - no matter the project - to unplug sewer lines or repair water lines. Now, he says, "all hands on deck means **all hands on deck**." Confirmation of Bradberry's commitment to teamwork on the job comes from his long-time co-worker, Foreman Mike Eagler, "Cortez and I started working at the Water Board at nearly the same time. He has become a trusted friend. He has

shown the ability to lead with determination and compassion and has become a vital part of the renaissance at the Water Board. I look forward to working with him in the years ahead of us".

What makes Cortez Bradberry tick? Family comes first. His wife Kimberly is a 10 year employee in HR at City Hall; his son Stephon is a senior majoring in political science at the University of North Texas; another son, Cortez, Jr. is a senior at Niagara Falls High School and his youngest child, daughter Aniyah, is in elementary school at the Catholic Academy of Niagara Falls, (formerly Prince of Peace School) on Military Rd. Cortez Jr. has generated recent buzz in the bowling community (and presumably among college recruiters) bowling a 299 game and being featured as a scholar-athlete on local TV station Ch. 4. You can watch the feature at: <http://wivb.com/2018/01/25/scholar-athlete-cortez-bradberry/>.



The family has resided for over 15 years in a neat residence on 22nd Street, north of Niagara Street.

As is apparent from the thickness of the grass cover in the accompanying picture, Cortez is particular about his yard. While his main motive is keeping his residence and surroundings looking good, he allows that he has added incentive to keep things looking better than those of co-worker Mike Eagler, his friendly rival in a yard beautification contest.

Cortez is proud to be a Niagara Falls native and, though he acknowledges the problems facing the city, he argues that rather than merely complaining about such problems (some see this as the "Niagara Falls way") the whiners should become active and do something. He wonders about such people, asking: "do they ever have a good day?"

Faith is also important to Cortez; a member of St John's AME Church, a vibrant congregation off 10th Street in the North End of Niagara Falls.

As for hobbies and pastimes, again, the operative word may be "mellow." As a youngster he often fished the upper and lower Niagara River with his father and several uncles and remembers digging up nightcrawlers for use the next day. Now, on the occasional outing on a buddies' boat, they stop and buy their bait! Times change.

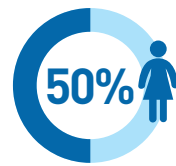
About his ambitions, Cortez has a steady view of the future. His commitment to provide for and take care of his family will continue to drive him forward. He explains to his son when the late night "show-up" calls come in that "if you want something you've got to work for it", a valuable lesson that Cortez Jr. seems to have grown to understand at a relatively early age.

When asked when he is truly relaxed, Bradberry leans back and thinks a while, then speaks, "you know what, I like to get home, have a nice dinner with my family, and if the weather is even half way-decent, just sit quietly on my front porch and take in the passing world." That's mellow.

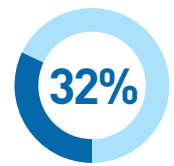
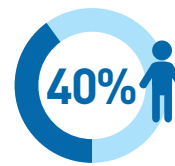
Employee Engagement by Jim Perry

Employee Engagement - What Is It?

Employee engagement is the employee's commitment to the organization's goals and values. It is measured in various ways, but the gauge is each person's motivation to contribute to organizational success. With employee engagement, there comes a high degree of correlation between the employee turnover rate, organizational values and the organization's ability to meet objectives.



STRUGGLED AT WORK & FELT UNFAIRLY TREATED BY MANAGER



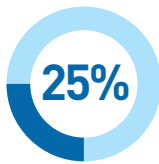
LOST JOBS DUE TO MISTREATMENT

The job satisfaction of the young people surveyed was driven in large part by how they thought their manager treated them. They said that being treated fairly and with respect was even more important than their income. Yet nearly 50% of the women and 40% of the men surveyed reported that they struggled at work because they felt they were treated unfairly by their manager. In fact, 32% of those surveyed said they lost a job in the past due to unfair or disrespectful treatment by a manager.

Lower rated companies tend to not feel development of management is worth the time and effort or that the payback is substantial but the companies that are the highest achievers understand that the development of managers means that they will see an ever-increasing return on their investment.



PLAN TO LEAVE 1YR OR LESS



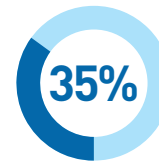
SATISFIED WITH JOB



In a recent survey more than half of 1,200 people responding that were working in entry-level jobs said they planned on leaving that job in a year or less. About 25% said they were satisfied with their job. Turnover can cost up to 200% of an employee's annual salary, depending on the role. In industries like retail, customer service, and hospitality, entry-level turnover alone costs billions of dollars each year, based on voluntary turnover rates and annual replacement costs. Meanwhile, employee disengagement results in higher absenteeism, more accidents, lower business profitability, poor customer service, and a lower share price.

2x

LIKELY TO STAY IF THEY SEE JOB AS CAREER OR STEPPING STONE



DESCRIBED THEIR CURRENT JOB AS CAREER JOB

Another area that proves to enhance employee engagement is the offering of professional-development opportunities. Research indicated that people are more than twice as likely to stay at their job for more than a year if they see their job as a career or a stepping stone to a career. Yet only 35% of people that were surveyed described their current job in those terms.



"FIRM AND FAIR"



SUPPORTIVE MANAGERS

It is no surprise then that management of leading companies around the world look to find ways to engage their workforce. How is that done? The first answer that would come to mind would be money. Sure, if you pay workers more money they will be more dedicated to their jobs - right? No, not necessarily. What researchers have found is the number one way to engage workers is by treating the workers with respect. This could be called the policy of "firm and fair." Companies that have set rules which are given to the employees when they start and that apply those rules across the board in a fair manner are some of the firms that report the highest numbers when it comes to employee engagement. The key to this is training of frontline managers to support people and process.

How can employers close that gap?

First, employers can offer clear and meaningful opportunities for professional growth within the company. This means providing a clear career path for entry-level employees. During the on-boarding process new hires need to understand that there is a career path for them. Understanding that the company promotes from within is a great incentive for many to stay with an organization.

The bottom line to all of this is: employees need to understand that they are a real asset to the company that employs them. Quality employees are essential to the success to business and to have those types of employees a company must be dedicated to investing in them. After all, the company is the sum of its workforce.

I would be interested in hearing what our employees would have to say about this. Would you care to share an opinion? Feel free to write a response to the editor.

General Counsel's Report, by Sean Costello



In the first months of the New Year, I will be focusing on completing the review and revision of various Water Board policies and procedures that is required by principles of good governance, and in some cases, by law. The first product of these efforts is a revised and updated procurement policy, approved by the Board at its January 2018 meeting.

While most day-to-day procurement procedures are little changed, all employees should review the new procurement policy that is posted on the website. This is the first major revision to the Water Board's procurement policy since 2007 and incorporates into one document: (1) the various statutory requirements applicable to Water Board procurement; (2) changes in New York State procurement law; and (3) answers to most of the procurement questions that I have been asked over the past few months.

The most notable changes to the procurement policy and procedures are as follows:

1. The Executive Director now may approve purchases up to \$20,000. Previously, Board approval was required for purchases over \$10,000.
2. There now are written procedures for emergency procurements, to permit even more timely and uniform responses to emergencies.
3. Policy and procedures to take advantage of the relatively new "piggybacking" provisions of General Municipal Law § 103(16) have been incorporated into the policy. "Piggybacking" lets the Water Board make procurements off contracts let by a wide variety of government entities, even those located in other states.

This procurement policy is not a stone tablet. If you can suggest improvements, let me know, and we may be able to present them to the Board for approval. In any case, the procurement policy now will be subject to annual review, to be certain it remains current and complete. If you have any questions about procurements, please do not hesitate to let me know. Following proper procedures from the start of a procurement may save time in the long run.

Correspondence, Publications, etc.

RESIDENTIAL DRINKING WATER LEAD SERVICE LINES

The city of Niagara Falls and the Niagara Falls Water Board will continue to closely cooperate in the allocation and expenditure of the \$567,492 awarded below for the replacement of residential drinking water lead service lines as part of New York's Clean Water Infrastructure Act of 2017.



NOVEMBER 27, 2017 Albany, NY

Governor Cuomo Announces \$20 Million Awarded for Replacement of Residential Drinking Water Lead Service Lines

"These critical improvements to New York's drinking water infrastructure are vital to protecting public health and to laying the foundation for future growth and economic prosperity in these communities," Governor Cuomo said.

Western New York

City of Buffalo - \$567,492

City of Niagara Falls - \$567,492

City of Jamestown - \$567,492

Correspondence, Publications, etc. *(cont.)*

O'LAUGHLIN "TEAM" READY FOR SUPER BOWL LII



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

REPAIR, 47TH STREET WATER MAIN

From: Todd Doty [mailto:ToddDoty@catco.com]

Sent: Tuesday, January 30, 2018 10:21 AM

To: Bill Wright

Subject: Repair, 47th Street Water Main

Good Morning Bill,

I wanted to say a Thank You for all the help that we received from the NFWB, its employees and the Niagara Falls Engineering Dept. Everyone stepped up to the plate to support CATCO and to facilitate the entire project. This is a difficult situation for a city to be in when these types of catastrophes happen. The NFWB along with NF Engineering teamed together and were fantastic to work with. You guys supported all the issues that were faced right to the very end. It's a pleasure to work hand in hand with you guys. If I can help you guys in anyway, please feel free to give me a call anytime. Thank You for all your support.

Thank You,

Todd Doty

Project Manager, CATCO Construction

ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION BY THE NY STATE FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT CORP. APPROVING \$500,000 EXPENDITURE BY NFWB

New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation

Meeting of the Board of Directors

Thursday, January 18, 2018

Draft Minutes of meeting authorizing appropriation of \$500,000 to the Niagara Falls Water Board

A meeting of the Board of Directors was held on January 18, 2018 in the Board Room on the seventh floor of the Corporation's office located at 625 Broadway, Albany, New York. A quorum of the Directors was present as indicated:

Resolution No. 2538

Following its introduction by the Secretary, Mr. Corcoran moved for adoption of the resolution and the motion was seconded by Ms. DeMarchi. Discussion ensued and the following resolution was adopted unanimously and made part of the minutes:

A RESOLUTION OF THE NEW YORK STATE ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITIES CORPORATION AUTHORIZING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO FUND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE NIAGARA FALLS WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

Upon motion made by Mr. Kruzansky and seconded by Mr. Pattison, the Directors voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 12:02 p.m.

SIGNED BY:

ANNETTE M. HARRIS

SECRETARY TO THE CORPORATION

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

