

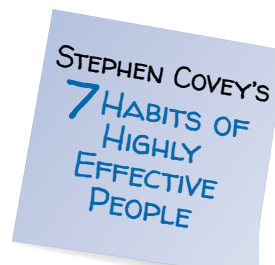


WITH THE FLOW

Volume 2 No. 3
May-June 2018

Executive Director's Message

In the last newsletter I referred to Stephen Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People as being incorporated into our on-going leadership development program (<http://www.shoshannacogan.com/>) and as having specific relevance to the execution of our mission at the Niagara Falls Water Board. I listed outcomes that have been obtained in part by the utilization of the "Be Proactive" habit. I focused particularly on the challenge to be proactive in addressing the issues raised by the December Consent Order with the state Department of Environmental Conservation and stressed my full confidence in our management team and the engineering consultants we are working with. You may ask, why the full confidence? It is due to the proactive mindset that has developed over the last 8 or 9 months. There is a shared mindset that has been encouraged and supported by the Board, that is effectively combining the creativity of proactive individuals, the training and experience of highly qualified professionals and the collective resourcefulness of all involved to solve problems together. We have a long way to go, the Consent Order mandated studies underway are far from completion, but the "be proactive" habit has, indeed, become a habit.



HABIT #2

BEGIN WITH
THE END IN
MIND

Which leads me to **Covey's Habit 2, "Begin with the End in Mind"**. Covey tells us that with the end in mind, as an institution and as individuals, we can better understand our starting point and what steps will take us in the right direction and which ones will not. He, and Shoshanna Cogan, our leadership trainer, encourage the development of a personal mission statement as the most effective way to begin with the end in mind. This applies likewise to an organizational mission statement. The NFWB mission statement provides a good foundation for establishing the values and principles upon which our actions should be based:

The mission of the Niagara Falls Water Board is to provide safe and reliable water and wastewater management services to our community in an economical and efficient manner.

The mission statement leads directly to the stated vision of the NFWB to achieve excellence through:

- **Continual infrastructure investment**
- **Providing a safe and supportive work environment**
- **Investing in employee professional development and growth**
- **The application of technology in all areas of operation**

continued on next page

Contents

- 1 Executive Director's Message
- 2 Review and Updates
- 3 Employee Profile, Pat Fama
- 6 HR Advisory by Jim Perry
- 7 General Counsel's Brief, by Sean Costello
- 7 Report from Bob Drury
- 8 Memo from Bill Wright
- 8 Commissioner's Corner
- 9 Publications & Misc.
 - Memorial Day Parade
 - Doxo.com alert
 - Summer Inches Closer
 - Water Infrastructure Initiative March 28
- 11 Feedback

Contact

Rolfe Porter
e-mail: rporter@nfwb.org
office: 716-283-9770 x 232
cell: 716-622-9201



Executive Director's Message *continued*

The combination of our mission statement and the vision of how to accomplish the mission is meant to guide us toward matching the activities we are engaged in with what we really want to achieve with the end in mind. Granted, accounting for all the myriad challenges we face at work (and elsewhere) this alignment, or matching, of activities with goals can be very difficult. But, to be the quality organization we strive to be, we must keep trying.

From my perspective, we have been trying, and achieving, over the last 14 months or so, often under difficult circumstances, to execute the NFWB mission statement effectively through "keeping the end in mind." Key examples include:

- Fire protection. Keeping the end in mind by reducing non-working hydrants to the barest minimum and activating a hydrant flushing program
- Reduction of unaccounted for water. Keeping the end in mind by more enhanced leak repair, greater meter checking and bill verification
- Application of technology. Keeping the end in mind by (I know this is repetitious, but it is part of my personal mission statement to keep focusing attention on the importance of keeping up with ever changing technology) by instituting wider use of the Lucity software for public works to manage and maintain assets and coordinate maintenance management. And, of course, to utilize New World software to more efficiently and accurately manage finances.

- Leadership. Keeping the end in mind by developing an effective model for board and management coordination and, acknowledging certain past practices that did not conform with the vision of the board and the operational managers, working to change an ingrained culture that did not reflect a shared commitment to excellence.
- Safety and Security. Keeping the end in mind by placing maximum emphasis on providing a safe work environment, following lock-out-tag-out protocols, workforce Personal Protective Equipment, hiring an in-house security staff, placing a new access gate at the WWTP and adding effective outdoor lighting.
- Public education. Keeping the end in mind through board initiatives - appearances at city council meetings and on local media - to inform ratepayers and others of significant policy changes and creative cost saving and other initiatives, and through the "Wastewater Investment Initiative" (WIN) awareness campaign, in which the Martin Group's public relations arm is assisting in a multi-pronged informational effort explaining the WWTP operations and pressing infrastructure improvement needs at the facility. ■

In the next newsletter:



Review and Update

QUARTERLY REPORT TO NY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

The required First Quarter 2018 Progress Report has been filed pursuant to the December 2017 Order on Consent R9-20170906-129 (<https://nfwb.org/app/uploads/2018/05/NFWB-Q1-2018-Progress-Report-4-30-18-sent-4-30-18.pdf>).

The very comprehensive and carefully written report by Dr. John Goeddertz reiterates that the NFWB is committed to working cooperatively and openly with the NYSDEC and states, in summary, that:

"Maintenance activities during the reporting period have been extensive, and as of the end of the quarter all major treatment systems and components are fully functional. The WWTP is undertaking a number of capital upgrades and improvements that are within the capability of the WWTP's maintenance staff and/or contractors recently awarded service contracts. In addition to a multitude of projects that are being undertaken by the WWTP's staff and outside contractors, project planning for \$21.7 million in major capital upgrades is taking place, including the preparation of three grant applications to the State of New York, the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation, and possibly other potential funding sources." ■



FLINT, MICHIGAN



Flint, Mi. February 2018

The city of nearly 100,000 people was still dealing with its leaded water crisis in February when its residents suffered yet another hit to their water supply. A cracked pipe that delivered potable water to the city meant that for three days they had to boil their tap water to protect against bacterial contamination. As is highlighted in the employee profile in this issue of Lab Director Pat Fama, nothing is more important to the mission of the NFWB than insuring the quality of the water supply provided to our customers. So, it should go without saying that the lessons of Flint should be understood and studied.

Those lessons, including the consequences of irresponsible cost cutting, outright government negligence, and a failure to focus - at the highest level of state government - on the fair distribution of environmental benefits and burdens must guide us at all levels of this organization, from policy making, to management, to operations and maintenance. The events in Flint must remind us to continue doing everything possible to safeguard public health — to do less would amount to no less than an unforgivable dereliction of duty. ■

HYDRANT REPAIR

A recent independent review by the American Society of Civil Engineers of New York State's water infrastructure needs estimated the cost of repairing, replacing, and updating the statewide drinking water infrastructure is \$38.7 billion over 20 years. The study further pointed out the unfortunate fact that 95% of the applications to the state's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund program from local agencies seeking funds for water improvement projects remain unfunded due to the overwhelming demand. (This is not to suggest that the state isn't doing enough in funding projects, - it is rather to show the huge need on a statewide basis.) Considering the age and condition of our system - including the history of water main breaks - from a long-range planning and funding perspective, NFWB will have no shortage of challenges to address. The Board and staff are aligned in recognizing those challenges and are reviewing the 5-year capital plan, currently available resources, grant and loan opportunities, rate-payer considerations, and alternative funding mechanisms, among other things. The bottom line is that needed improvements cannot be deferred at the expense of public safety and health. ■



GENERAL COUNSEL

As of June 1, Sean Costello is a full time NFWB employee. I congratulate him on his change of status and wish him all the best in the years to come. Of course, Sean has been a key presence here for the last couple of years and will now be even more so as he and the Board have agreed on his full-time status. I look forward to continuing to work with Sean and receiving his prompt and thoughtful legal advice. ■

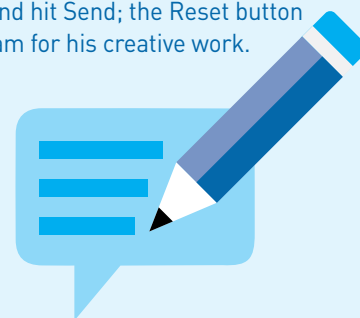


ELECTRONIC SUGGESTION BOX

Adam Janzen has developed a Feedback page for internal communications. There are a variety of uses to which this feature can be put; one of them being an "electronic suggestion/comment box." As I have previously pointed out, I find anonymous comments to be of no merit - if one has something to say they should be able to put their name to it. Still, there is no chance of anyone, no matter how harsh a comment may be, from becoming the subject of retaliation or discipline of any sort for using the Feedback page. In fact, I'd like to see the development of a robust, opinionated and interesting dialogue on the site. Access is only for NFWB email

account holders and comments will only be accessible by such account holders. The link to the **Feedback page is: <http://mco2/Nfwb%20Intranet/Feedback>**. Once at the page all you need to do is fill in the form and hit Send; the Reset button will clear the form. Thanks to Adam for his creative work.

Please utilize the Feedback page. ■



Employee Profile: Lab Director Pat Fama, Microbiologist

One thing that we should never take for granted is the safety of our drinking water. Just look at the example of Flint, Michigan, as is described above, and one gains appreciation for living in a community where we are on constant guard to avoid the kinds of decisions that resulted in the Flint fiasco or the negligence that has harmed the water supplies of other communities, for example, the village of Hoosick Falls, right here in New York State (<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20180411005186/en/Cabot-Norit-Activated-Carbon-Selected-NYSDEC-Town>).



Of course, the United States Environmental Protection Agency sets rigid national health-based standards for drinking water to protect against both naturally-occurring and man-made contaminants that may be found. That agency works with the state and water supply systems such as the NFWB to make sure that these standards are met. At the end of the day though, it is the people on the ground, where the action is and who do the actual monitoring and testing, upon whom we rely for clean and safe drinking water. Which brings us to the subject of this month's employee profile: Microbiologist Pat Fama. Certainly, everybody knows that a microbiologist is a scientist who studies microscopic organisms including bacteria, algae, and fungi. They study organisms that cause disease and environmental damage or are of industrial or agricultural interest. They also study the characteristics of nonliving pathogens, such as viruses and prions. Here at the O'Laughlin Water Treatment Plant Pat runs the Water Quality Laboratory and is charged with planning, directing and conducting all laboratory duties.

Pat grew up in LaSalle and graduated from Niagara Catholic. (This makes one wonder how many NFWB employees went to the same schools - - it seems like more than a few came through the same route.) While not sure of a specific career path after high school, Pat knew he wanted to continue his education and had a notion that he might want to work in an occupation that included "non-office" work; life as a game warden was contemplated. So, he decided to enroll at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry ("ESF"). EFS, designated by the prestigious Princeton Review as the No. 2 "Green College" in the country, is a highly specialized and selective school on the Syracuse University campus that enjoys a unique

partnership with SU providing ESF students special access to Syracuse classes, academic facilities, student clubs and organizations, and other services. NFWB General Counsel Sean Costello, who obtained both his undergraduate and law degrees at Syracuse U., knows well the solid reputation of ESF and says that its students represent a "unique and welcome addition to the SU community."

After graduation, and armed with a degree in environmental biology, Pat went to work at Advanced Environmental Services, an environmental testing company, and worked there for over 4 years before joining Allied Signal (presently known as Honeywell) at a research facility in Buffalo. Allied Signal was at that time in a race with DuPont to produce a replacement for Freon, the fluorocarbon refrigerant that has been linked to ozone depletion, see: http://articles.latimes.com/1988-03-26/business/fi-277_1_cfc-compounds. Pat's job in R & D had its hazards, with the risk of exposure to hexavalent chromium (a recognized human carcinogen) among them. He stayed with it though until a corporate business decision by Allied Signal brought him to a career crossroads. A layoff had been announced for his department and Pat was presented with a choice: keep his position and see a co-worker with a family to support be out of a job or accept the layoff and allow the other person to remain. Rather than view the choice in purely economic terms, Pat saw the matter as presenting a "karma moment". To him, the notion of karma is not "what goes around comes around" but is better understood as "give and you will get back". Pat decided to "give" and made the choice to accept a layoff and return to Niagara Falls, leaving his lucky co-worker behind. After a bit of time the "get back" aspect arrived in the form of an interview with microbiologist Larry Sklarski, then the city of Niagara Falls water department lab director. A lab assistant was about to start an extended maternity leave and Sklarski was looking for a temp fill-in. Pat was hired, and the rest, as they say, is history. Pat will be the first to tell you that he didn't just call up Sklarski and have a full time, state pension, civil service job, but eventually he did. And that job, in one form or another has, for over a quarter century now, worked well for both employer and employee. There have been a few left turns into on-coming traffic, so to speak, as when a prior senior "higher-up" re-organized and cut back the lab staff resulting in Pat moving into the water treatment operation for over two years, first as a licensed Grade 2a Operator and then advancing to Grade 1a.

In a reversal of the prior determination toward a down-graded lab, smarter heads prevailed, recognized the importance of a fully staffed lab and returned Pat to the lab in 2012, with Larry Sklarski still at the helm. The two men worked closely together for the next 4 years until Larry's retirement in 2016. (Larry returns from time to time to help on various matters including the bi-annual state Department of Health lab certification audit.)

Employee Profile: Lab Director Pat Fama, Microbiologist *continued*

Standing Tall at the Lab



Pat Fama, Jordan Boyd, Ralynn Morrison

Pat's official job is "Microbiologist", an apt title but one that doesn't fully explain the distinguishing features of his broad responsibilities. With the able assistance of lab technicians Ralynn Morrison (microbiology) and Jordan Boyd (chemistry and metals analysis) Pat's, and the lab's, fundamental responsibility can be described simply as safeguarding all aspects of drinking water quality. Of course, there is constant sampling of water, strict quality control, detailed record keeping, report preparation, research on water treatment and purification, lab administration and management and more. Add to that the recent introduction of "on-site" testing at the scene of water main breaks to make sure that restored service is conveying uncontaminated water.

There is also, in addition to the day to day functions, the role of the lab as a testing laboratory for outside agencies, businesses, not-for-profits and others. Offering flexible scheduling, comprehensive sampling, expert consultation, and timely reporting, the lab accepts and tests samples on a fee basis. One example is the Niagara Falls Aquarium, a frequent customer that relies on the lab to assure the needed quality of the water in which their aquatic friends frolic. Nearby Oxy and Niacet facilities have also been customers. Fama sees the lab as growing as a revenue source and is encouraging management to more broadly publicize the availability of such services.

Board member Nick Forster neatly sums up the importance of the lab, and Pat Fama, in stating: "the Niagara Falls Water Board not only has a top-notch testing laboratory, but a top-notch microbiologist in Pat Fama, a highly regarded professional, assuring our community of clean and safe drinking water, widely recognized as second to none and better than most. I'm pleased that he has a vision to continuously upgrade the lab and to grow outside testing opportunities as a needed service for business and other users as well a source of revenue for the NFWB."

So, does a picture of Pat Fama emerge as a "lab guy" in a white coat who goes home from work and reads technical journals, endlessly studying microbiology "stuff", isolated and alone in a basement or attic? If so, you don't have the right picture, not by a long shot. Nothing against lab coats

or professional zeal, but by all appearances Pat leads a full, vibrant and fulfilling life outside of work. He has been married since 2008 to Lynette Blacher, Director of Data Management for the International Breast Cancer Study Group (IBCSG)/Frontier Science Foundation, a non-profit organization offering research including design, analysis, data management and reporting of clinical trials, staff training and other services. The National Institutes of Health, as well as pharmaceutical and clinical research networks are collaborators on a wide range of projects. Co-incidentally, upon publication of this profile, husband and wife will both have been recent subjects of an employee spotlight, Lynette having been featured by the Frontier Science Foundation in January. The couple met at a gym, so it is no surprise that they each maintain strict work out regimens.

Pat is a welcome daily fixture at the gym in Niagara Falls owned by the legendary fight trainer/promoter Ray Casal, <http://casalsboxingclub.com>. Ray says in operating his gym and boxing training facility for 47 years no one has impressed him more than Pat Fama. Pat works out at the gym but also helps train fighters at all levels of skill. Ray says that Pat is an enormous help with not only up and coming fighters, amateur and pro, but with others, often kids who have had difficulty in school, at home or with the law. Casal says "these kids gravitate to Pat because he listens to them and doesn't judge." He adds, "everything Pat does is on a voluntary basis, in fact, I've stopped asking if I can pay him. Pat is a great guy, loyal, honest, ethical and sincere." The respect Pat is afforded by others at the gym may also be attributed to his holding of a Black Belt in the martial art of kyokushin kai.

Pat is also an avid angler who intends someday to obtain a charter license. He owns a 17ft fishing boat and frequently gets out to spots on Lake Erie or Lake Ontario. He also pulls in trout from Cattaraugus Creek and other nearby streams. His fishing extends past local venues when he takes several trips per year with a group of pals; Cape Cod, Gloucester, MA, and Montauk Point on Long Island are notable fishing starting points he has launched from.

Pat Fama exemplifies the commitment of the NFWB to provide safe, clean and reliable drinking water to the people of Niagara Falls. ■



A Quick Word About Work by Jim Perry



I have recently been instructed to provide a plan for reorganization. Now before you say, "Oh no, here we go again," let me say something. Sometimes we go forward with them, sometimes we don't; however, plans and scenarios for events that may or may

not happen are always being made by management. That is one thing pro-active management does.

In today's fast-moving business environment, if someone thinks that the pace of change will slow, they are likely to be sorely disappointed, and if you are not prepared, bad things will happen. In fact, businesses and those who understand the business environment have come to embrace change. Change is important for any organization because, without change, businesses lose out. When the businesses lose out, the employees involved with them also lose out.

Years ago, I remember talking to a fellow worker. He saw me working and pulled me aside. The conversation that ensued went something like this:

He said, "Jim, man, you've got to slow down or you're going to work us out of a job."

I looked at him and asked what he was talking about. He went on to explain, if I produced too much the company would no longer need me. OK, I thought to myself, this guy has to be kidding me. But nope, he was serious.

'Look,' I said, 'let me try and explain this basic economic fact to you; if it takes you one day to do a job, and I can do two jobs in a day, who is more valuable?'

'Exactly!' he said, 'they have to pay me for two days to do two jobs, but you get paid a day for two jobs.'

OK, that is all good in the short term, but what is going to happen is management is eventually going to figure out a cheaper way to get it done without you because you are of no value to them'

This argument went on all night (we were on the graveyard shift that night) and I don't think I ever made my point with him.

Fast forward this conversation and let's look at what is happening today. Fast food workers are complaining they want a minimum wage of \$15.00 an hour. So, they convince the governor to pass a bill to make it so. At that amount of money, many employers have determined the cost of a computer terminal to purchase and maintain over the period of a year would be less than \$15.00 an hour. It doesn't take a genius to figure out what happens next, does it?

Fast forward to the situation between my friend and I. The company closed the part of the plant where he was working. He was laid off. I think he eventually found another job. I got promoted to management and went on with the company to retire 32 years later.

The point of my story is this - each day, when we come to work we should be prepared to demonstrate our worth. Almost everyone thinks they are worth more than what they are getting paid. If you do not believe me, ask the person next to you right now. My philosophy has always been, find work you love to do and do it - when you do it, do it the best you can and learn how you can get better. Eventually you will be the best and the rewards will follow. If you look around you likely will notice that the men and women who are the best workers are the ones who are never unemployed no matter what happens to an organization. ■



Understanding Gift Rules, by Sean Costello, General Counsel



The New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics ("JCOPE") has provided an informal opinion that Water Board employees are subject to its rules and regulations. These rules are somewhat different from ethics rules applicable to City employees but are the same rules that apply to State employees. Among these rules and regulations are restrictions on accepting certain gifts and invitations.

The gift rules apply to situations involving persons and companies with which the Water Board has dealings, including vendors, contractors, and ratepayers (not to personal interactions with your family and friends that are unrelated to your Water Board employment). Water Board employees must not accept a gift from any person or entity under circumstances where it will reasonably appear that the gift is intended to influence you, or that it will influence you, in the performance of your Water Board duties, or

to reward you for official action already taken. You must not solicit or accept any reward or compensation from a source other than the Water Board for the performance of your Water Board duties.

In general, you can accept gifts - including food, invitations to events, or services - worth less than \$15. If you receive a gift with a value greater than \$15, it should be returned to the sender. A perishable gift, like a fruit platter, must be returned to the sender, donated to charity, or placed in a common area like a break room where it is available to all employees.

You may accept items that may have cost the gift giver more than \$15 if they are promotional items with no substantial resale value. This would include items such as hats, mugs, pens, calendars, paperweights, and other similar items that have a company's logo or name permanently attached to them.

Under JCOPE regulations, employees who violate the ethics rules related to gifts are subject to fines of up to \$40,000 and the value of the gift. If you have any questions about the JCOPE ethics rules that apply to Water Board employees, please do not hesitate to contact me at scostello@nfwb.org, or at 283-9770, ext. 211. ■

Report from Bob Drury, Director of Operations



"BIG RED" ARRIVES

It hurts to know that you own a "lemon", whether it's a new or used car, a household appliance or any other object that doesn't work as intended. So, when we found the NFWB to be in possession of a true lemon of a dump truck - multiple break downs, mounting bills for towing to Cheektowaga, lost work time, etc., [yet still under warranty!] - we knew that decisive action was necessary. With the New York Lemon

Law not providing coverage for vehicles registered for commercial use, Superintendent Bill Wright set out to find a solution. He first identified a replacement vehicle more suited to our needs: a 2018 Western Star Tandem Dump Truck, model 4700, with a Set-Forward Axle and certain options that met Bill's experienced judgment as to what would be best suited for the many tasks to which the truck would be put.

Negotiations were then undertaken with Evan Walton at Fleet Maintenance Inc. in Buffalo, the local Freightliner and Western Star dealer. Wright and Walton worked cooperatively to reach common ground on a price that matched state contract pricing and allowed attention to focus on a trade-in value for the "lemon" truck. Wright more than held his own, from spurning an opening offer of \$25,000, and subsequent offers, until a full \$98,000 trade-in was agreed upon and the deal, with Board approval, was sealed. Walton



could only say positive things about the process leading up to the sale. According to him, "Bill Wright got the best deal possible for the Water Board, and I guarantee you that "Big Red" will more than live up to his expectations."

When all was said and done we ended up with a replacement dump truck with a higher gross vehicle weight, allowing for the hauling of significantly greater amounts of material, resulting in less trips, and thus reducing fuel costs and general wear and tear. A winning proposition by any measure.

I relate the above as just one example of the commitment to excellence at all levels of this organization that I am seeing every day. From the Board, the executive offices, supervisors and the unionized work force, there is an obvious change for the better. Sure, there will be no shortage of challenges in the future, but, in my opinion, the "new" Niagara Falls Water Board is well prepared to address such challenges and continue to improve in carrying out its responsibilities to the residents of the city of Niagara Falls. ■

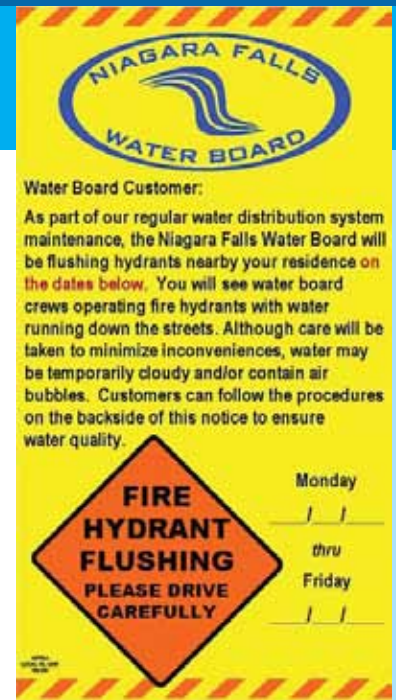
Memo from Bill Wright, Superintendent



HYDRANT FLUSHING

Hydrant flushing is a necessary procedure to remove sediments and rust from water or to maintain proper chlorine levels. Additionally, it provides a test of fire flow capacity in the event of a fire. The NFWB has not had a crew dedicated to flushing for nearly 10 years and previously handled hydrant flushing on a case-by-case basis. Now, as part of regular water distribution system maintenance, crews are flushing hydrants throughout the city on a periodic basis. During a flushing procedure, residents can expect to see NFWB crews operating fire hydrants with water running down streets.

Customers that may be impacted by hydrant flushing are notified through door hang tags left at their residence on each Friday before a week of flushing is undertaken. Although care is taken to minimize inconveniences, in some cases water may become temporarily cloudy or contain air bubbles. Flushing hydrant is essential to ensuring clean, safe and accessible water.



Commissioner's Corner

BOARD CHAIR DAN O'CALLAGHAN



ORGANIZATION

Organization means more to me than a neat desk or a detailed "to do" list. It means understanding the working parts of a group, in this case the Niagara Falls Water Board - the commissioners, the managers and the staff, from the longest serving employee to the newest hire - and having in place a structure that

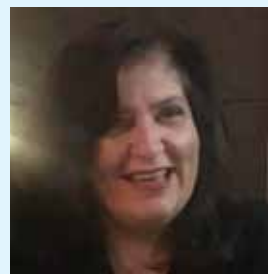
acknowledges the importance of each of those parts and how they fit into the way in which we work to meet shared goals.

I'll leave it to Jim Perry to explain the HR philosophy behind "organization management", but I know, from my years in construction and construction management, that without a well-defined structure the likelihood of achieving your goals is reduced in a big way. Time and money can be lost when there is uncertainty over which trade or skill is supposed to do a certain job or which one is to follow-on after the completion of a certain task. In the case of the NFWB, the consequences of such uncertainty are such that we have little or no room for error.

By the way, I'm not suggesting a lock-step, no discretion approach to how we operate. What I am suggesting is that we continually look at our organizational structure - the policies, the people and the procedures - to make sure we are doing all we can on behalf of the rate-payers. To date, since early 2017, I believe we have performed well, but we must stay on the ball.... there's always room for improvement! ■

-Dan

COMMISSIONER COLLEN LOW-LARKIN



COMMITMENT

April marked my first full year as a commissioner on the NFWB and it's been a rewarding learning experience. What has impressed me most is the people who work here, day in and day out, each of whom is committed to providing Niagara Falls with the best possible water and sewer service. There

have been challenges in the past year from which opportunities arose to become even stronger. Everything that has been accomplished is a testament to this talented staff.

I see the role of commissioners as doing what we can with the resources we have available to ensure you have the tools and leadership necessary to excel. As we move forward, our next steps should be to solidify our vision for the future so that we're all working together toward a common goal, one that is passed on beyond board tenures. Thank you for all you do, now and in the future. ■

-Colleen

COMMISSIONER NICK FORSTER



LEADERSHIP

When the Board set out to develop a new leadership strategy for the NFWB in February and March of 2017 we faced three basic questions: where are we, where do we want to be and how do we get there? It took virtually no time to realize that we were faced with more than a few problems that had been allowed to fester and worsen

to the crisis point. I don't think I need to list them here, but it should be sufficient to say that the rate-payers of our city were not getting the informed, decisive leadership they deserved. We wanted to be at a place where sound policies were established for delegation to a competent management team that would run the organization in a fiscally sound manner providing safe and reliable drinking water and the proper treatment of wastewater.

As for the "how we get there" question, our operative thinking was: "things have to change." So, we changed upper management across the board, installing professionals who shared our

commitment to doing things in a new and better way. We changed the long-standing adversarial relationship between the bargaining units and the Board. We began the process of changing a culture within the work-force that had set in over time (double meaning intended!) that in some cases amounted to a detachment from a fair understanding of the expected work ethic. We opened dialogue with the public through public appearances and far greater transparency. We authorized a highly regarded leadership training program for a dozen key employees across all areas of operation. We set and enforced policies on overtime, upgraded the fleet, energized our grant writing and news dissemination tasks, insisted on more compressive and better employee training, addressed system leakage detection and through an aggressive repair program achieved a very substantial reduction in unaccounted for water, enhanced building safety and security measures.

I could go on, but I think I made my point that this Board found itself at a point in time where "change leadership" was called for and necessary. We have delivered that change and expect to continue to deliver in the months to come. ■

-Nick

Publications and Miscellaneous

MEMORIAL DAY, 2018

The Water Board was well represented at the city of Niagara Falls Memorial Day Parade on May 26 with the new Camera Truck, the mini-excavator and Big Red proudly moving along Pine Avenue. Thanks go out to volunteer drivers Mike Eagler, Cortez Bradberry and Lou Fratello. Voluntary attendance by Bob Drury, Bill Wright and Tony Cheff is also gratefully acknowledged. ■



"Big Red" on display



Mimi-excavator rides high



New camera truck unveiled

SCAM ALERT/WARNING

SCAM ALERT

Thanks to Frank DelGrosso of the front office staff for bringing the Doxo billing issue to our attention and to Joe Morock of the IT Department for sleuthing the facts as to how it works. While Doxo appears to be a legitimate utility bill payment service (<https://www.neonlink.com/scams/doxo-bill-payment-service>) there is no reason for any NFWB customer to avail themselves of such a service. Moreover, efforts are underway with Bank on Buffalo to simplify and update our bill payment process. More to come on those plans soon. ■

SUMMER INCHES CLOSER AT O'LAUGHLIN



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

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE INITIATIVE MARCH 28

March 28th saw the kick-off of our Wastewater Infrastructure Initiative (WIN) with a tour, presentations and Q & A for local, state and federal officials and representatives from several of their offices. The message conveyed, which appeared to be well received, addressed the future of the WWTP's technology, options for changing that technology and steps that have been put in place in the last year that address the capabilities of the plant. Further communication and collaboration with many of the officials is anticipated as funds allocated in the 2018 state budget are authorized and grant applications are submitted seeking additional funding for specific WWTP projects.

Other WIN activities are forthcoming as we continue efforts to keep all stakeholders up to speed on our efforts. Special thanks to Erika Schroeder for her excellent event coordination and to the Martin Group for their assistance.

See photos on next page...

The Hon. Paul Dyster
Mayor
City Hall



Dear Mayor Dyster,

Thank you for taking the time to join us at the Niagara Falls Water Board Waste Water Treatment Plant for our inaugural presentation of the Wastewater Infrastructure Initiative. Your attendance was greatly appreciated.

We hope you found the information useful and that you will continue to show interest and support for the Niagara Falls Water Board. Please feel free to contact us for further information or with any questions you may have.

Very truly yours,



Rolfe Porter
Executive Director



Dan O'Callaghan
Board Director

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE INITIATIVE MARCH 28



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.

Use the Feedback page:
<http://mco2/Nfwb%20Intranet/Feedback>

Thank you and best regards,

RP

