



MINUTES
Meeting of the Niagara Falls Water Board
April 26, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.

Note: This meeting was held via conference call pursuant to Governor Cuomo’s Executive Order 202.1 as extended by Executive Order 202.101. as extended through May 6, 2021 by Executive Order 202.101.

1. Attendance and Preliminary Matters

Chairman Forster called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

a. Asklar P Forster P Kimble P Larkin P Leffler P

b. Letters and Communications

There were no letters/communications to discuss.

c. Public Comment (The meeting notice provided that public comments were to be submitted in writing to be read by the Secretary and to be received by 12:00 p.m. on April 26, 2021).

There were no public comments received for the April 26, 2021 board meeting.

d. Approval of Minutes

i. March 22, 2021 Meeting

Motion by Board Member Larkin and seconded by Board Member Leffler to approve the March 22, 2021 meeting minutes.

Asklar Y Forster Y Kimble Y Larkin Y Leffler Y

Motion carried, 5-0.

ii. April 13, 2021 Special Meeting

Motion by Board Member Larkin and seconded by Board Member Asklar to approve the April 13, 2021 special meeting minutes.

Asklar Y Forster Y Kimble Y Larkin Y Leffler Y

Motion carried, 5-0

2. Executive Director

Mr. Costello gave the Board an update regarding health insurance rates. Mr. Costello explains that the renewal rate will remain the same as the prior policy year. Mr. Costello notes Resolution 2021-04-006, authorizing acceptance of the rates, has been included in the Board's agenda packets for review and approval.

Mr. Costello states he was notified early this morning of a motor vehicle accident involving a utility pole located at the corner of Buffalo Ave. and 56th St. (the accident occurred at approximately 1:30 a.m. on 4/26/21), causing a power outage at the WTP. The generators at the WTP kicked on and functioned properly powering the plant processes. The power from the generators only supplies power to the plant process areas, excluding the office areas, computers, heat, etc. National Grid estimated that the time to complete the necessary repairs would be approximately 8 hours – National Grid postponed beginning the repairs in order to allow the NFWB to “switch over” to our secondary feed line. Mr. Costello explains that this feed line is a separate line from National Grid, however, it is equal to the regular feed. Mr. Costello states that we have never had cause to switch over to that feed in the past; given the lengthy period that power would be off, it made sense to “switch over.” This was successfully completed around 7:45 a.m. with support from Ferguson Electric, due to the unfamiliarity our internal staff had with this type of work. Since the work was completed, the plant has experienced no further power issues. Mr. Costello notes, between the 1:30 a.m. collision and the 7:45 a.m. “switch over,” there were periods where the plant did experience electrical service for the entire plant – the significance of that is the generators powered the plant as intended but did not “switch off” as they should. Out of the three separate feeds that should have successfully “opened” and “closed” only one of the three was properly turning off when the power was restored. NFWB staff was able to successfully “cut” the power to the necessary feeds and turn off the generators. Mr. Costello explains that this process identified two things, the first being the generators worked successfully and demonstrates the value in the investment that the Board has made with the generators over the recent years. The second being the attention needed to address the controls of the generators. This is currently being addressed and quotes are being obtained. In closing, Mr. Costello shows his appreciation to the staff for how exceptionally well this issue was handled and their response to the incident in the middle of the night. In particular, Mr. Costello expressed appreciation for the operator on duty Dave Roeser, WTP Chief Operator Rob Rowe, Supervisor of Maintenance Joe Argona, Electrician Neil Zysk, & Mechanic Dan McGovern.

3. Superintendent

a. Large Meter Information

Mr. Wright states he met with Deputy Director of Financial Services (Brian Majchrowicz) and Supervisor of Meters (Robert Reid) to gather the information necessary to respond to Mr. Forster's request for information about large meters. This information was distributed to all Board Members. Mr. Wright asks if any of the Board Members have any questions regarding the information they received. No questions were asked. Mr. Wright states the meter

shop will begin calibrating the large meters (approximately 20) and checking their accuracy, however, the tool needed for the calibration of the 8-inch compound meters broke. The broken meter has been packaged and is prepared to be sent out for repair, however, this repair could take upwards of a few months. Mr. Wright is requesting permission to purchase a new calibrator in order to maintain two on site in case another situation such as this arises in the future (see Resolution 2021-04-008).

b. Planned Demonstration of Movable and Remote Readable Leak Spy Data Logger

The supplier of this device is scheduling a demonstration for Water Board staff to evaluate its effectiveness.

c. Fleet Vehicle Update

Mr. Wright states the NFWB had its annual meeting with Enterprise which recommended to trade in nine Ford F-150's (most of which are 2019, two are 2018) in order to lower the monthly payments for each vehicle due to the current state of the used car market. The previous Director of Financial Services approved the transfer of the nine leased Ford F-150's and the NFWB will be receiving nine new leased vehicles (approximately \$31,000/year cost savings).

Mr. Forster questions whether the NFWB will be obtaining any additional electric vehicles, other than the two the NFWB currently has. Mr. Wright states he spoke with our representative from Enterprise and electric trucks are not yet available but it was mentioned that GM will begin the fabrication of the "smart" pick-up trucks next year. These pick-up trucks will be electric, combined with gas.

4. Engineering

Mr. Williamson states he has nothing new to add.

5. Personnel Items

a. April 26, 2021 Personnel Actions Sheet

Motion by Board Member Asklar and seconded by Board Member Larkin to table "section B" of the Personnel Action Sheet (recommended promotion) from MW2 position to MW3 position.

Asklar __Y__ Forster __Y__ Kimble __Y__ Larkin __Y__ Leffler __Y__

Motion carried, 5-0.

Motion by Board Member Larkin and seconded by Board Member Leffler to un-table the previously tabled “section C” of the Personnel Action Sheet (to hire an electrician).

Board Member Kimble questions the total cost of re-hiring an electrician, including the cost of benefits. Ms. Kimble also questions if there is a proper budget line to cover the cost of the hire. Mr. Costello states the total cost, including benefits, is approximately \$78,000. Mr. Costello states he spoke with the Deputy Director of Financial Services (Brian Majchrowicz) regarding the savings of the personnel budget lines, this year’s budget reflected personnel budget lines for the Director of Administrative Services (\$90,000/year) along with the Executive Director position (\$120,000/year) for the first few months of the 2021 that have not been utilized due to the vacancy of those positions. The totals of those budgeted salaries are in excess of the salary/benefits amount needed to fill the electrician position (\$78,000/year). Board Member Kimble shows concern regarding the cost of the electrician position with the unknown salary of the potential new hire for the Executive Director position.

Board Member Leffler questions whether an “in-house” electrician would have changed the outcome of the power outage/generator issue versus having Ferguson on site. Mr. Costello explains that the NFWB’s electrician (Neil Zysk) responded and the only reason Ferguson Electric was needed was due to the fact that in the last 20+ years, the NFWB had never completed a “switch” such as the one that was needed this morning. This situation could have been potentially hazardous due to the high levels of voltage involved. Mr. Costello states that without a second electrician at the WWTP, in order to produce the work needed, the NFWB will either need to hire temporarily out of the union hall or potentially contract out work that we may have otherwise have been able to perform in-house. Mr. Costello emphasizes the importance of an in-house electrician in order to continue the daily preventative maintenance work that is needed, along with the consistent repairs that are needed due to the corrosion of the electrical wires that takes place due to the nature of the WWTP.

Board Member Kimble explains that she does not discount the need to hire an additional electrician, her main concern is the financial aspect.

Chairman Forster states during his most recent tour of the WWTP, the need for an additional electrician was brought to his attention by the Chief Operator of the WWTP (Bob Dunn). It was also brought to the Chairman’s attention the need for some lighting repairs at the WTP.

Asklar __Y__ Forster __Y__ Kimble __Y__ Larkin __Y__ Leffler __Y__

Motion to un-table “section C” of the Personnel Action Sheet (to hire an electrician) carried, 5-0.

Motion by Board Member Larkin and seconded by Board Member Asklar to approve “section C” of the personnel action sheet (to hire an electrician).

Asklar __Y__ Forster __Y__ Kimble __Y__ Larkin __Y__ Leffler __Y__

Motion carried, 5-0

6. Information Technology (IT)

Mr. Costello states he has no new IT developments to report.

7. Finance

In connection with an inquiry raised at the work session regarding a budget amendment to cover a bulldozer rental, Mr. Majchrowicz states he was not a part of the budget amendments completed in March; therefore, he is unsure why the more funds than were needed for the rental of the bulldozer equipment were moved from the “temporary payroll” budget line in order to cover the cost.

Chairman Forster seeks confirmation that the figure that appeared on the invoice was the amount that was paid. Mr. Majchrowicz states that is correct. Mr. Majchrowicz states the invoice reflects \$8,413.20 and additional funds may have been moved in order to cover any future work/rentals that may be needed.

8. Questions Regarding March 2021 Operations and Maintenance Report

No questions were asked.

9. Safety

Nothing new to report.

Chairman Forster states that the individual that was hired for the Safety position has not held a safety meeting.

Mr. Costello states he is currently working to reinstate safety training and expects to see that take place in May.

No further questions were asked.

10. General Counsel and Secretary

Nothing new to report.

11. From the Chairman

Chairman Forster thanked his fellow Board Members for all of the time and effort that has been put forth over the last month, including all scheduled and special meetings along with any of their own time they have spent while they continue their search for the new Executive Director.

12. Resolutions

2021-04-001 – ESRI SOFTWARE LICENSE RENEWAL AGREEMENT

a. Esri Renewal Agreement for 2021-2024

Motion by Board Member Larkin and seconded by Board Member Leffler to approve.

Asklar __Y__ Forster __Y__ Kimble __Y__ Larkin __Y__ Leffler __Y__

Motion carried, 5-0.

2021-04-002 WWTP SPDES PERMIT RENEWAL ENGINEERING AND SCIENTIFIC SUPPORT SERVICES

a. AECOM Proposal dated March 31, 2021

Motion by Board Member Kimble and seconded by Board Member Asklar to approve.

Asklar __Y__ Forster __Y__ Kimble __Y__ Larkin __Y__ Leffler __Y__

Motion carried, 5-0.

2021-04-003 – AUTHORIZING OUTSIDE PIPES CREW LEADERS TO TAKE HOME WORK TRUCKS TO SPEED EMERGENCY RESPONSES

Motion by Board Member Leffler and seconded by Board Member Larkin to approve.

Asklar __Y__ Forster __Y__ Kimble __Y__ Larkin __Y__ Leffler __Y__

Motion carried, 5-0.

**2021-04-004 – REJECTING ALL BIDS FOR WWTP PROJECT 9,
INTERIOR PROCESS PIPING IMPROVEMENTS, AND DIRECTING REBID**

Motion by Board Member Kimble and seconded by Board Member Asklar to approve.

Asklar __Y__ Forster __Y__ Kimble __Y__ Larkin __Y__ Leffler __Y__

Motion carried, 5-0.

**2021-04-005 – TRANSFER STATION COATING FOR WWTP CHEMICAL BULK
STORAGE TANKS 211-A, 216, AND 217**

a. Niagara Coatings Estimate dated March 22, 2021

Motion by Board Member Asklar and seconded by Board Member Larkin to approve.

Asklar __Y__ Forster __Y__ Kimble __Y__ Larkin __Y__ Leffler __Y__

Motion carried, 5-0.

2021-04-006 – ACCEPTING BLUE CROSS HEALTH INSURANCE RENEWAL RATES

a. Renewal Executive Summary

Motion by Board Member Leffler and seconded by Board Member Kimble to approve.

Asklar __Y__ Forster __Y__ Kimble __Y__ Larkin __Y__ Leffler __Y__

Motion carried, 5-0.

WALK-ON RESOLUTIONS

2021-04-007 – STIPEND FOR THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

Motion by Board Member Kimble and seconded by Board Member Larkin to waive the agenda deadline policy in order to “walk-on” Resolution 2021-04-007.

Asklar __Y__ Forster __Y__ Kimble __Y__ Larkin __Y__ Leffler __Y__

Motion carried, 5-0.

Motion by Board Member Kimble and seconded by Board Member Larkin to approve Resolution 2021-04-007.

Asklar __Y__ Forster __Y__ Kimble __Y__ Larkin __Y__ Leffler __Y__

Motion carried, 5-0

2021-04-008 – LARGE METER TESTER

Motion by Board Member Larkin and seconded by Board Member Kimble to waive the agenda deadline policy in order to “walk-on” Resolution 2021-04-008.

Asklar __Y__ Forster __Y__ Kimble __Y__ Larkin __Y__ Leffler __Y__

Motion carried, 5-0

Motion by Board Member Larkin and seconded by Board Member Kimble to approve Resolution 2021-04-008.

Asklar __Y__ Forster __Y__ Kimble __Y__ Larkin __Y__ Leffler __Y__

Motion carried, 5-0

13. Unfinished/Old Business

a. 18th Street Slip Line

Mr. Wright states a walk-through was completed from Whitney Ave. to Seneca St. with City Engineering on Discussion regarding the work that is needed took place and a check to the County Health Department for plan review was provided to City Engineering.

b. Roof Study

Mr. Meyers from CPL states the roof study is in the final stages of completion (approximately 96% complete).

Chairman Forster questions the work that is still needed.

Mr. Meyers explains further review is needed in a few areas and then sent to the manufacturer who provided the warranty on the roofs for a final review. Mr. Meyers states he will report all findings to the board as soon as they are made available.

Board Member Kimble questions the cost to complete the roof study.

Mr. Meyers states approximately \$500.

No further questions were asked and there was no objection from the Board to finish the roof study.

c. Beech Ave. Water Tower

Mr. Meyers states there is some modeling work left to complete and finalizing some ideas for an ideal location still is needed (possibly on Buffalo Ave.)

Mr. Meyers states Beech Ave. is not an ideal location since a pump station is needed. If the water tower is located on Buffalo Ave. the tower could be filled directly from the WTP, negating the need for a pump station.

Chairman Forster questions the additional cost for completion.

Mr. Meyers states the cost to complete the study would be approximately \$9,800.

No further questions were asked and there was no objection from the Board to finish the study.

d. Caulking Project WTP

Chairman Forster states the caulking project was brought to his attention during his tour of the WTP with Chief Operator (Rob Rowe). Last year the Board approved the caulking project for the exterior of the WTP, however, the inside needs to be caulked as well.

No objection from the board.

Mr. Costello was tasked to solicit bids while leaning on CPL to prepare the specifications for this project.

14. New Business & Additional Items for Discussion

a. 56th Street Water Tower

Following discussion from the work session, Chairman Forster explains WTP operations must drain the water tower levels down on a daily basis in order to recirculate the water, due to the lack of a recirculating pump along with the lack of valve at the bottom of the tank. He would ask that CPL review whether this can be improved.

No objection from the board.

b. Lift Stations

Mr. Costello has been in contact with the maintenance employees regarding some of the work that is needed for the lift station roofs. Mr. Costello states he is still working through the numbers but would prefer to keep the work in house if possible.

Chairman Forster agrees that he would like to keep the work needed at the lift stations in house. He also discussed driveway dealing as a potential area for work to be performed in house.

c. Sanitary Flow Regulators

Chairman Forster closed by stating his appreciation for all of the time that Board Members have been putting in over the past month in connection with the Executive Director search.

15. Executive Session (if needed)

The board did not enter executive session.

16. Adjournment of Meeting

Motion by Board Member Leffler and seconded by Board Member Larkin to adjourn at 5:47 p.m.

Asklar Y Forster Y Kimble Y Larkin Y Leffler Y

Motion carried, 5-0.