



MINUTES

Meeting of the Niagara Falls Water Board
June 28, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.
5815 Buffalo Avenue
Niagara Falls, NY 14304

1. Preliminary Matters

Chairman Forster called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

a. Attendance:

Asklar (Board Member/Chairman of Finance) **P**

Forster (Chairman) **P**

Kimble (Board Member) **absent**

Larkin (Board Member/Vice Chairwoman/Governance Chairwoman) **P**

Leffler (Board Member) **P**

b. Comments from Chairman Forster

Chairman Forster had nothing new to discuss at this time.

c. Letters and Communications

- i. June 24, 2021 Letter from City Administrator Regarding Operation Agreement

d. Public Comments

There were no public speakers.

e. Approval of Minutes from May 24, 2021 Meeting

Motion by Board Member Leffler and seconded by Board Member Larkin to approve the May 24, 2021 meeting minutes.

Asklar __Y__ Forster __Y__ Kimble __absent__ Larkin __Y__ Leffler __Y__

Motion carried, 4-0

2. Executive Director – Dr. Abderrahman Zehraoui

Dr. Zehraoui provided an update from the NFWB’s meeting with Cascades – held on 6/28/21. Dr. Zehraoui states Cascades is experiencing some infrastructure issues at its pretreatment plant and are requesting assistance through the Water Board accepting more SOC than allowed by Cascades permit while the pretreatment plant is restored. Dr. Zehraoui explains that he believes the repair process will take longer than the 3-month period Cascades originally mentioned – the anaerobic system takes time to acclimate.

Cascades original proposal to the NFWB was to by-pass their anaerobic system and send untreated wastewater to the NFWB. NFWB did not agree to this and the DEC also objected. Cascades must continue to run its wastewater through the available pretreatment system.

Mr. Costello notes some challenges with our chlorine supplier. The supplier is experiencing steep cost to procure the chemical supply for the NFWB – they have said this is causing them to lose money when they are delivering chlorine to the NFWB at their bid price. The supplier has not stated that they are unable to supply the NFWB with chlorine. Mr. Costello states that “economic hardship” does not warrant the breach of the original contract, therefore, the cost remains the same.

Dr. Zehraoui updated the Board members on his meeting with CPL on 6/24/21 regarding the hydraulic model study and his conclusions from the analysis.

Dr. Zehraoui also reviewed the LaSalle Sanitary Sewer Improvements Engineering Report with the Board members.

3. Superintendent – William Wright

Mr. Wright provided the board with an update from Neptune (Dave Johnson) regarding the NFWB’s unaccounted for water. Mr. Wright explains a potential connection issue with our water meters only logging the first 4 digits of the meter read – with no log of the last 2 digits. Mr. Wright states that Neptune will on-site in July to meet with himself, Dr. Zehraoui and Mr. Majchrowicz to discuss this issue further and ensure that New World is properly connecting with Neptune and that the meter reads are being billed properly. Neptune communicated this may be a clerical error.

Mr. Wright explains the new industrial meter calibrator is in-house and the top 20 industrial meters will be completed by the end of October 2021 – weather permitting.

Mr. Wright requests two full time/temporary employees to assist the meter shop with additional reads.

Board Member Larkin inquires about the cost of potentially adding additional, full time/temporary employees to the meter shop.

Mr. Wright states the hourly rate would start at approximately \$21.00/hour and approximately an additional \$1.60/hour for medical insurance.

Dr. Zehraoui suggests ensuring that the potential additional assistance for the meter shop, remains under 20 hours/week.

Board Member Leffler requests a proposal, outlining all the necessary figures to potentially hire additional staff for the meter shop. Board Member Leffler notes how important it is to obtain the information from the large industrial meters throughout the city that have not been read in years.

Mr. Wright states maintaining the current work force in the meter shop will ensure all the residential meters are being kept up to date; allowing the additional assistance to focus on the large industrial meter reads.

Chairman Forster states that all individuals who have topics for discussion are to ensure that they are outlined on the agenda prior to the work session/board meeting.

Chairman Forster states, there are currently 5 individuals working in the meter shop – with 2 calibrators for the industrial meter reads. There are currently no shutoffs taking place at this time; also, no meters are being tagged (since Summer/Fall 2019).

Chairman Forster suggests ordering additional water meters, because when some of the industrial meters are calibrated – they may need to be removed/replaced due to age or if they contain lead, etc. Chairman Forster states that the meter shop has previously stated that they do not believe the approximate 70% unaccounted for water has any relation to the water meters. Chairman Forster explains he believes the water meters could very well be the issue – since some have not been calibrated since 1989. He notes that this matter may be related to an internal billing issue as well.

4. Engineering – Douglas Williamson

Mr. Williamson had nothing new to add at this time.

5. Personnel Items – John Accardo

a. June 28, 2021 Personnel Actions Sheet

Mr. Accardo seeks guidance from the board members regarding the Covid-19 mask wearing policy. Mr. Accardo mentions, to-date, there are currently 33 unvaccinated employees.

Mr. Costello does not recommend requiring employees to wear a badge or sticker to identify whether they have been vaccinated. Mr. Costello states that the NFWB is a small enough work force that if senior management is provided with a list of non-vaccinated employees – they can ensure that non-vaccinated employees continue to wear a mask in the workplace.

Motion by Board Member Larkin and seconded by Board Member Asklar to approve the June 28, 2021 Personnel Actions.

Asklar Y Forster abstain Kimble absent Larkin Y Leffler Y

Motion carried, 3-0-1.

The Board members would like to see the NFWB explore additional options for job postings; aside from the standard Niagara Gazette posting. Such as, LinkedIn, Indeed, etc.

6. Information Technology (IT) – Dr. Abderrahman Zehraoui

Dr. Zehraoui had nothing new to report at this time.

7. Finance – Brian Majchrowicz

Mr. Majchrowicz states that Randy Shepard from The Bonadio Group will be present at the July 19, 2021 work session to review the NFWB's 2020 Audit. There then ensued some discussion about potentially moving that date because Dr. Zehraoui will not be present in person for the work session.

8. Questions Regarding May 2021 Operations and Maintenance Report

No questions were asked.

9. Safety – John Accardo

Mr. Accardo states he will have an update from AFI Environmental for the Board members at the July 2021 Board meeting.

10. General Counsel and Secretary – Sean Costello

Mr. Costello informs the board that Niagara Grid has voluntarily withdrawn a lawsuit that it filed against the NFWB – seeking approximately \$48,000 in damages related to a 2019 incident where the NFWB’s excavator clipped the support wire of a utility pole; pulling down wires and transformers on a portion of Buffalo Ave. National Grid failed to comply with a requirement of the notice of claims statute. Mr. Costello filed a motion to dismiss. Rather than answer the motion and appear before a judge, National Grid chose to withdraw their claim.

Chairman Forster thanks Mr. Costello for a job well done.

11. From the Chairman

Chairman Forster seeks a motion to approve staff to enforce COVID-19 rules consistent with current CDC guidance, presently requiring employees and visitors who are not fully vaccinated to wear masks and socially distance and permitting fully vaccinated employees to wear face coverings if they choose, and directing that all supervisors and management are to enforce these rules.

Motion by Board Member Larkin and seconded by Board Member Leffler to approve the motion as stated by Chairman Forster.

Asklar __Y__ Forster __Y__ Kimble __absent__ Larkin __Y__ Leffler __Y__

Motion carried, 4-0.

12. Resolutions

2021-06-001 – GENERATOR PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE SERVICE AGREEMENT WITH KINSLEY POWER SYSTEMS

a. Kinsley Power Systems Proposal Revised June 22, 2021

Motion by Board Member Larkin and seconded by Board Member Asklar to table Resolution 2021-06-001 until further information is gathered as to whether this work can be performed in house.

Asklar __Y__ Forster __Y__ Kimble __absent__ Larkin __Y__ Leffler __Y__

Motion to table carried, 4-0.

2021-06-002 – ZERO COST CHANGE ORDER FOR EMERGENCY REPAIR CONTRACT

a. Memorandum from City Engineering

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

Asklar __Y__ Forster __Y__ Kimble __absent__ Larkin __Y__ Leffler __Y__

Motion carried, 4-0.

2021-06-003 – AWARD BID FOR WWTP PROJECT 9, INTERIOR PIPING IMPROVEMENTS

a. Engineer's Award Recommendation and Bid Tabulation

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

Asklar __Y__ Forster __Y__ Kimble __absent__ Larkin __Y__ Leffler __Y__

Motion carried, 4-0.

2021-06-004 – ACCEPTING CPL ENGINEERING SERVICES PROPOSAL FOR WATER LINE PROJECTS ON WHITNEY AVENUE AND 77TH STREET

a. CPL Proposal Dated June 1, 2021

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

Asklar __Y__ Forster __Y__ Kimble __absent__ Larkin __Y__ Leffler __Y__

Motion carried, 4-0.

2021-06-005 – CHANGE ORDER 1 AND FINAL FOR 21 INCH COMBINED SEWER REPAIR ON MCKOON AVENUE

a. Change Order Memorandum

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

Asklar __Y__ Forster __Y__ Kimble __absent__ Larkin __Y__ Leffler __Y__

Motion carried, 4-0.

2021-06-006 – PROCUREMENT OF E.H. WACHS VALVE MAINTENANCE TRAILER

a. E.H. Wachs Proposal

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

Asklar __Y__ Forster __Y__ Kimble __absent__ Larkin __Y__ Leffler __Y__

Motion carried, 4-0.

13. Additional Comments from Chairman Forster

Chairman Forster did not have any additional comments at this time.

14. Unfinished/Old Business

a. 18th Street Slip Line

- Walk-through completed from Whitney Ave. to Ontario Ave. with City Engineering – discussed at board meeting held on 5/24/21.

b. Roof Study

- Jay Meyers from CPL stated this project is approximately 96% complete.
- Further review is needed in some areas – will be sure to report all findings to the board as soon as they are made available -- discussed at board meeting held on 5/24/21.

c. Beech Ave. Water Tower

- Jay Meyers explains some modeling work is needed along with finalizing ideas for an ideal location (possibly Buffalo Ave.)
- Beech Ave. is not an ideal location due to the need for a pump station.
- Cost to complete the study – approximately \$9,800 – discussed at board meeting held on 5/24/21.

d. Caulking Project WTP

- Exterior caulking of the WTP was completed in 2020.
- Interior caulking of the WTP is now needed
- Mr. Costello was tasked to solicit bids – requesting CPL to prepare the specifications.
- - discussed at board meeting held on 5/24/21.

- e. **56th Street Water Tower**
- CPL was tasked to explore ways to improve the functionality and eliminate the need for WTP operators to have to drain the water lower levels on a daily basis in order to recirculate the water; due to the lack of a recirculating pump and valve at the bottom of the tank - discussed at board meeting held on 5/24/21.
- f. **Lift Station Roofs**
- Mr. Costello has been in contact with the maintenance department regarding the work that is needed; would prefer to keep the work in-house if possible - discussed at board meeting held on 5/24/21.
 - *Mike Eagler met with Jay Meyers on 6/22/2021 to explore the possibility of installing roof trusses on flat roofs – discussed at board meeting held on 6/28/21.*
- g. **Program Logic Controller (PLC)**
- (1) showing a processor error, (2) showing error - discussed at board meeting held on 5/24/21.
 - *Rob Rowe provided an update on 6/14/21 stating that the PLC has been repaired and is running well at this time. Rob Rowe feels comfortable removing this item from unfinished business – discussed at board meeting held on 6/28/21.*
- h. **Chlorine System**
- Adding a booster pump to the raw water chlorine feed would prevent loss of chlorine feed during a low-pressure scenario (i.e. Goodyear break).
 - Will also provide backup to chlorine dosage during backflow testing/repairs
 - WTP Chief Operator (Rob Rowe) met with Fluid Kinetics to discuss options.
 - CPL to provide drawings (April 2021) for submittal to DOH - discussed at board meeting held on 5/24/21.
 - *Rob Rowe provided an update on 6/14/21 stating that Jay Meyers has emailed drawings to the DOH – waiting for a response – also noting the delay caused from the pandemic – discussed at board meeting held on 6/28/21.*
- i. **Emergency Backup Generators**
- In need of repair – multiple issues with transfer gear and controls.
 - 1 unit has been determined to need radiator parts/replacements.
 - Work continues with Zenith – determined TS-2 and TS-3 need cleaning and lubrication, which involves removing power and running a separate generator to make the necessary repair.

- Quotes have been received for auto switching main plant power feeds to lessen the risks involved with a generator failure (unknown).
- *Joe Argona provided a quote from Milton-Cat (dated 6/25/2019) for the radiator (estimated amount \$41,626.25).*
- *In the case of malfunction with the back-up generators – this would be the alternative route:*
- *Joe Argona provided a proposal from Milton-Cat (dated 4/19/21) for the installation of the auto-transfer scheme and relay upgrade for the (2) main incoming feeders for the WTP – discussed at board meeting held on 6/28/21.*

j. WTP Roofing

- Area over front main entrance vestibule is leaking – creating issues with drywall mold and cracking.
- Area over filter gallery with floating foam pieces – no leaks detected. Nearby roof drains have been cleaned to help with the issue - discussed at board meeting held on 5/24/21.
- *Rob Rowe provided an update on 6/14/21 stating that Tremco Roofing was on-site on 6/9/21 to evaluate the problem areas of the WTP roofs and will provide update soon – discussed at board meeting held on 6/28/21.*

k. Replacement of the outdated CO2 detection system.

- Units are in house for installation and work is progressing (unknown).
- - discussed at board meeting held on 5/24/21.
- *Rob Rowe provided an update on 6/14/21 stating that the new CO2 detection system has been installed. Rob Rowe had a meeting with a representative on 6/18/21 to review the installation and discuss the start-up – discussed at board meeting held on 6/28/21.*

l. Backflow Preventers

- Need to be tested/repaired/replaced yearly or as necessary.
- Larger units may cause the plant to lose chlorine capabilities – will now be tied in with chlorine system – experiencing pressure related issues on the Plant Water line.
- Work may need to be subcontracted if in-house staff is unable to complete the necessary repairs.
- - discussed at board meeting held on 5/24/21.
- *All backflow preventers have been completed at the WTP.*
- *Backflow preventers at the WWTP will be completed by the end of July 2021 – discussed at board meeting held on 6/28/21.*

m. Interior Lighting

- High lift room has been updated by Ferguson Electric.
- Low lift room to be completed next – will likely be completed by Ferguson Electric due to the safety concerns of completing the work in-house.
- - discussed at board meeting held on 5/24/21.
- *Low lift lighting has begun (in-house repairs are being completed on straight time).*
- *Joe Argona explained his department is waiting for clarification from the safety specialist prior to proceeding – discussed at board meeting held on 6/28/21.*

n. HVAC Rooftop & Make Up Air

- Outdated units – need replacements – 4 out of the 5 units are inoperable.
- AC-1 – rooftop unit over Operations Control Room is now replaced and awaiting final installation items. Startup to be completed shortly (10/16/2018) – *AC-1 is complete – 6/24/21.*
- Still in need of additional units – the pandemic has brought this to the forefront, as makeup air is potentially regulated in certain environments as well as air filtration ratings.
- *Joe Argona to provide pricing – discussed at board meeting held on 6/28/21.*

o. PACL System Upgrades

- Need SCADA professionals to finish updating our program to match the 4 PACL pumps so that all 4 pumps can be utilized with SCADA control.
- In-house work completed regarding the necessary pipes and valves. SOP's have also been created for the new completed system.
- PACL liners have been replaced (unknown).
- - discussed at board meeting held on 5/24/21.

p. Bulk Chemical Storage Liners

- PACL liners complete – contractor has concerns about Fluoride toxicity. Maintenance department to follow up.
- - discussed at board meeting held on 5/24/21.
- *Joe Argona states he is waiting on the Canadian boarders to re-open in order to receive servicing on the fluoride tank. Also, waiting on a response from the DOH regarding regulations for not dosing during the time of servicing – discussed at board meeting held on 6/28/21.*

q. Board Member Asklar will have oversight on remodeling of the WWTP employee break room, shower area and bathrooms - discussed at board meeting held on 5/24/21.

- *Board Member Asklar states he would like to meet with Dr. Zehraoui prior to their weekly finance meetings to further discuss – discussed at board meeting held on 6/28/21.*

q. Vice Chairwoman Larkin – employee PPE - discussed at board meeting held on 5/24/21.

- *On 6/28/21 Vice Chairwoman Larkin asked if employees were complying with the PPE requirements. Mr. Costello has not noted employees in improper pants and observed that safety shoes are not necessarily boots, some look like athletic shoes.*

15. New Business & Additional Items for Discussion

- a. WTP Roof
 - i. Tremco Roof Inspection & Repair Proposal June 10, 2021
 - ii. Tremco WTP Roof Inspection Summary June 2021
- b. CPL Proposal for Whitney Ave. & 11th St. Water Project Engineering
 - i. Watermain Replacement Location Map
- c. Water Meter Update – Automated Meter Infrastructure (“AMI”) Propagation Study by Neptune.
 - i. 2017 CPL Report on Unaccounted Water

16. Executive Session (if needed)

Motion by Board Member Leffler and seconded by Board Member Larkin to enter executive session at 6:23 p.m. for the purpose of discussing matters related to the hiring, firing, appointment, promotion, or demotion of a specific individual.

Asklar __Y__ Forster __Y__ Kimble __absent__ Larkin __Y__ Leffler __Y__

Motion carried, 4-0.

Motion by Board Member Larkin and seconded by Board Member Leffler to enter the open meeting at 7:16 p.m.

Asklar __Y__ Forster __Y__ Kimble __absent__ Larkin __Y__ Leffler __Y__

Motion carried, 4-0.

17. Adjournment of Meeting

Motion by Board Member Leffler and seconded by Board Member Asklar to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 p.m.

Asklar __Y__ Forster __Y__ Kimble __absent__ Larkin __Y__ Leffler __Y__

Motion carried, 4-0.

DRAFT