



## MINUTES

### **Business Meeting of the Niagara Falls Water Board June 26, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.**

**Water Treatment Plant Conference Room  
5815 Buffalo Avenue, Niagara Falls New York 14304**

**Meeting could be attended in person  
or via videoconference.**

#### **1. Preliminary Matters**

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

*Board Member Kimble said a prayer for the family of the late William Costello, father of Sean Costello, NFWB General Counsel.*

##### **a. Attendance:**

Asklar (Board Member/Chairman of Finance/Member Exec. Staff Review Cmte.) *Present*

Forster (Chairman) *Present*

Kimble (Board Member) *Present via Videoconference*

Larkin (Board Member/Vice Chairwoman/Governance Chairwoman/  
Chairwoman Exec. Staff Review Cmte.) *Present*

Leffler (Board Member/Member Exec. Staff Review Cmte.) *Present*

- b. Public Comments (All speakers must register with the meeting clerk prior to roll call and are limited to three minutes per person – total time for all speakers may not exceed one hour).**

*No public comments.*

##### **c. Comments from Chairman Forster**

*Chairman Forster asked that the Board enter into executive session to discuss matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, or removal of a particular person.*

*Motion by Board Member Larkin and seconded by Board Member Asklar to enter into Executive Session at 5:04 p.m.*

*Asklar \_\_Y\_\_ Forster \_\_Y\_\_ Kimble \_\_Y\_\_ Larkin \_\_Y\_\_ Leffler \_\_Y\_\_*

*Motion carried, 5-0.*

*Motion by Board Member Asklar and seconded by Board Member Larkin to exit Executive Session at 5:27 p.m.*

*Asklar \_\_Y\_\_ Forster \_\_Y\_\_ Kimble \_\_Y\_\_ Larkin \_\_Y\_\_ Leffler \_\_Y\_\_*

*Motion carried, 5-0.*

**i. Before and After Operational Improvements**

*Chairman Forster commented on the before and after photos from today's meeting packet, which show improvements made throughout the company. He stated that all the work shown has been done in-house, resulting in significant cost savings. In the past, many of these projects would have been done by outside contractors. Projects include replacing rugs original to the plant, improving stairs, redoing rundown break rooms, sealing and painting the gorge pump station tunnel, and other measures taken to improve work environment. He stated there are still many areas that are in need, but it can't be done all at once and will take some time.*

**d. Presentations (none scheduled)**

**e. Letters and Communications**

- i. 2023-06-14 – COVID Wastewater Surveillance Update Memorandum**
- ii. Correspondence from Jamestown Community College**

*John Mogavero, an instructor from Jamestown Community College, sent an email to Mr. Eagler asking him to relay his message to the NFWB staff. Mr. Mogavero recently instructed Water and Wastewater Operator Courses in our facility over the span of two weeks. Mr. Mogavero stated that the WTP Conference Room was beneficial for operator training, especially the high-definition monitors, audio, and Wi-Fi. He looks forward to scheduling more training here in the future.*

**f. Prior Meeting Minutes**

**i. Draft May 22, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

*Motion by Board Member Larkin and seconded by Board Member Leffler to approve the May 22, 2023 meeting minutes.*

*Asklar \_\_Y\_\_ Forster \_\_Y\_\_ Kimble \_\_Y\_\_ Larkin \_\_Y\_\_ Leffler \_\_Y\_\_*

*Motion carried, 5-0.*

## **2. Executive Director – Dr. Abderrahman Zehraoui**

*Dr. Zehraoui stated the NFWB met with the DEC and EFC on Thursday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, and submitted the application for the \$20 million plant conversion loan to the EFC on Friday, June 16<sup>th</sup>. The remaining funding for plant conversion, \$230 million, will be split into two applications, one for \$100 million, and another for \$130 million. Applications are due July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and NFWB must provide further breakdown of the expected plant conversion costs. Next week, the team will be meeting with Governor Hochul’s environmental advisors to gain more support to optimize funding.*

*NFWB team members completed work related to the risk management plan in-house, taking over 60 hours to complete, instead of contracting the work to an engineering firm.*

- a. WWTP Project Budget Tracker (CPL)**
- b. WWTP Construction Schedule Tracker (CPL)**
- c. Financial Award Summary (CPL)**

*Jay Meyers and Seth Krull spoke on behalf of CPL. Mr. Krull gave an update on Item 2 from the Project Budget tracker. They are working with NFWB staff on submitting reimbursement requests from DASNY and EFC.*

*Mr. Meyers stated out of 11 projects, there are two remaining. Project 1 will be completed in 2024, Project 3 will be completed in August, and Project 7 was completed last week. Mr. Krull stated there has been discussion on using the remaining funds from the WWTP \$27 million grant for other items that have come up, including Intermediate Pumps, and paperwork has been submitted to the DEC.*

*Chairman Forster asked for an update on the roof repair project. Mr. Meyers stated the bids were opened last week, his estimate is around \$3.4 million, anticipated to start in September. Chairman Forster noted that the start time is significant because there are roof areas at the WTP that are in dire need of fixing, and patching is set to start soon, which will be a waste if major repairs will start right after. CPL will discuss this timeline with Mr. DeFranco to avoid excess work.*

## **3. System Infrastructure and Operations – Russell DeFranco**

*Mr. DeFranco handed the Board Members a copy of correspondence with Marty Schebell, NFWB Control Maintenance Technician. This letter addresses WTP Turbidimeters, which are beyond their lifespan and take up most of Mr. Schebell’s time to maintain. We have 10 Turbidimeters, and 5 “brains” that operate 2 meters each. Parts are no longer available, and Mr. Schebell often must go down and reset them. There is a new Turbidimeter on loan to us, and he has not reset it since June 16<sup>th</sup>. Total cost to replace them all is \$54,000, but they don’t have to be replaced all at once. Old ones will be backup, to scavenge parts. We are required to monitor turbidity (water clarity), so it is necessary to have functioning turbidimeters.*

*Mr. DeFranco gave an update on WTP High Lift Pump 3, the valve is functioning properly and there are no concerns. He also stated Danforth began the work for the WWTP Intermediate Pump Valve replacement.*

*Currently, one Sedimentation Basin is down due to construction, and Sedimentation Basin 1 was fixed over the weekend. Mr. DeFranco thanked Mr. Eagler, and team, for using his Vac Truck to clean out Sed Basin 1, saving \$24,500.*

#### **4. Outside Infrastructure Updates – Michael Eagler**

*Mr. Eagler stated the 18<sup>th</sup> St Project (16” main running from Whitney to Ontario) has been completed. The road has been restored to better condition than before it was ripped up. Four new hydrants were installed on that main. The project finished \$55,000 under budget, with the help of CPL.*

*Freeze Thaw beds have been repaired and are ready for use.*

*The lift station modem for Cayuga Island came in (it has not been on SCADA for a couple months). Clayton Hotchkiss, Sanitary Engineer, will be working on programming this week.*

*Major flaws were discovered on Highland and Calumet 48” brick sewer main, they are estimating 300-400’ replacement. Will be a large, expensive project.*

*Mr. Eagler is working with the City and Fourth Generation to bring down the cost of a water valve repair on Walnut and Hyde Park.*

#### **5. Engineering – Douglas Williamson**

##### **a. Project Status Updates**

*Mr. Williamson stated for the Sodium Hypochlorite replacement project, he is hoping to use the remaining balance of the Phase 1 WWTP grant, issue a change order to Project #6, and get a quote from AECOM. If the quote is not sufficient, an RFP will go out.*

*Intermediate Pump RFP is almost done, and should be awarded by September.*

*Mr. Williamson stated he is waiting for answers on the electrical room HVAC, as two proposals were received, and he is unsure if they should go out for RFP. Chairman Forster stated he currently does not have an answer, and there may be a special meeting later this month.*

*Mr. Williamson put together an RFQ for architectural engineering services consulting to aid with project grants and RFPs.*

#### **6. Personnel Items – David San Lorenzo**

##### **a. June 26, 2023 Personnel Actions**

*The only item on today’s PA sheet is one resignation.*

*Mr. San Lorenzo stated that last year when Blue Cross switched over to Highmark, there were many billing issues. As they were reviewing a new health insurance contract at the beginning of this month, HR staff found two employees that had opted out of health insurance the previous*

*year that we were still billed for. Mr. San Lorenzo thanks his staff, Fifi Sandonato and Erika Schroeder, for their diligent work in finding this mistake, which resulted in a substantial refund.*

## **7. Information Technology (IT) – Dr. Abderrahman Zehraoui and Jonathan Joyce**

*Chairman Forster stated there was an issue last week with several employees being out and no one having access to Adobe Acrobat to create today's meeting packet. Jonathan Joyce stated that all computers are equipped with Adobe Reader, but going forward he will extend Adobe Acrobat to users that need it, being mindful that Adobe has a monthly charge per user.*

*The server that IT is migrating Lucity to is up to date, and Mr. Joyce has a meeting with the account rep on June 28<sup>th</sup> to discuss the migration. Migration will start within the next couple weeks, and training will follow.*

*IT is also working on the VoIP system. They signed with Spectrum, are testing SIP trunks, and are getting ready to flex over telephone numbers, which will likely be a two-day procedure between both locations. They also found a service that offers language translation, which is charged per minute, and are looking into incorporating it into our phone system to be more inclusive to the community. Once the new phone system is in place, they will implement overhead paging.*

*The VPN was implemented and a job is being used for 2-factor identification.*

*Once the above projects are complete, IT will have a security audit done to test for vulnerability and check compliance.*

## **8. Finance – Brian Majchrowicz**

- a. Shutoff Program Update**
- b. Revenue Budget Performance Report through 4/30/2023**
- c. Sewer Fund Expense Budget Performance Report through 4/30/2023**
- c. Water Fund Expense Budget Performance Report through 4/30/2023**
- d. Board Fund Expense Budget Performance Report through 4/30/2023**
- e. Key Bank and Bank on Buffalo Balance Report**
- f. Wilmington Trust Balance Report**
- g. Treasury Account Balance Report**
- h. Budget Amendments Report**
- i. Capital Payments**

*Mr. Majchrowicz was absent from today's meeting.*

*Chairman Forster commented on the 2023 Budgeted Expenses - Expenditures of User Rates, Fees, and Charges Less Debt Service. He stated our Sodium Hypochlorite usage is down, which may have a significant favorable impact on the budget.*

## **9. Questions Regarding May 2023 Operations and Maintenance Report**

## 10. Safety – John Accardo

### a. CPR/AED Training

*The official PERMA inspection report was received, and the only concerns were minor housekeeping items. One of the recommendations from the inspection was the development of a safety committee.*

*Tomorrow, June 27<sup>th</sup>, there will be CPR/AED training by the NFFD for 17 of our employees in the WTP Conference Room, 9am-11am.*

*It was recommended by our auto insurance company, Zurich, that we develop fleet management policies. They also recommended driver safety training. A 6-hour course for each employee may reduce the company's and the driver's personal insurance premium.*

## 11. General Counsel and Secretary – Sean Costello

## 12. From the Chairman

## 13. Resolutions

### 2023-06-001 – AWARD BID FOR WATER TREATMENT PLANT VENT PIPING REPLACEMENT

#### a. 2023-06-14 – Clark Patterson Lee Award Recommendation and Bid Tabulation for Project No. 14143.02

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

*Asklar \_\_Y\_\_ Forster \_\_Y\_\_ Kimble \_\_Y\_\_ Larkin \_\_Y\_\_ Leffler \_\_Y\_\_*

*Motion carried, 5-0.*

## 2. Unfinished/Old Business

### 1) WWTP Sodium Hypochlorite Tank Replacement

- 7/14/22: The 2021 WIIA Sewer (WWTP) Grant of \$1,125,000 was awarded on April 19, 2022 that included the some of the funds necessary to complete the WWTP tank removal and replacement work. We may be able to utilize some of the remaining balance of the WWTP Phase II grant to assist with this work, as well. We need approval from the NYSDEC to include some of the WWTP tank replacement work under this WWTP Phase II grant. The draft WWTP Tank Replacement RFP that was created needs to be finalized to show the grant funding sources that have been approved for the project before we can proceed.
- 9/22/22: Next step is requesting approval to use Phase II grant funds (will be packaged with other projects).

- 5/16/23: DEC comments on proposed allocation of grant funds received.

## 2) Whitney Ave. Water Main Replacement

- 5/9/2023: Bid released April 24. Contractors have submitted questions and requested an extension of the bid due date. An addendum is necessary to secure competitive bids has been issued extending the bid deadline to May 31, for award at the June 2023 Board meeting.

## 3) WTP Perimeter Fence Replacement Update

- 7/14/22: The 2021 WIHA Water Grant application of \$3 million was awarded on April 19, 2022 that included some funds that can be used for the WTP perimeter fence replacement work. On 7/13/22, the capital purchase order for the \$8,000 brush hog was completed to assist with the work in-house. WTP maintenance to schedule and coordinate the fencing work.
- 9/22/22: Brush hog delivered, Outside Maintenance has used it to clear along the fence line.
- 11/10/22: Obtaining quotes related to fence and other security needs, meeting OGS-listed contractor 11/17.
- 1/19/23: Project to be attempted in Spring with outside maintenance installing posts.
- 2/23/23: South side fence break repairs in progress. Ground elevation improvements and security wire on top of south side fence scheduled for Spring when ground has hardened.
- 5/17/23: Ground elevation correction work to be scheduled soon.

## 14. New Business & Additional Items for Discussion

### 15. Executive Session (if needed)

*Conducted earlier in the meeting.*

### 16. Adjournment of Meeting

*Motion by Board Member Larkin and seconded by Board Member Asklar to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 p.m.*

*Asklar \_\_Y\_\_ Forster \_\_Y\_\_ Kimble \_\_Y\_\_ Larkin \_\_Y\_\_ Leffler \_\_Y\_\_*

*Motion carried, 5-0.*