



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Niagara Falls Water Board Sets Budget Vote**

*Proposed Budget: No Rate Increase for 2024*

**Niagara Falls, NY** – At its meeting on November 20, 2023, the Niagara Falls Water Board (NFWB) is set to vote on its proposed operations and maintenance budget for 2024. Following two years of rate increases driven by skyrocketing chemical costs, the Board has prepared a balanced budget with no rate increase for 2024.

“More than one-fifth of our annual budget is currently eaten up by the cost of chemicals that are essential to drinking and wastewater treatment. Our personnel costs have remained flat, but in recent years chemical prices that doubled or tripled from the prior year have driven rate increases,” said Water Board Member Michael Asklar, who chairs the NFWB’s Finance and Audit Committee.

The NFWB is hopeful that the chemical market is beginning to stabilize, as there were no major increases in 2024 treatment chemical bid prices. This change, combined with cost-control measures such as careful management of overtime expenses, implementation of improved technology, and avoidance of excessive contractor markups through more work completed “in house” (hiring skilled labor from local union halls as temporary employees when necessary) has helped control overall expenses. The 2024 budget also forecasts modest increases in interest earnings and revenue from industrial users.

“It’s certainly a relief to present a responsible budget for 2024 with a 0% increase, and this budget also begins to address some deferred maintenance expenses that were postponed over the past several years to reduce the total required rate increase. We’re continuing to invest millions of dollars in our infrastructure, and much of our capital spending is at the wastewater treatment plant, which was completed in 1977 and uses outdated treatment technology. Separately, our water treatment plant is now more than a quarter-century old and beginning to require capital investments as well. And we have over 500 miles of water and sewer lines to upgrade and maintain, some of which are nearly 100 years old,” continued Asklar.

The NFWB’s entire operations and maintenance budget is funded through rates, fees, and other charges to users of its system; it receives no money through taxes. The Board maximizes the value of ratepayer dollars by aggressively pursuing grants to help fund necessary projects.

Members of the public are invited to comment on the budget during the public comment period that is part of every NFWB business meeting. The meeting on November 20 begins at 5:00 p.m.

To review the 2024 proposed budget, visit [www.NFWB.org/reports/budgets](http://www.NFWB.org/reports/budgets).

For more information on the NFWB, go to [www.NFWB.org](http://www.NFWB.org).

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**About the Niagara Falls Water Board:**

The Niagara Falls Water Board is a public benefit corporation created in 2002 by a special act of the New York State Legislature. Its mission is to provide safe and reliable water and wastewater management services to our community in an economical and efficient manner. In 2003, it acquired the drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater systems previously owned and operated by the City of Niagara Falls, a separate municipal entity. It owns and operates a water treatment plant, a wastewater treatment plant, a pumping station located in the Niagara Gorge, two elevated water storage tanks, seven lift stations, and more than 500 miles of water and sewer service lines. The Water Board serves nearly 18,000 residential, commercial, and industrial users. The Water Board also supplies water to and maintains the public fire hydrants in the City of Niagara Falls.