



**2023 Annual Review of Mission Statement,
Performance Measurement Report,
and Report on Operations and Accomplishments**

December 18, 2023

A. Mission Statement

Pursuant to Public Authorities Law Section 2824-a, the Niagara Falls Water Board has adopted a mission statement and reviews that statement annually to ensure its mission has not changed and that its performance goals continue to support its mission.

The Water Board's mission statement, adopted in 2003, is as follows:

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

The Water Board has reviewed its mission statement and the following performance goals and is proud to report that its policies and operating practices are in accordance with its mission statement.

B. Performance Goals

The Niagara Falls Water Board has established the following performance goals, and met them during 2023 as follows:

1) Safe:

- **Meet or exceed Department of Health and EPA drinking water quality requirements.**

In 2023, the Water Treatment Plant has operated with no violations, providing clean, ample, and high-quality water for our service area. [In June 2023, the Water Board issued its Annual Drinking Water Quality Report for 2022](#), and it is proud to report that our system has never violated a state established maximum contaminant level.

- **Environmentally sound sewage treatment in accordance with SPDES permit.**

The Water Board has operated its aging wastewater treatment plant as efficiently and effectively as possible, while aggressively seeking funding to convert that 1970's era treatment plant to a more appropriate biological treatment technology. Its only SPDES permit violations in 2023 relate to low-level detections of BHC, and the Water Board has initiated a robust response to address this issue. In October 2022, the Board approved a professional services agreement with AECOM, an engineering firm, to research the cause and solution for the BHC violations and to help develop a plan of action to address the issue. In 2023, the DEC accepted a plan proposed by the Water Board to address BHC violations by requiring actions from the Significant Industrial Users that contribute most of the BHC to the Water Board system. These efforts are underway, have demonstrated early success, and will continue in 2024.

2) Reliable:

- **Invest in capital projects required to maintain facilities and customer satisfaction.**

The Board has invested an average of approximately \$9 million per year in capital improvements over the past three years and plans more than \$30 million in capital improvements over the next three years. Its capital investments are intended to ensure reliable drinking water and wastewater treatment and delivery of those services through the City-wide network of mains maintained by the Water Board. It also has invested in its vehicle fleet, purchased equipment in 2023 to allow its outside crews efficiently to perform jobs in-house at lower cost, and it has continued to invest in newer passenger vehicles for employee safety, fuel efficiency, and to reduce maintenance costs and downtime. Capital projects underway in 2023 included additional SCADA control of treatment plant processes, ensuring efficient utilization of chemicals and human assets.

3) Economical:

- **Consider burden on ratepayers when determining operational and capital spending.**

The Water Board funds all its operational costs from rates and fees charged to users of its system, and covenants with its bondholders require it to raise the full amount of its operations budget in rates and fees each year. Treatment chemicals are approximately one-fifth of the Water Board's budget. Soaring chemical costs drove rate increases in 2022 and 2023, but in 2024 chemical bids were more favorable. This, combined with cost-control measures such as careful management of overtime expenses, implementation of improved technology, and avoiding contractor markups through continued efforts to do more work "in house" – hiring skilled labor from Union halls as temporary employees when necessary – has helped control expenses. With careful cost control, the Water Board's 2024 budget was balanced with no increase in 2024 rates, fees, or other charges.

Even with a 0% rate increase, in 2024 the Water Board plans to continue to improve its operations and capital facilities. Investments will be made at both treatment plants and in the distribution and collection system.

- **Actively seek grants and cooperative agreements with other government entities to reduce costs.**

In 2023, the Water Board continued to work cooperatively with partners in government to deliver efficient and cost-effective services to the community. In particular, it worked cooperatively with the City of Niagara Falls on many occasions in 2023 pursuant to an agreement that permits shared services between the parties.

The Water Board also has continued to invest in professional grant writing services and in a consultant to assist with seeking State and Federal infrastructure funds to maximize the grant money it can obtain, as its ratepayers cannot shoulder the cost of all needed system investments on their own. Efforts to secure financial support in 2023 included numerous treatment plant tours for elected officials, community leaders, and other stakeholders. Water Board staff presented the case for funding for converting the wastewater treatment plant to a biological treatment process to elected officials both in Albany and locally.

4) Efficient:

- **Leverage advances in technology and science to meet expanding system needs without excess increases in costs.**

In 2023, further integration or enhancement of SCADA control for equipment continued to be a major focus of projects at the wastewater treatment plant and gorge pumping station. IT infrastructure has been upgraded, including for the first time deploying a secure wireless network in certain locations and major upgrades to firewalls and other network hardware. Meter reading technology has been updated with the manufacturer's newest cloud-based software solution.

Telecommunications equipment has been upgraded, including replacement of costly desktop phone service with a new system that saves substantially on recurring monthly costs while enhancing the service provided to customer service callers.

C. Report on Operations and Accomplishments

There have been no material changes in the Water Board's operations, which are focused on its mission to provide safe and reliable water and wastewater management services to our community in an economical and efficient manner. The Water Board continuously monitors its operations and accomplishments through creation and review of monthly operations and maintenance reports. Reference is made to the full reports which are posted as part of monthly Water Board agenda packets here: [Minutes | Niagara Falls Water Board \(nfwb.org\)](https://www.nfwb.org). For future-looking projects, the Water Board maintains and updates its Capital Improvement

Plan, available at [Capital Improvements | Niagara Falls Water Board \(nfwb.org\)](https://www.nfwb.org/capital-improvements). Combined, these documents provide a detailed picture of the Water Board's operations as well as its completed and active projects. Interested persons may request a compilation of these reports by contacting the Water Board's Secretary at scostello@NFWB.org.