

## **Niagara Falls Water Board Board of Directors**

Note: Pursuant to Public Authorities Law § 1230-e(2), “All [Water Board] members shall continue to hold office until their successors are appointed and qualify.”

**Nicholas J. Forster, Chairperson.** Mr. Forster was appointed to his current term on the Board by City of Niagara Falls Mayor Robert M. Restaino on January 18, 2022, to fill a term ending on December 31, 2024. Mr. Forster has served as the Mayor’s appointee since February 2020, he previously was the Niagara Falls City Council’s appointee from February 2017 through February 2020. Prior to his election as Chairperson, Mr. Forster has served as the Water Board’s finance committee chair. Mr. Forster’s professional experience includes service as a supervisory-level Senior Inspector with the New York State Gaming Commission, Erie County Deputy Sheriff, and Director of the Niagara County Office of Traffic Safety. He is a graduate of multiple law-enforcement academies and has served as a training instructor for multiple law-enforcement agencies. Mr. Forster is a former President of C.S.E.A. Local 003, in which position he represented nearly 600 workers.

**Colleen Low Larkin, Vice-Chairperson and Chair of Governance Committee.**

Ms. Larkin was appointed by the New York State Senate on March 27, 2017, to fill a term ending on December 31, 2019. Ms. Larkin has a Bachelor’s Degree in Communications from SUNY Buffalo. She is employed as Manager of Internal Communication at a major local corporation. Her prior professional experience includes having operated a communications consulting firm, serving as a managing editor of a technical publication and for an in-house publication, as well as several years of employment in sales and service.

**Michael J. Asklar, P.E., Treasurer and Chair of Audit and Finance Committee.**

Mr. Asklar first was appointed to the Board by the Niagara Falls City Council on February 18, 2021 to a term expiring December 31, 2022, and was reappointed by the City Council on December 14, 2022 to a term expiring December 31, 2025. Mr. Asklar is a New York State Licensed Professional Engineer who holds a Bachelor of Science Degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo, as well as a Bachelor of Science Degree in Physics from the State University of New York at Fredonia. He has over 20 years’ experience in engineering and is employed as Superintendent of General Maintenance with a major statewide NYS Public Authority.

**Rena Kimble.** Ms. Kimble was appointed by the New York State Assembly on February 24, 2012, to fill a term ending on December 31, 2014. Ms. Kimble holds a Juris Doctor Degree and a Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science from the State University of New York at Buffalo, as well as an Associate Degree in Liberal Arts/Social Science from Niagara County Community College. She served for over 18 years as a Niagara County Legislator, and her professional qualifications also include serving as Risk Manager for the City of Niagara Falls, Director of the Niagara Falls Human Rights Commission, Adjunct Professor at SUNY Buffalo, Director of the Business Opportunity Program at the Office of Urban Initiatives, and serving as a Legal Associate with the Niagara County Attorney’s Office. Her extensive community involvement includes leadership and Board positions in many organizations, including serving as a member of the Executive Committee and Chairperson of the Legal Redress Committee for the NAACP’s Niagara Falls Branch.

**Gretchen Leffler.** Ms. Leffler was appointed by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo on February 11, 2013 to fill a term ending on December 31, 2015. She holds a Master of Science Degree in Education from Niagara University, and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Home Economics Education from Misericordia University. Her professional experience includes

services as Regional Vice President of the American Cancer Society, Executive Director for the American Cancer Society in Niagara County, Field Director for the Girl Scout Council of Niagara County, and as a teacher in Niagara Falls City Schools.

## **Executive Management Team**

**Sean W. Costello, Executive Director, General Counsel, and Secretary.** Mr. Costello holds a Juris Doctor Degree from Syracuse University College of Law, and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in International Relations, *magna cum laude*, from Syracuse University College of Arts and Sciences. Mr. Costello was appointed Executive Director in May 2024, and at present continues to serve as the Board's General Counsel and Secretary. He previously served as Acting Executive Director during portions of 2020 and 2021. He has been an employee of the Water Board since 2018 and began working on Water Board matters as an outside contractor in 2012.

Mr. Costello has long had an active role the Water Board's in operational, regulatory, and legal affairs. He has been involved in matters as varied as procurements, Board governance, labor relations, pretreatment program administration, capital project planning and management, compliance with State and Federal regulations, grant applications, lobbying for State financial assistance, risk management, and more.

An attorney, Mr. Costello is admitted to practice law in New York, New Jersey, the Federal District Courts for the Northern, Southern, and Western Districts of New York, the United States Bankruptcy Court, Western District of New York, and the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. Prior to becoming an employee of the Water Board in 2018, Mr. Costello was a Partner with one of the region's largest private law firms and first worked on Water Board matters in 2012. His prior experience includes having served as Contract General Counsel to the Water Board, as attorney for a Western New York Town, and representing municipal entities in tort, civil rights, and employment-based claims in state and federal court. Mr. Costello was a law clerk with the U.S. Department of Defense Education Activity and with the Defense Information Systems Agency.

Mr. Costello is a member of various professional organizations, including the American Water Works Association (AWWA), New York Water Environment Association (NYWEA), Water Environment Federation (WEF), and the Niagara Frontier Section of the Air and Waste Management Association (AWMA NFS). He has been honored as a Buffalo Business First 30 Under Thirty Honoree and as an Upstate New York Super Lawyers Rising Star each year from 2016 through 2024.

### **Douglas Williamson, P.E., Director of Technical and Regulatory Services.**

Mr. Williamson received a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering from the State University of New York at Buffalo. He is a NYS licensed professional engineer in New York State. Mr. Williamson has 25 years of progressive experience focusing on construction and the water/wastewater fields and has been with the Water Board since 2009. He previously worked for the Seneca Nation of Indians and for one of Western New York's largest mechanical contracting firms.

**Michael Smith, CPA, Director of Financial Services.** Mr. Smith holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting from Niagara University. He is a NYS licensed Certified Public Accountant with over 40 years of experience as an accounting and finance professional. Past work experience includes working as an audit manager for two regional public accounting firms, where he supervised audit, accounting, and tax services for non-profit, governmental,

healthcare, manufacturing, and service provider clients throughout Western New York. He was employed as accounting manager by a large local medical service provider, responsible for all accounting activities, including payroll and employee benefits administration. Earlier in his career, he was a senior accountant at a manufacturing firm with a Union workforce, where he also supervised payroll processing and employee benefit plan administration.

**David San Lorenzo, Director of Administrative Services.** Mr. San Lorenzo holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Business Administration from Niagara University. He has over 30 years of progressive leadership experience in the human resources field and has been a member of the Society of Human Resource Management (“SHRM”). Past positions include serving as Human Resources Officer with the United States Department of Justice, Office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of New York, as Resource Center Manager for Eagle Research Group, where he managed a Federal compensation and medical benefits program for current and former employees of the United States Department of Energy, as Director of Human Resources for Seneca Niagara Casino, where he directed a human resources staff of 24 that supported 3,000 employees in two locations, and as Regional Human Resources Director for Adelphia Communications Corporation, handling benefits, recruitment, and employee relations for 2,400 Union and non-Union employees. Mr. San Lorenzo has been active in civic and community boards, including as Board Member and Board Chair of the Independent Health Foundation, Board Member for the Mount St. Mary’s Hospital Foundation, Board Member of the American Red Cross Niagara County Chapter, Board Member of Horizons Human Services.

**John G. Accardo, Deputy Director of Administrative Services.** Mr. Accardo possesses an Associates Degree in Business Administration from Niagara Community College and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration from Columbia Union College. He joined the Water Board in 2020. His professional experience includes employment as president of an insurance agency, executive director of the Niagara County Workforce Investment Board. Mr. Accardo was a Niagara Falls City Councilman from 1992-2001, including serving as Council Chairman from 1993-1995, and he has served as a member of numerous civic and community boards in Niagara Falls.

**David Conti, Operations Executive.** Mr. Conti has 24 years of experience working in municipal government, including 18 years working in the water and wastewater fields. He has hands-on experience as both a water treatment plant and wastewater treatment plant operator. His prior positions have included Chief Operator of a municipal water treatment plant and Superintendent of a town’s water and sewer department. Mr. Conti maintains a NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Grade 4 Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator License as well as NYS Department of Health IA-SW/GUI Filtration Plant and “D” Distribution System Licenses. He also is a licensed NYS Code Enforcement Officer, and is a NYSDOH and NYSDEC certified training instructor. Mr. Conti is a graduate of Hutchinson Central Technical High School in Buffalo, New York.