



## MINUTES

### **Business Meeting of the Niagara Falls Water Board May 19, 2025 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**

- a. Call To Order**
- b. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America**
- c. Attendance:**

**Cole Present, Dean Present, Kimble Present (Zoom), Larkin Present (Zoom),  
Sirianni Present.**

***Chairman Sirianni asked to begin the meeting by speaking a few words addressed to the Board and anyone in attendance at last month's meeting. He stated it is his responsibility to keep an orderly meeting. There is nothing wrong with disagreement on issues and debate, it is what boards do on any issue. However, he should have cut off the discussion when it became redundant and to the point where it was not worthy of further discussion.***

- d. Presentations (None Scheduled)**
- e. 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).**
- f. Letters and Communications**

**g. Prior Meeting Minutes**

**i. Draft April 28, 2025 Business Meeting Minutes**

*Board Member Dean noted a typographical error on the minutes stating that Chairman Sirianni was present via Zoom whereas he was present in person, Mr. Costello stated that it would be corrected on the final copy.*

*Motion by Board Member Dean and seconded by Board Member Cole to accept the April 28, 2025 business meeting minutes with that noted.*

*Cole \_\_Y\_\_ Dean \_\_Y\_\_ Kimble \_\_Y\_\_ Larkin \_\_Y\_\_ Sirianni \_\_Y\_\_*

*Motion carried, 5-0.*

**2. Executive Director & General Counsel – Sean Costello**

*Mr. Costello discussed the substantial work in May devoted to grants and financing from EFC, including updating existing projects on EFC's Intended Use Plan. Staff are working on submitting documents needed to secure low-cost financing for the Calumet Avenue sewer project, and also putting together a list of projects for 2025 grant applications. These will include applications for funding to replace lead service lines, and to replace certain water mains, mostly 4" diameter mains and those with break histories.*

*Mr. Costello further noted that the return to disconnecting water service for non-payment has been relatively smooth, and cited excellent cooperation between various NFWB departments, including finance, meter shop, and water operations, which gets after-hours calls. He also expressed appreciation for assistance from Billing and Collections at City Hall.*

*Regular Operations & Maintenance meetings are again happening at the WTP with excellent results, some projects that have been languishing for years are moving forward, such as painting walls in the area of the filters. For the first time in a few years we have some petunias planted around the WTP sign, brightening up the building and putting a better face forward for the many residents and visitors who drive by when entering Niagara Falls.*

*The new confined space alternate procedure for entry into certain areas has been put into practice, initially with entries in WTP basins for cleaning. This procedure was developed with consultants from safety firm OSEA with substantial in-house work by Sanitary Engineer Margaret Bilquin and input from operations and maintenance staff.*

*Board Member Dean asked about the financial implications of the confined space alternate procedure. Mr. Costello stated the cost to hire an on-site rescue crew prior to the confined space alternate procedure was about \$3,600 per day. With the new procedure, we spent about \$2,500 with OSEA and \$850 for an air monitor. This procedure is used a minimum of eight times per year at the WTP, so it represents a substantial savings.*

### **3. Engineering – Douglas Williamson**

*Mr. Williamson discussed potential grant projects in more detail. On the wastewater side, he noted that the grant projects need to have a positive impact on water quality to improve odds of an award. A discussion then ensued regarding funding for the capital improvement plan, and how projects are financed, generally with grants and low-interest loans through EFC.*

### **4. Information Technology (IT) –Jonathan Joyce**

*Elton Mensah-Selby presented for IT. The SCALE computing hypervisor is on site, Mr. Joyce has returned from training, so configuration will begin now. The Mobile Device Management system is fully deployed, and we are on target to update all PCs to Windows 11 before end of support for Windows 10. Communication issues with Regulator 6C to the WWTP have been resolved, which had been a longstanding problem.*

### **5. Finance – Michael Smith**

- a. 2024 Audit Status Update**
- b. Bank Account Balance Report**
- c. Investment Account Report**
- d. Wilmington Trust Account Report**

*Mr. Smith provided an update on the shutoff program.*

*There are still some issues with returned checks, but with a warning posted to the payment website about using “checkless” checking accounts that is becoming less of a problem.*

*The audit is not yet done; Mr. Smith thought he would have everything done by now but has had trouble finding some information the auditors need.*

*Board Member Larkin asked what information is needed and what the obstacle is. Mr. Smith replied that accounts his predecessor had indicated were reconciled ended up being off, with several accounts not tying into prior year numbers. Mr. Smith needs to speak with the auditors to understand what the beginning number should be so he can make whatever adjustment is necessary.*

*Chairman Sirianni asked about further review of prior years’ financials. Mr. Costello replied that is the process that is underway now, with the problem being that Mr. Smith cannot find where the numbers used last year were sourced. Mr. Smith said he was not left “tracks” for where numbers came from, though he is creating binders that detail where to locate these numbers as he figures them out. Chairman Sirianni requested that Mr. Costello think about any additional help that could be brought in to get this audit done.*

*Board Member Cole asked what the deadline for the audit was; Mr. Smith replied March 31. He has contacted the State to let them know we would be late and was informed quite a few entities have not submitted the audit reports. Board Member Kimble stated that she was disappointed that Mr. Smith did not have details on potential penalties for not being on time.*

## **6. Administrative Services – Caleb Holman**

### **a. May 16, 2025 Personnel Actions**

#### **i. Job Specification – Meter Technician**

*Mr. Holman thanked the Board for the opportunity it has provided to him and has been meeting the team, consultants, and vendors. He is examining core HR processes and beginning compliance audits. An employee appreciation program has begun, with employees receiving birthday and work anniversary cards, and this has been very well received.*

*Mr. Holman reviewed the Personnel Actions sheet.*

*Board Member Larkin requested an amendment to the Personnel Actions sheet, stating that afternoon she was made aware of a request for the leave of absence for the Sr. Administrative Assistant to be extended through January 28, 2026. Board Member Larkin stated it is not something the Board normally votes on and asked Mr. Costello if the sheet needs to be updated now. Mr. Costello stated that he had just received the request at approximately 3:30 p.m. and would review it, if the extension is granted it will be noted on the next Personnel Action Sheet. Board Member Larkin asked if it was something the Board needs to approve, Mr. Costello stated that he just needs to review for compliance with the policy. Board Member Larkin stated that she thinks it is compliance with the policy because the leave was approved for January 28 and asked if it could be amended now. Mr. Costello noted that the Board does not grant leaves of absence, he does not anticipate an issue but needs to review it.*

*Motion by Board Member Dean and seconded by Board Member Cole to the May 16, 2025 Personnel Actions.*

*Cole \_\_Y\_\_ Dean \_\_Y\_\_ Kimble \_\_Y\_\_ Larkin \_\_Y\_\_ Sirianni \_\_Y\_\_*

*Motion carried, 5-0.*

## **7. Questions Regarding April 2025 Operations and Maintenance Report**

## 8. Resolutions

### 2025-05-001 – WWTP SEDIMENTATION BASIN CHAIN AND FLIGHT SPARE PARTS

- a. 2025-04-25 – Siewert Equipment Quotation for Brentwood Industries Chain and Flight Parts

*Motion by Board Member Dean and seconded by Board Member Cole to approve.*

*Cole \_\_Y\_\_ Dean \_\_Y\_\_ Kimble \_\_Y\_\_ Larkin \_\_Y\_\_ Sirianni \_\_Y\_\_*

*Motion carried, 5-0.*

### 2025-05-002 – PROCUREMENT OF MAIN PUMP VARIABLE FREQUENCY DRIVES

- a. 2025-05-16 – Rexel WWTP Main Pump VFDs Quotation

*Motion by Board Member Dean and seconded by Board Member Cole to approve.*

*Cole \_\_Y\_\_ Dean \_\_Y\_\_ Kimble \_\_Y\_\_ Larkin \_\_Y\_\_ Sirianni \_\_Y\_\_*

*Motion carried, 5-0.*

### 2025-05-003 – AUTHORIZING ADDITIONAL \$2,800 FOR PROCUREMENT OF REPLACEMENT WWTP CARBON FILTER BED TROUGHS

- a. 2025-05-14 - Warminster Fiberglass Quotation for Fiberglass Troughs Modified Per NFWB Requirements

*Board Member Dean asked if the \$2,800 is above the amount in the budget for this item. Mr. Costello replied that this is being paid from existing capital funds, so it does not exceed a budget line and is within the available funds.*

*Motion by Board Member Kimble and seconded by Board Member Dean to approve.*

*Cole \_\_Y\_\_ Dean \_\_Y\_\_ Kimble \_\_Y\_\_ Larkin \_\_Y\_\_ Sirianni \_\_Y\_\_*

*Motion carried, 5-0.*

### 2025-05-004 – AUTHORIZING BILL ADJUSTMENT FOR WATER THAT PASSED THROUGH TWO METERS

*Motion by Board Member Dean and seconded by Board Member Cole to approve.*

*Cole \_\_Y\_\_ Dean \_\_Y\_\_ Kimble \_\_Y\_\_ Larkin \_\_Y\_\_ Sirianni \_\_Y\_\_*

*Motion carried, 5-0.*

**2025-05-005 – AUTHORIZING BILL ADJUSTMENTS FOR EXEMPT NYS ENTITIES**

*Board Member Cole asked for some additional explanation. Mr. Costello noted these are not routine adjustments. The NYS Parks matter had a French drain to which water from the building was removed for winterization. The building drain was not closed last year, so the large bill represents mostly water going to the French drain and not to the sewer, the resolution would grant a one-time accommodation on the sewer charge. For NFTA, as a non-resident it is charged 260% of the resident rate. This one-time accommodation would charge NFTA the highest rate charged to a resident user in the City.*

*Motion by Board Member Dean and seconded by Board Member Cole to approve.*

*Cole \_\_Y\_\_ Dean \_\_Y\_\_ Kimble \_\_Y\_\_ Larkin \_\_Y\_\_ Sirianni \_\_Y\_\_*

*Motion carried, 5-0.*

**9. Unfinished/Old Business**

**10. New Business & Additional Items for Discussion**

**11. Executive Session (if needed)**

**12. Adjournment of Meeting**

*Motion by Board Member Dean and seconded by Board Member Cole to adjourn the meeting at 5:51 p.m.*

*Cole \_\_Y\_\_ Dean \_\_Y\_\_ Kimble \_\_Y\_\_ Larkin \_\_Y\_\_ Sirianni \_\_Y\_\_*

*Motion carried, 5-0.*