



MINUTES

Business Meeting of the Niagara Falls Water Board May 18, 2026 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. Minutes do not represent a complete summary of all matters discussed. Complete video recordings of meetings are posted online at: <https://tinyurl.com/nfwbMedia>.

1. Preliminary Matters

a. Call To Order

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

b. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America

c. Attendance: Cole Present, Dean Present, Kimble Present via Zoom, Sirianni Present, Weiss Absent.

d. Public Comments (all other topics): Speakers must register with the Secretary by 5:00 p.m. and are limited to three minutes per person – total time for all speakers may not exceed one hour.

e. Correspondence

f. Prior Meeting Minutes

i. Draft April 27, 2026 Business Meeting Minutes

Motion by Board Member Dean and seconded by Board Member Kimble to accept the April 27, 2026 business meeting minutes.

Cole Y Dean Y Kimble Y Sirianni Y Weiss Absent

Motion carried, 4-0.

2. Executive Director & General Counsel – Sean Costello

Mr. Costello noted that work will proceed next week on installation of an automatic transfer switch for the WTP, which will allow switching between power feeds in an emergency without needing to contact the high-voltage contractor. There may be brief interruptions to building power and telephones.

A major focus in May is working to update multiple projects on the EFC Intended Use Plan by the May 29 deadline, in order to keep these project costs eligible for State financing. Also working on grant applications.

Hazen and Sawyer have made their recommendations following an evaluation of corrosion control at the WTP. New LCRI rules come into effect in 2028, lowering the lead action level from 15 to 10 micrograms per liter and requiring 5th liter sampling. Water leaves the WTP lead free, but can be exposed to lead in customer-owned water service lines and household plumbing.

To prepare for the new Federal regulations, the NFWB needs to optimize its corrosion control, which essentially is deliberately formed pipe scale to lock in lead and prevent it from getting into drinking water. Hazen and Sawyer was retained for this project, and has analyzed plant data since it began production, conducted jar testing, and analyzed scale on lead service lines.

Hazen recommends that we replace the poly-orthophosphate blend we currently use for corrosion control with phosphoric acid. They also recommend that we renew/refurbish our caustic chemical control system to control pH in finished water and the sulfuric acid process to control raw water pH. These systems were part of the original plant design but were not used, so they require investment to put back online. Hazen also recommends we explore replacing filter media and whether repairs are needed for the filter underdrains.

The estimate for all of this work is in the neighborhood of \$5 million and WIIA grant funding will be pursued to cover much of the cost.

Board Member Cole noted that he was with Meter Shop employee John Paul after work hours, and Mr. Paul identified a contractor using a hydrant without a meter and addressed the issue with the contractor. Board Member Cole commended this dedication.

3. Finance – Deborah Ziolkowski

- a. Bank Account Balance Report**
- b. Invested Funds Balance Report**
- c. Wilmington Trust Account Report**
- d. Budget Performance Reports**
 - i. Revenue**
 - ii. Sewer**
 - iii. Water**
 - iv. Board**

Ms. Ziolkowski's department has been very busy, including with the shutoff program. Meter Shop personnel now are scheduled to work until 4:00 p.m., in order to restore service during the hours when City Billing and Collection is accepting payments.

Ms. Ziolkowski provided an overview of the financial reports. Revenues, specifically from industry, are declining. Expenses are under control.

The new online payment system is going well and seeing rapid adoption. Fliers will be included in the next water bills mailed to each district to help spread the word.

A new accountant, Nick, has started.

4. Administrative Services – Caleb Holman

- a. May 18, 2026 Personnel Actions**

Motion by Board Member Dean and seconded by Board Member Cole to approve Line Item 1 on the May 18, 2026 Personnel Actions, authorization to hire a WWTP Operator Trainee.

Cole Y Dean Y Kimble Y Sirianni Y Weiss Absent

Motion carried, 4-0.

Mr. Holman updated the Board on training conducted and scheduled over the past month.

Health insurance renewal negotiations were a focus over the past month. Ultimately, the renewal premium increase was negotiated down from 14.5% to 8.7%.

After almost a year with the new Workers' Compensation carrier, Comp Alliance, we have been working closely with their loss control staff and implementing recommendations. We also have had less injury exposure than in some prior years. We approached Comp Alliance to renegotiate the rate for the upcoming year, which is year two of our two-year agreement. Comp Alliance has agreed to reduce our premium by 2.5% and to lock in the reduced rate with another two-year agreement, which will be presented to the Board next month.

5. Engineering – Douglas Williamson

Mr. Williamson provided updates on a number of projects and bids. He reported that there were no WWTP permit violations in April. WWTP oxidizer use remains well below typical and is trending under budget, though conditions may change in the summer when wastewater temperatures increase.

6. Outside Infrastructure Updates – Michael Eagler, Sr.

Mr. Eagler informed the Board that the developer of a seven-story apartment complex to be located on 1st Street has agreed to repair a collapse in the sanitary sewer main near where they wish to connect to the sewer. The NFWB will supply parts if needed. This benefits the developer and represents a major cost savings for the NFWB, as the 14-foot depth of the sewer in that location would have required use of an outside contractor. Mr. Eagler estimates the savings at \$55,000 based on similar prior projects.

For the ongoing West Rivershore water main replacement project, we are evaluating a request by the contractor to use open trench installation in the area where horizontal directional drilling was planned. Buried debris make the original drilling plan much less feasible. Mr. Costello is waiting for clarity on potential changes to the contract cost and DOH approval before authorizing a change.

The 44-inch trunk sewer collapse on the Goodyear parcel has been excavated. The depth is 26 feet, which requires engineered shoring. The collapse extends beyond the original 16-by-20 shoring and additional shoring will be installed next week so that the impacted area can be fully uncovered and assessed for repair.

7. Information & Operational Technology (IT & OT) – Jonathan Joyce or Elton Mensah-Selby

Mr. Joyce advised that the department is continuing work to prepare for upcoming NYS water and wastewater system cybersecurity regulations. This work includes deploying network switches, uninterruptible power supplies, backup solutions, and two-factor authentication. He is continuing to work with Ms. Ziolkowski to apply for a cybersecurity grant from NYS.

8. February 2026 Operations and Maintenance Report

a. 2026-05-14 - E3communications Government Affairs Activity Report

Mr. Costello noted that Senator Gillibrand has included the Beech Avenue tank project on her list of Congressionally Directed Spending projects. On June 5, Senator Schumer's WNY regional staff will be visiting the WWTP for a tour and a presentation on the biological conversion project.

9. Resolutions

2026-05-001 - AWARD BID FOR BEECH AVENUE WATER STORAGE TANK PUMP STATION

- a. **2026-05-13 - CPL Award Recommendation and Bid Tabulation for Beech Ave Pump Station**

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

Cole Y Dean Y Kimble Y Sirianni Y Weiss Absent

Motion carried, 4-0.

2026-05-002 - AWARD BID FOR REPLACEMENT OF 20 INCH WATERMAIN FROM ONTARIO STREET TO BEECH AVENUE

- a. **2026-05-13 - CPL Award Recommendation and Bid Tabulation for 20 Inch Watermain Replacement Ontario to Beech**

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

Cole Y Dean Y Kimble Y Sirianni Y Weiss Absent

Motion carried, 4-0.

10. Unfinished/Old Business

11. New Business & Additional Items for Discussion

12. Executive Session (if needed)

13. Adjournment of Meeting

Motion by Board Member Kimble and seconded by Board Member Cole to adjourn the meeting at 5:41 p.m..

Cole Y Dean Y Kimble Y Sirianni Y Weiss Absent

Motion carried, 4-0.