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Dyster Trying to Help Workers After Sudden Plant Shutdown

By: Tony Farina

Analysis

Mayor Paul Dyster is working with state and federal labor officials to try and help the 100 workers affected by the sudden "shutdown" of the Global Specialty Metals silicon production plant in Niagara Falls, effective last Sunday, two days before the beginning of the new year.

"The company did not give the required notice to the local facility and workers as required by the federal WARN Act," said Dyster referring to the Worker Adjust-



ment and Retraining Notification Act which requires employers with more than 100 or more employees to provide at least 60 calendar days advance written notice of a plant closing at a single

site.

"They didn't do that," said the mayor, "and I believe they (Global Specialty Metals) are liable for 90 days of wages and benefits to the workers under the WARN (Cont. on pg. 2)

North Tonawanda City Clerk / Treasurer Dan Quinn to Return to Deputy County Clerk Position

Deputy County Clerk Parish to become City Clerk / Treasurer

By: Nicholas D. D'Angelo

North Tonawanda Clerk/Treasurer Daniel R. Quinn has announced that he will be leaving his current position to return to the office of the Niagara County Clerk. In a corresponding move, Niagara County Deputy Clerk for Administration Matthew L. Parish will become the North Tonawanda Clerk/Treasurer, succeeding



(Cont. on pg. 6)

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Plant Shutdown Cont.

Act."

Dyster said his administration is working with all of the parties involved, state and federal, and including the United Steelworkers Union, and he expects several claims to be filed to seek benefits for the workers who lost their jobs without proper notice.

The help for the workers could be very significant, said Dyster, possibly as much as \$10,000 in benefits, including relocation assistance.

Dyster said the sudden closing caught the city by surprise, and he also believes the local operators of the Highland Avenue plant were also unaware of the shutdown until it happened.

"We had been working with them on grant applications," said Dyster, including a new furnace. "I think we were all caught by surprise by this announcement."

Ferroglobe PLC, the London-based owner, made the announcement last Thursday, saying in a statement "the decision to suspend production at the Niagara Falls plant was difficult given the unquestioned commitment of the plant's employees."

Ferroglobe CEO Pedro Larrea said the shutdown follows its efforts to adjust production "to optimize utilization rates and logistics to customers" and to "maximize economic efficiency."

Dyster said an unfavorable ruling from the International Trade Commission last spring on efforts to seek protection from unfair competition also worked against the silicon producer.

"Australia, Brazil, and Norway were dumping by selling below cost," said Dyster of the ruling that found

that silicon producers were not being materially injured by the dumping and unfair subsidized competition, including from Kazakhstan, the largest economy in Central Asia.

Global Specialty Metals was seen as a key piece in the efforts in New York to produce solar grade silicon and the Niagara Falls plant was reopened amid significant fanfare in 2009, receiving tax breaks and low-cost hydro-power -- which had since disappeared.

"We have been talking to Global here about modernization, not closing," said a disappointed Mayor Dyster who again said the focus now is on getting help including wages and benefits to the 100 workers affected by the shutdown.

Lost wages were not a problem for former executive chairman Alan Kestenbaum of Ferroglobe PLC who not long ago resigned after merging his North America-focused Global Specialty Metals with Ferroglobe after Ferroglobe borrowed money to pay Kestenbaum a \$30 million golden parachute as part of the deal. The golden parachute was bankrolled by a junk-bond deal, according to published reports by a Bloomberg Gadfly columnist.

Niagara Falls is facing its fair share of economic challenges, and the loss of 100 jobs almost on the eve of the new year is another blow to the local economy. In this case, it appears the Dyster people were hands-on in trying to make it work for Global Specialty Metals in the Cataract City and forces beyond the control of local and state officials appear to have been at work in the sudden shutdown.

Chris Robins to Run in County's Fifth Legislative District

Former Niagara Falls City Council member Chris Robins, (D) Niagara Falls has announced his intent to seek election to the Niagara County Legislature in the 5th District for 2020-21. The fifth district seat, which encompasses Town of Niagara, along with the Deveaux and Hyde Park sections of Niagara Falls is currently held by Jason A. Zona, who announced recently he would not be seeking a fifth term in the county post. Robins, an elementary school teacher residing in Deveaux served on the city council from 2006-2009 and choose not to seek re-election at that time, after one term so that he could spend more time with his wife and two young sons. Since that time, almost annually, Robins has been vetted to return to elected office, but he feels now the timing is right to get involved once again in local government.

"I am excited at the opportunity of serving the community in a different capacity, this time in the County Legislature Robins stated. When I decided not to seek re-election to the city council, this city was in a different place. With my sons now teenagers, I want to teach them the importance of public service and spending the last ten years seeing from the outside all of the issues this area has faced, I want to be part of the solution. It's long past time for the county play a larger role in developing Niagara Falls."

Since the time he chose not to seek re-election to the city council, Robins has stayed very active locally in the community serving on the boards of Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, Niagara Falls Urban Renewal Agency, NFC Development Corporation, Niagara Junior Purple Eagles and Whirlpool Park Little league, while working as a full time elementary educator.

Zona, the current legislator and Niagara County Democratic Chairman added "Chris was an extremely popular councilman, and for years, many people have tried

to get him back involved politically, myself included. He knows how to get things done. I know he is the best candidate for this position, and I'm thrilled he's running for the seat. We promised a strong slate of candidates for county office in 2019, and I think this shows we're serious about that."

The fifth district encompasses both neighborhoods of Niagara Falls, as well as the entire Town of Niagara. Town Democratic Chair Geraldine Carpenter mentioned "I remember Mr. Robins from his time on the city council. Looking at his resume, he's clearly stayed involved and is extremely qualified to represent us in county government. We look forward to working closely with him in the years ahead."

The county legislature, which has been dominated by a GOP super majority for well over a decade faces numerous challenges in the coming years. With serious questions on how much federal and state dollars the county will continue to receive, pension costs likely to inflate, infrastructure costs going up and continued annual property tax increases, the county needs to step up its economic development efforts and reduce discretionary spending.

Robins added "I'm obviously familiar with the mandates levied upon us from Albany from my time in city government. With so many unknowns regarding Medicaid as well as pension costs, and long time infrastructure issues in the county still on hold, we can't keep going to the property tax payers to foot the bill. I hope to lead on economic development efforts, specifically in Niagara Falls and Town of Niagara where there is so much opportunity wasted. The only way to have long term sustained success here is to grow our local economy and I look forward to working with all local officials, as a team to get this done. I'm extremely excited at the opportunity to serve as a county legislator"

NIAGARA



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Niagara Falls: BankOnBuffalo, City Hall (basement), The Como (restaurant, deli, & airport locations), DiCamillo Bakery (all locations), Frankie's Donuts, John Duke Center, Key Bank (800 Main St.), Memorial Medical Center (entrance to lobby), Michael's Restaurant, Marketside Restaurant, Mom's Restaurant, Niagara Towers, Niagara Falls Family Court, Niagara Falls Police Station, Niagara Falls Public Library (both locations), Rite Aid (7804 Buffalo Ave. & 4407 Military Rd.), Save-A-Lot, Spallino Towers, Supermarket Liquor, Tops (all locations), Tim Hortons (all locations), Wedge Liquors, & Wrobel Towers.

North Tonawanda: Bishop Gibbons, Broadway Hotel, Budwey's Market, Carousel Park Apartments, City Hall, DMV, Kimek's Tavern, Lou's Diner, Platter's Chocolates, Public Library, Olympia Restaurant, Tops, Roman Café & Save-A-Lot

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Wilson: Lakeside Market

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Ken Hamilton

The representatives from the Renae Kimble "minority-majority" district are seemingly incapable of selecting good leadership, and will likely continue being the poorest, least educated district in the city. That's not to say that the other districts understand government, especially county government, much better.

But how could it improve when the district was surgically cut out of the heart of the inner-city in a way that would hobble together not only the poorest of African-Americans, but of whites also.

Ultimately, the district has never been more than marginally blacker than it is white, and that is only because many bi-racial members consider themselves black.

Sadly, because American voters tend to vote for the persons either most like themselves or most like they project themselves to be, the 4th District leaves the electorate the option of electing to public office the poorest, least educated members among them to serve – and I say "serve" in the loosest of terms.

And in Legislator Owen Steed, we do, indeed, have representation that is far worse than even his predecessor, whom incidentally was highly-schooled.

From what I understand, Steed was the one that had the street-facing perimeter landscape boulders removed that were placed to protect

Form Over Function and Another Misdeed of Legislator Owen Steed

the children that played at the renovated playground at the intersection of Centre Avenue and Aaron Griffin Way. He replaced them with a 4-foot chain link fence, paid for by the county. That intersection is one that is by the abandoned community center at that corner -- an intersection that is highly subjected to drivers ignoring the stop signs and speeding through it.

Ironically, not much more than a week after Steed's chain link fence was placed, Steed's folly was demonstrated when a woman sped a very modest automobile drove through an 8-foot fence that surrounds the parkland area of Tulip Co., also known as the old Prestolite Company on Beech and Highland avenues.

She somehow crossed the snowmelt softened soil of the park, dipped down into a drainage ditch some 60-feet away and back up out of it, then continuing more than another 60-feet to apparently slam into the back of a parked pickup truck, pushing it out of the way and on into the side of 2nd parked car, hitting it hard enough to not only drive it into a 3rd car next to it.

She lodged her small automobile into the 2nd car so hard that a tow truck had to jerk it off to extricate it. Witnesses said that the woman exited the car unaided prior the fire department's arrival. The event apparently happened just minutes before some of the employees' business at the plant had been completed.

A couple of them expressed relief that had they arrived at the lot just 5-minutes before, they would

have likely been seriously injured, or worse.

Despite the drainage gully being there, had either the park or Tulip's visitors lot were lined with the landscape boulders that Steed had removed from the Kiddy Park but a few blocks away, regardless of when the employees or visitors had been in the parking lot they would have been relatively safe – but what of the children playing in the Kiddy Park if or, more likely, when something similar happens there?

It's not being fatalist in so saying. It was just a couple of years ago that the 8-foot fence surrounding the nearby swimming pool was damaged when a car apparently speeding down Garden Avenue jumped a curb, knocked over a decorative steel trash can and stopped just feet before making one of the biggest splashes of that hit-and-run driver's life.

Is the safety of the children important or not?

Steed is not only on the board of the Niagara Falls Housing Authority, but at the time that he was the Center Court resident representative, a resident who lives a few apartments away from the one in which Steed lives in the public housing project asked Steed to try to get stop signs placed at the intersection of Beech Ave and 17th Street so that the children could safely cross from the project to the Kalfas Magnet School.

After months of waiting for Steed to do so, she gave up and asked a common citizen that she know to help her get the signs. He got the signs placed less than



2-weeks after her asking. But in the citizen's discussion with the Traffic Committee on why no stop signs had previously been placed, he was told that his was the 1st request that they had heard.

But poor, seemingly witless Steed cannot take all of the blame for his apparent ineptitude. What steed sees is what Steed does; and what he sees in a city where "form often takes precedence over function" is that former NFHA Executive Director Stephanie Cowart initiated tearing down perfectly serviceable and functional 'brick and mortar' public housing – whose quality is still demonstrated at the sister project of Packard Court – and building what some consider to be nicely-formed single generation "wood and vinyl" housing, not only in its place, but also planted the project atop the old city dump.

So then, logically, why not take away the safety and permanence of stone boulders for our children and replace it with a flimsy and relatively high-maintenance, but so-called good-looking fencing that perfectly complements the project itself – the safety of the children be damned!

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THE CRIME

WEEKLY HEADLINES

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 7-Eleven on 82nd and Niagara Falls Blvd. in the evening hours of Tuesday, December 25th, for an attempted armed robbery. According to police, the suspect entered the 7-Eleven with a gun and pointed it at the store clerk before demanding gun. Police say he left his gun behind.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the DiCamillo Bakery on Linwood Avenue in the early morning hours of Wednesday, December 25th (Christmas) for an armed robbery.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 7-Eleven located at 1504 Pine Avenue for an attempted armed robbery involving a gun.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center in the early morning hours of Saturday, December 29th for a walk-in stabbing victim. Police are continuing to investigate the incident.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to Mr. Ventry's Pizza on Niagara Falls Blvd. in the evening hours of Friday, December 28th, for reports of a man that began beating up his own vehicle. According to reports, the man repeatedly kicked and punched his car in the parking lot after it broke down. When police arrived, the man was "rolling around and using vulgar language" toward officers. He proceeded to tell officers that bystanders who called police were "the devil." Dino Potalivo, 55, of 98th Street, was thereafter arrested for disorderly conduct.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center after a woman told officers she was held against her will at a 19th Street apartment for three days and

repeatedly raped by multiple men. According to reports, the woman, who had been staying at the Niagara Falls Community Missions, met a woman named "Amanda" who took her to a 19th Street apartment where they used cocaine and marijuana. However, after using the drugs she was tied up and was not allowed to leave. Police are continuing to investigate the incident.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to a robbery at the 7-Eleven at 1504 Pine Avenue in the early morning hours of Sunday, December 30th. According to reports, the man stated he had a gun and acted as if he did but did not actually display one.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to an elderly 20th Street resident in the afternoon hours of Thursday, December 27th, after receiving a call that a care aid stole her vehicle. The elderly resident, who was recovering from open-heart surgery, allowed the aid to use the Ford Escape to run errands. On this particular occasion, however, the aid did not return with the vehicle.

-Niagara Falls Police and Fire responded to the 2400 block of Woodlawn Avenue in the early afternoon hours of Tuesday, January 1st, for an assault with serious injuries.

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North Tonawanda

NT Clerk/Treasurer Cont.

Quinn. Quinn will assume his position effective January 8, 2019.

"While I have thoroughly enjoyed my time serving the residents of North Tonawanda as their clerk/treasurer, I am very excited to work with County Clerk Joe Jastrzemski and his great team at the clerk's office," said Quinn.

Parish stated that he expects to hit the ground running in his new position, and hopes to institute several new initiatives for residents of the Lumber City in the near future.

"As a lifelong resident of North Tonawanda, I am looking forward to the opportunity to bring a new vision and perspective to the city," said Parish.

"I plan to work with County Clerk Joe Jastrzemski to bring a satellite passport office to our com-

munity, and I would like to examine and expand programs available to our veterans."

North Tonawanda Common Council President Erik Zadzilka said he anticipates the council to appoint Parish at the council's reorganizational meeting on January 2nd, with Parish's appointment to become effective on the January 8th.

"While we are sorry to see Dan go, we look forward to working with Matt Parish," said Zadzilka. "Matt brings significant budget knowledge to the position, along with a great deal of experience and enthusiasm, and we are looking forward to working collaboratively with Matt for the betterment of the North Tonawanda community."

Lady Golfers 'Up in Arms' in North Tonawanda



Brendan McDonough

Tee times being cut in half have women across North Tonawanda up in arms.

For the past five years Brendan McGinnis and her friends have gotten together at the Deerwood Golf Course on Monday evenings. Team captain Jean says she got a call on or around November 28th telling her to move the group's tee time and to split the league into two different groups. Both of which would have different start times. The reason they say was to free up tee times for walk-on golfers.

McGinnis says it's not fair that her league was ordered to be restructured after five years of problem free nights.

"This is an 18-week league and we pay a \$480 season fee to the City of North Tonawanda to guarantee our tee times," said McGinnis. "This has been paid consistently and on time for five years with no problems. We are always on time and sometimes we even get sent out early due to the availability of the course."

In addition, McGinnis says they are a mature group of women who respect the game and the course they play on. What's worse, she says, is that other leagues have formed after hers and she wonders why things have not been restricted based on seniority.

"How was our league chosen," said McGinnis. "There are currently forty-one golf leagues and only five of them are women. We are the only working women golf league in the City of North Tonawanda that plays in the evenings. We are consistent

revenue to the golf course as well as the restaurant and bar."

Common Council President Eric Zadzilka says he reached out to the group to try to come up with a solution.

"Did you get my email? In it I suggested that Alex would be at the meeting. He may be able to answer some of your questions. But what I did not hear back was if we could set up a meeting and if we would not answer your questions that to come up with a plan to try and accommodate you in a better manner," said Zadzilka.

Director of North Tonawanda's Youth and Park Department Alex Domaradzki says the group was not singled out but the City is just looking for a way to free up time for those individuals who are not in a league to be able to enjoy the course.

"First off you are not being singled out in any way," said Domaradzki. "The reality is that we have a municipal public golf course that is essentially being privatized by the enormous number of leagues that we have playing. Basically, if you are not in a league, it is very difficult to get on the course."

He says it's not just this group of women but in the twenty-nine leagues that play Monday through Thursday they are asking twenty-three of them to make adjustments.

The goal is to condense 27-holes into 18-holes and free up a 9-hole course for those golfers who want to walk on and play.

McGinnis says she plans to continue to meet with City officials to come up with a workable solution for her and the league of lady golfers.

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Fees Up for Vendors at NT City Market



Brendan McDonough

Vendors at the North Tonawanda City Market will soon be paying more. Last week members of the Common Council voted to increase fees. City Market Clerk Dale Rodgers requested the increase from 175 dollars to 225 for half a year rental. The move comes as the City wants more oversight in order to allow customers to use SNAP benefits. Rodgers also justified the increase by saying that other area farmers markets, charge more than North Tonawanda.

In order to qualify for SNAP benefits, the farmers must grow a

certain percentage of the fruits and vegetables that they sell. It's a common practice that some of the vendors purchase some of the fruits and vegetables that they sell. As a result, Rodgers now performs spot inspections to make sure and to verify that the farmers are growing, what they are actually selling. That increase travel and responsibility has made his part time job more difficult and lawmakers agreed that in the future they may need to increase the stipend that Rodgers gets to account for the increase travel time.

The fee increase is for vendors who rent space during the summer months. The fee for year round rental remains at \$300.

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Health and Wellness For the New Year

The start of the New Year also marks the start of a focus on being healthier. We hope to educate you about the eight dimensions of wellness and enhance your own personal wellness. We will provide tips and strategies you can apply to your own life and the different roles you may fill.

Health

Health and wellness are not the same although these terms are often used interchangeably. Health is typically thought of in terms of the absence or presence of disease. It is often defined by objective yes/no responses. Are you sick? Have you been diagnosed with a medical condition? Are you currently taking medication to manage a chronic condition? While the answers to these questions may provide a snapshot into your general physical health, they do little to determine how "well" of a life you are leading.

Wellness

Now consider the following questions. What is the quality of your sleep? How healthful and nutritious are your meals and snacks? How often do you exercise? The answers to these questions may not be as cut and dry as the previous health questions. They likely require an explanation or a scale to answer, but they may also lead to a panoramic view of your overall, holistic sense of health, better known as wellness. Wellness is a multidimensional, holistic, evolving state and process of achieving your full potential. It is subjective, personalized, individual, cultural and situational. One's own sense of wellness may change based on experiences, age, life stage and values. Wellness is about balance, moderation and avoiding social comparison. It is comprised of the following dimensions: physical, social, intellectual, emotional, mental, financial, vocational and spiritual.

There are many different paths to follow heading to better health and wellness and you should take the path that makes the most sense for you. The journey is comprised of eight wellness dimensions and people are at varying levels on each dimension. For example, while someone may have a very strong sense of spiritual wellness, they may be lacking in their emotional wellness. Another person may feel secure in their financial wellness, but their physical wellness could use some improvement.

All aboard! Join us as we embark on this journey to become healthier, happier and well-balanced Laborers leading successful lives and doing our best each and every day.

**MATRIMONIAL LAW
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CHAPTER 7 & CHAPTER 13
CRIMINAL
DEFENSE
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SILVER PACKAGE (\$90 MONTHLY)

2 JOBS PER MONTH FOR TOTAL
OF 2 HOURS

- CLEANING GUTTERS
- FIXING WINDOWS OR SCREENS
- FIXING MINOR PLUMBING LEAK
- REPLACING KITCHEN FAUCET
- REPLACING LIGHT BULBS
- UNPLUG SINKS
- CHANGE OR REPLACE FURNACE FILTER
- HANGING CURTAINS/BLINDS/PICTURES
- RAKE YARD
- CHANGE LOCKS (2 PER CALL)
- REPLACE TOILET SEAT

TREATING YOUR HOME AS
OUR OWN SINCE 2002

GOLD PACKAGE (\$115 MONTHLY)

2 JOBS PER MONTH FOR TOTAL
OF 2 HOURS

- INCLUDES ALL FROM SILVER PACKAGE
- INSTALL WINDOW (2 PER CALL)
- UNPLUG TOILET
- FIX SWITCHES OR OUTLETS
- REPLACE SINK • CLEAN FURNACE
- REPLACE SMOKE DETECTOR OR CO (4)
- RE-ROUTE CABLE FOR TV
- FIX HOLE IN WALL (UP TO 12")
- REPLACE MIRROR
- MOVE FURNITURE IN HOUSE
- ASSEMBLE STORE • FIX SIDING BOUGHT PRODUCTS
- INSTALL DRYWALL (3 SHEETS UNFINISHED)
- FIX MINOR FENCE PROBLEMS
- REPLACE INTERIOR DOOR

PLATINUM PACKAGE (\$135 MONTHLY)

3 JOBS PER MONTH FOR TOTAL
OF 3 HOURS

- INCLUDES ALL FROM SILVER & GOLD PACKAGES
- INSTALL CEILING FAN (WIRING MUST BE PRESENT)
- REPLACE HOT WATER TANK
- REPLACE EXTERIOR DOOR
- FIX GARAGE DOOR
- JUMP START VEHICLE
- PAINT ROOM (12' BY 15')
- CLEAN SEWER
- REPLACE SHOWER FIXTURES
- CLEAN WINDOWS (4, DOUBLE HUNG)
- REPLACE LIGHT FIXTURE (2 PER CALL)
- FIX ROOF LEAKS (1 SQUARE)
- INTERIOR PAINTING (1 HOUR)
- VEHICLE TOW WITHIN 15 MILES
- REPLACE TOILET
- FIX TILE (ONE SQUARE)