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# THE NIAGARA REPORTER

**FREE**

October 31st, 2018 - November 6th, 2018

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**FREE**

**Robert M.  
Restaino**

*Attorney  
at  
Law*



**285-8185**

## Niagara Falls Officials Fighting to Avoid Financial Train Wreck

**By: Tony Farina**

With no casino cash next year, dwindling reserves, and disagreement among elected officials on how to close a projected \$14-million budget shortfall, Niagara Falls is facing a potential financial train wreck that is gaining speed with each passing day.

Councilmember Kenny Tompkins, who is among lawmakers not yet sold on a garbage user fee to raise \$3.1 million to help close the deficit next year along with a \$12.3 million loan from the state, concedes "yes, the train is definitely out there running."

Tompkins says Mayor Paul Dyster's



team is all out to convince wary lawmakers about the need for a \$168 garbage user fee with only Chairman Andrew Touma on board as of this writing. At least three of the five city councilmembers must

(Cont. on pg. 2)

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## Mayor Pappas Leads Ceremony Unveiling Children's Remembrance Garden

**By: Brendan McDonough**



On Wednesday, October 24th, 2018, city leaders along with friends, family and loved ones took part in the opening ceremony of the new Children's Remembrance Garden.

The park is located in Brauer Park - right across from City Hall - and is designed for people of all ages to

(Cont. on pg. 10)



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# NIAGARA FALLS

(Contd from cover)

vote to even schedule a public hearing on the user fee to even consider enacting the new revenue stream to the sinking city, and after this week, there will only be two more council meetings before the budget deadline of Dec. 1. Time is growing very short.

"I need more information," says Tompkins. "They tell me I'll get the information but as of yet, I don't have it. The mayor has proposed a budget that includes a garbage user fee that is not yet approved and a loan from the state on a promise from the governor, assuming he gets re-elected. What about 2020?"

Councilmember Chris Voccio is also wary of the garbage user fee, suggesting the city needs to look at cutting expenses while Touma says the user fee, as it does in neighboring communities, could help provide the recurring revenue stream the city sorely needs with the uncertainty over the slot revenue returning any time soon, if ever.

All this wrangling over dealing with the crisis is playing out as the Seneca Nation and the state prepare for arbitration in December over the Senecas' refusal to pay any more slot revenue to the state saying it is no longer required under the compact, with the last payment coming in mid-2017.

Under the compact, the payments to the state ended in 2016 and the Seneca Nation's new president, with the election on the same day as the state's, will likely stay the course and go to arbitration. The



[Not a real photo] Gov. Andrew Cuomo drove the train on negotiations with the Seneca Nation and somehow forget to negotiate any payment to the city (or state) with the Senecas when he renewed their right to operate a tax free casino, stores and a gas station in downtown Niagara Falls. The inept mayor of Niagara Falls, Paul Dyster forget to even ask about the deal. "I was in the caboose baby," he might have just as well said.

next Seneca president is expected to be Ricky Armstrong and sources say he will likely continue the current Seneca opposition to paying any more money to the state.

Meanwhile, we have been told by sources close to the Senecas that the state has missed at least one filing deadline on the December arbitration, suggesting there's more interest in the governor's re-election efforts than the gaming crisis gripping Niagara Falls. The governor's press office did not respond to questions about missing a filing deadline or anything else about the arbitration.

If Cuomo wins re-election next month as expected and returns to power for a fourth term as the new Seneca president takes over, it will be a likely battle for control of that speeding train heading to Niagara Falls with the fate of the city hanging in the balance.

Meanwhile, Niagara Falls is fighting for survival against overwhelming odds, much of it the result of using casino cash to balance budgets for the last four years, money that is no longer available and may never be available again.

Touma makes a strong argument for the garbage user fee at this point as the high degree of uncertainty over the arbitration outcome makes it paramount for Niagara Falls to find a way to cut costs and increase revenue, and a recurring revenue stream seems like it is needed.

Nothing short of a state victory at arbitration will make Niagara Falls whole again without enormous sacrifice all around. As Cuomo and the Seneca president fight for the wheel of that speeding train, Niagara Falls braces for the hit.

All of this comes with a looming mayoral election next year. Stay tuned!

## Nick Casal Returning to Ring in December

Niagara Falls boxer Nick Casal has signed to fight junior middleweight Rick Graham on Dec. 14 in Houston, Texas, his first bout since scoring a unanimous decision over Antonio Fernandez in May of 2016 at the Seneca Niagara Casino.

"I'm very excited to be getting back in the ring," said Casal, "and Graham is a good opponent. It should be a good test."

Casal, whose ring career was derailed when he was beaten with a hammer in a domestic dispute in May of 2012 shortly before he was scheduled to box in a nationally televised card from the Seneca Casino, has a record of 23 - 4 and is hoping the Houston fight will kick-start his comeback effort.

Nick "hands of gold" Casal was a three-time national champion but his promising professional career was cut short by what happened outside the ring. Despite the setbacks, Casal remains a hard-working boxer eager to re-establish himself as a top contender again.

Western New York has been without a serious boxer since the glory days of heavyweight Joe Mesi whose own ring career was cut short by brain bleeding, forcing him to retire undefeated and give up his quest to bring a world championship to the area.

## NIAGARA



## REPORTER

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# Piccirillo has Track Record of Harebrained Ideas & Dangerous Incompetence; Will Make Perfect Successor for Dyster

**Frank Parlato**

*Analysis*

He is a man to match the mountains – or at least accidentally demolish them.

Seth Piccirillo is running for mayor of Niagara Falls and is expected to get the endorsement of the current mayor, Paul Dyster.

That in itself may demolish his chances of winning.



Speaking of demolitions, I recall a day in May 2015, when Piccirillo accidentally demolished a home at 1338 Centre Ave. in Niagara Falls.

The house collapsed after his crew - from Isaiah 61, the not-for-profit corp. he ran, that was supposed to rehab homes and sell them to homeowners while, at the same time, teaching students building trades - removed the bearing walls.

The roof fell into the basement as walls bowed outwards. Fortunately, none of the students were in the house. A neighbor called the fire department to tell them the house was falling.

"Yes, the roof ended up in the basement," Acting Code Enforcement Director Louis Fontana told the Reporter then.

When questioned about the work on the house, Fontana said, "They took out interior partitions and the roof pulled the walls out. They demolished support walls - everything was gone. They must have pulled supports



that were holding up the rafters."

In addition to taxpayer money spent to fix [ruin] the house, it cost taxpayers an additional \$34,222 to clean up the mess Piccirillo's team created.

The house was formerly owned by a city firefighter who donated it to charity to help the city. Nice try dude.

Piccirillo assumed management of Isaiah 61 after its founder and executive director James Haid suddenly left town about eight months before the house collapsed. The public learned about his departure from the Reporter.

Back on September 15, 2014, Dyster wanted to use \$500,000 in casino cash to renovate an abandoned fire hall on Highland Ave. for a new store and school for Isaiah 61. The council approved the request. That was four years ago, and the old firehouse is still not renovated. Though it is believed the money has all been spent.

Back when Dyster made the request for \$500,000 from the council, both Dyster and Piccirillo knew Haid had left Isaiah 61 to take a new job in Utica - but they didn't bother to tell the council that the longtime director and founder of Isaiah 61 had left or that they



planned to let Piccirillo take over operations.

Informed City Hall sources say Piccirillo underestimated the condition of the firehouse walls and the firehouse - like the house on Centre St. - may collapse at any time. That's why work on the firehouse stopped after hundreds of thousands in taxpayer money was spent.

Let's add up the score: Piccirillo and Dyster got at least \$500,000 to fix an old abandoned fire house. They never fixed the firehouse.

They have, as far as we know, been unable to fix a single home and place a homeowner in one since Piccirillo took over Isaiah 61. Piccirillo did however accidentally demolish one.

In order to run for mayor next year, Dyster and Piccirillo conspired to switch his pay



"I'm a community development director, not a competent renovator!" The first house Seth Piccirillo renovated fell down. Fortunately no one was in the home at the time.

from federally-funded Community Development to city-funded Code Enforcement.

To obscure the fact that Piccirillo lacks qualifications or accreditations to be Director of Code Enforcement, Dyster and Piccirillo conspired to appoint him as "acting director" on the fiction that they will seek a legally qualified person to become director.

Meantime Piccirillo skirts the Hatch Act - which restricts how federally-funded employees may be employed if they run for municipal office. Dyster did this by a book-keeping sleight of hand. Dyster's proposed 2019 budget calls for Piccirillo to leave his \$82,000 job at Community Development for an \$82,000 job as Acting Code Enforcement Director.

If you like lack of transparency and self-serving tricks - a government designed to serve the people employed in it over the people who pay for it - while all the time telling anyone who will listen about how good, great and noble they are - the exact kind of government Dyster has been operating for 11 years, you could not do better than Seth Piccirillo.

Plus, you get a little more with Piccirillo - you also get hare brained ideas at taxpayer expense.

He took hundreds of thousands of dollars

to pay college grads to live here. Although it was a complete waste of taxpayer money, it did get us worldwide press as the city that was so desperate it had to pay people to live here.

He decided to paint abandoned buildings in the city with colorful murals drawing more attention to the city's decline.

He painted fire hydrants as dalmatians, rainbows, fairies, elves and dinosaurs. They look cute. The problem is there is actually a purpose for fire hydrants being painted yellow and red - so firefighters can spot them easily and know what to expect as to water pressure.

Piccirillo probably did not know that.

If Dyster is incompetent and extravagant -- what other mayor could blow through \$200 million in casino revenue and have nothing to show for it? - then forget to insure that the Senecas continued to pay when their renewal came due? -- I think you get all these with Piccirillo, with the added bonus of being both dangerously incompetent -- think houses falling down -- and at times outright silly -- think a fire hydrant painted as a leprechaun.

I think you get the idea. Maybe if he is elected he could paint up a fire hydrant as Pinocchio using himself as the model.



Another harebrained idea from the clown prince of Niagara Falls. Seth Piccirillo who brought us frosty the snowman fire hydrants also brought a novel idea of bringing more attention to vacant and boarded up buildings in the declining city - painting murals on them.

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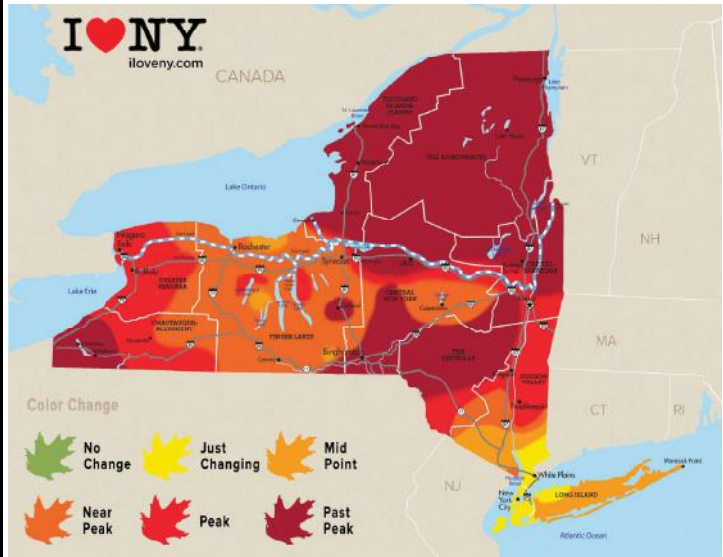


# THE CRIME

## WEEKLY HEADLINES

- Niagara Falls Police responded to 70th and Buffalo Avenue in the early morning hours of Wednesday, October 24th, for a purse snatching. Although the victim was able to retrieve the purse, multiple items were missing.
- Niagara County Sheriff's arrested a Niagara Falls woman, Sarah Attfield, Tuesday evening for driving while intoxicated and endangering the welfare of a child - a Leandra's Law violation - after 911 callers stated that her gold Chevy Impala was driving in multiple lanes.
- Niagara Falls Police responded Sunday evening to an attempted purse snatching at Partner's Bar. According to reports, a man begging patrons for money resorted to stealing a woman's purse. The snatcher was then chased by her boyfriend who scared him to drop the purse.
- Niagara Falls Police responded to the 7600 block of Buffalo Avenue early Saturday morning for an armed robbery. The victim stated that a male wearing black clothes and mask demanded money or other valuables at gunpoint.
- Niagara Falls Police responded to reports of an altercation outside of the Zodiac Lounge on Niagara Street in the afternoon hours of Saturday October 27th. Once arriving, multiple individuals were detained while others attempted to run away.
- Niagara Falls Police engaged in a foot chase Saturday evening that resulted in an arrest. After being pulled over, a driver with multiple warrants exited the vehicle, attempted to flee, and was later caught.
- Niagara Falls Police are investigating a burglary that occurred Tuesday on the 600 block of 20th Street. According to the victim, a 42-year-old woman, sometime between 5 and 5:30pm someone kicked in her side door and stole a large quantity of jewelry.
- According to a Niagara Falls police officer, those who steal together stay together. On Wednesday, October 24th, a couple was arrested and each charged with burglary & larceny after taking fourteen packages of meat from a store on the 1000 block of Portage Road.
- Niagara Falls Police are responded to a burglary on the 1300 block of Pierce Avenue Friday morning after the victim, a 35-year-old man, realized a TV, DVD player, and a power drill were taken from his home.
- Niagara Falls Police were called to the scene of a burglary on Sunday after Independence Avenue residents awoke to an intruder, dressed in all black & wearing a ski mask, in their home. A TV, two sets of car keys, credit cards & cash was taken prior to chasing him out.
- An 83-year-old Chapin Avenue resident was the victim of theft totaling more than \$1,700 after her debit card was left inside an ATM on Friday, October 26th. Within 24 hours, the woman's card was used for purchases in Buffalo, Niagara Falls & multiple online sites.
- Niagara Falls Police are currently on location at the Seneca Niagara Casino with a person(s) who barricaded themselves in a 10th floor hotel room. Early reports indicate that the individual is threatening to cause harm. Police are currently trying to have them surrender.
- Niagara Falls Police are asking for public assistance in identifying a middle-aged male who allegedly exposed himself to multiple women and children in the Walmart parking lot on Sunday, October 28th.

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# Weekly Update on Veteran House Renovation

**Ken Tompkins**  
**NF City Councilman**

Given that this is our fifth update from the original story, I thought it would be smart to give some context about what we are trying to do here.

Timothy and Colleen Degenhardt thought they did their homework when looking for a contractor to build an addition onto their home.

Timothy, a disabled army veteran, has health ailments that limit his ability to use his legs. As a result, the Degenhardts were looking to add a bedroom to the back of the house so that Timothy would not have to climb any stairs.

Unfortunately, a project that at first seemed quick and easy, did not stay that way for long.

The "so-called contractor," Kyle Edwards, who Colleen calls a "criminal" and a "thief," took their money and left them with nothing but huge trenches in the ground. Some of which were at least two feet deep.

Degenhardt gave Edwards roughly \$12,000 towards the project.

The Degenhardts filed in Small Claims Court seeking their \$12,000 back, but were ultimately unsuccessful. Despite Edwards not showing up to court, the judge only entered a judgment in their favor for \$5,000.

Timothy and Colleen found out the hard way that a judgement and collecting on a judgment are two different things. As a result, not one cent has been collected.

In a true showing of community, numerous businesses have donated their time, supplies and money to make this project a reality.

As you have been following this story, you may have wondered how I became involved. Let's take a moment to bring the story forward.

I received a phone call from my friend's mother, Bernice Stella. She wanted the okay to pass my phone number on to her neighbor, Colleen Degenhardt. Of course; I said yes. I proceeded to get a phone call from Colleen. She told me how she and her husband, Tim, a disabled veteran, were ripped off by a local contractor, Kyle Edwards. In my mind, I was thinking....it's more of a legal issue, what can I do?

Colleen told me that Tim used a walker and all they wanted was their backyard smoothed over as it was left full of ruts and deep holes. I agreed to stop over and take a look at the conditions. Upon inspection of the yard, I saw what needed to be done. I told her to I would make a few calls.

I went into work the next morning and spoke with my boss, Hank Bryk, and his oldest son, Jeff. I told them the story. Jeff and Hank both said they wanted to do something to help. Hank is a veteran himself, he was all in.

A couple of weeks later, Jeff loaded up a mini excavator and along with me and one of our men, Jesse Griggs, headed over to the Degenhardts. As we got the dirt moving, I called Kenny Smith, of KJ Enterprises, for some advice on proper grading of the soil and how to seed afterward. Kenny showed up to the house and showed us how to rake it. He provided seed, starter and straw. We left 8 hours later with a great looking yard.

Tim and Colleen were so happy they called Channel 4 to do a story. I thought we were done. We did a good deed and everyone is happy.



Little did I know, it was just the beginning.

A friend of my wife's, Dave Durkin, reached out to her and said if I were to do any remodel for this veteran, his employer, LaFarge Concrete, would be willing to help. Dick Palladino from Laborers Local 91 also offered their services. My mind starts churning; I called Legislator Mark Grozio and he believed IBEW 237 would be on board if I decided to have an addition built.

H. W. Bryk works with Cortese Construction Services, I called Phil Cortese and he liked the sound of a project like this. A few weeks later, he had commitments on materials and they were on board.

The rest is just a show of great community. Not one contractor or one supplier said no to donating. Today we have a sided, roofed, insulated and wired addition waiting on drywall and paint.

This week Urban Insulation was in and donated all the insulation along with a worker to install it.

Dom Morganti, a fellow Trot Vocational, Class of 1980, graduate, had a crew onsite to do the siding and trim on the outside. They matched the old siding and blended it so well with the new. My father,

Ken Tompkins, Sr., showed them how he would tie in the old roof to the new addition and he made some metal flashing pieces. Did I mention he is 84 years old?

IBEW 237 again jumped forward to remove the solar panels. Mike Siekh and his apprentices made short work of it. Mark Grozio,

Russ Quarantillo and his Union have been right along side of me

each step of the way. They are providing all of the fixtures for this project. Graybar Electric donated all the rough wiring.

Charlie and Sonny of Barone Building Co were on site Friday to do the cut throughs from the new addition to the existing structure. These craftsmen made short work of it, plus came up with a great idea on door placement that will definitely enhance the new room.

Allen Richards of Niagara Coatings Services called with an offer of any help they could give us on the project. Without hesitation, he provided all the drywall and materials to finish the room.

Bill Bing of Scruferi Construction is providing us with manpower from the Carpenter's Local 276 and they will be hanging the drywall on Monday.

Dominic Zirilli, IUPAT District Council 4 Painters/Finishers Union, put the word out and we will have a finisher. William Bentley, who is also a veteran, jumped at the chance to help out.

A painter, who wishes to remain anonymous, called and told me he would like the honor of painting the room for a veteran. He also set me up with Mike at Sherwin Williams for the paint.

I personally cannot believe that over 40 companies, big and small, stepped up and not only donated time, skills and materials but; all made sure to tell me they would provide more, if needed.

This is one of the major accomplishments achieved in my lifetime. We have pulled together in fellowship and mutual support. Western New York has shown its true colors, it is truly a place of good neighbors.







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# ANALYSIS

## Leave Buffalo Bishop Malone Alone - For Now



**Ken Hamilton**

What is it that we don't understand about "due process" in law anymore? It wasn't all that long ago that the Kavanaugh/Ford debacle took place, wasn't it?

You know, where a formerly beer-addled -year old girl who would later become a college professor some 35-years thereafter accused a 17-year old beer-addled boy who would become a US Supreme Court Justice, of sexually molesting her. What did we learn by allowing the case to be tried in the court of public opinion?

Do we not remember that it turned out to be insufficient evidence to, well, believe the-then college professor's allegations?

Like everyone else, Buffalo Bishop Richard Malone is an American citizen, and, as it is with the rest of us, he's due certain rights under the Constitution of our country. You know, rights, like those same rights that those same kinds of people who want the many immigrants to have as they illegally cross our borders!

But before any arrest warrants are being served, I am hearing that there are those who are calling for his resignation. The Bishop may be guilty of collusion, and if what Malone's confidential secretary and whistleblower, Siobhan O'Connor, possibly have turned over to the police, such warrants may be forthcoming - I don't know. But here's

what bothers me about the whole thing.

There's no question that the morality upon which America was once built, the morality that truly it made it the overall best country in the world, has slipped far past it from just being shaky - and I say that by virtue of all of those illegals to whom some people want to give rights - to the point that it seems that it has started to crack and crumble. Would you believe that people who haven't routinely darkened the door of any church, much less a Catholic church, is now demanding action from a high-ranking priest?

These are the same people who at the drop of a hat will spout out that misconception of separation of church and state whenever a cleric comments on a secular issue, and yet still demand that the state should be able to tell churches what it is that they should do. They do this when the critics themselves have little to no power to tell the state what to do.

There's been plenty of evidence to affirm that there have been some serious improprieties within the ranks of the whole of the Catholic Church; but such should be expected within an organization that is as massive in size as it is. It is as I have often said about Niagara Falls; and that is if Niagara Falls was the size of Buffalo then we would have a already had a dozen FBI offices within the city's limits.

So then, imagine what is going on in smaller-sized churches and organizations, or among smaller groups, or even in our own personal lives? While those same kinds of people talk about the relationship between what is considered the elevated moral expectations of the clergy and the responsibility that it implies - where much is given, much is required - then let these same pundits not forget where Jesus



said to the accusers of the woman caught in adultery and facing a summary stoning, "Let he who is without sin cast the first stone."

I want everyone to understand that I am neither supporting any nebulous events that might have occurred by the priests now or formerly assigned under Bishop Malone, nor any actions that Malone may have taken as chief executive officer to keep the business of the church running during these turbulent times as it tries to manage itself between accountability of the few and the massive good works to the many; but I am saying that we should not, nor are we non-practicing Catholics in a position to be making judgments. Even though whistleblower Siobhan O'Connor has admitted that she did betray the trust that Malone had bestowed upon her, she also rightfully said that, "... at

the end of my life, I'm not going to have to answer to Bishop Malone. I'm going to have to answer to God."

I agree with her, and I further say that at the end of his life, Malone will have to answer to the same God, and not to any of his secular detractors. But in the meantime, he may have to answer to the law that ultimately judges him innocent until proven guilty.

In the meantime, let's protect or children, and

- not be overly distracted by this, and

- make a greater effort to keep those who make the law to which we are accountable, more accountable to us as well, and

- leave the possibility of Bishop Malone's resignation accountable to Malone and the Pope.

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# Chris's Corner: My Position on the City Budget

*Chris Voccio is a Niagara Falls City Council member and can be reached at [ChrisVoccio@gmail.com](mailto:ChrisVoccio@gmail.com).*



**Chris Voccio**  
**NF City Councilman**

When Mayor Dyster presented his budget to the City Council on Friday, September 29, I was, before seeing the actual proposed budget, excited by his words.

He used phrases that get conservatives like me excited. He said his proposed budget “decreases the size of government”, “increases the efficiency of city government”, and said things like “consolidation of department staff”, “cutting taxes”, and “turning point in the city’s financial stability.” I really thought

this would be the year we get our fiscal house in order.

Then the City Controller handed me the binder with the actual budget documents.

I immediately turned to the General Fund Summary and saw that spending would go up next year, from \$91,425,986 to \$91,481,244. I was deflated. I was later instructed that I should be looking at the Summary of Appropriations & Revenues page where I would see, after all the convoluted fund transfers (I’ve been speaking out against our confusing system of fund transfers since the beginning of my term), actual spending will be \$94,706,102 compared to 2018’s \$95,166,333. But that reduction is less than one-half of one percent of the city budget, meaning we’ll essentially be hold our spending flat to last year.

Perplexing to me was the proposal to cut property taxes. The mayor and others in city government have lamented that the city



hasn’t raised taxes enough in the past, because of the inflows of casino revenue, suggesting our taxes are too low. I disagree with the premise that our taxes are too low, but now the mayor is proposing to cut taxes. All the while adding a garbage fee. I still don’t understand this.

As a libertarian-oriented guy, I will always prefer user fees over taxes, shifting the cost of a product or service to the actual user as opposed to blanketing the cost over every citizen. But considering our financial condition, and how the mayor has lamented how our taxes were not raised enough in the past, this proposed property tax decrease is, well, peculiar.

Yet another issue is the \$12.3 million advance from Albany. At the time of the budget presentation we had nothing in writing from the state. Even now, with a letter from the state, there are still questions concerning the details of this advance.

On top of that, if this \$12.3 million is an advance of casino dollars, then this money should fall in line with our recently passed casino spending policy, a measure passed unanimously by the Council earlier in the year. I stated then that I had issues with the policy, but I viewed it as better than not having a policy at all. Now that we have casino revenue coming to us, this mayor’s budget proposal should allocate these funds according to the policy. It does not.

But my real issue isn’t with the garbage fee. Nor is it with the \$12.3 million advance from the state. Nor is it with the position changes between the Community Development and Code Enforcement departments. No, for me the issue is with expens-

es. While the proposed garbage fee is an understandable irritation, frustrated taxpayers should really be focused on the city’s spending habits.

The administration knew that we were facing a \$13 million budget deficit when they crafted the budget proposal. The advance from Albany came at the very last minute. Surely there had to be plans, albeit drastic plans, to cut our spending. When the \$12.3 million was announced, I know there must have been rejoicing. I would have understood if instead of cutting \$13 million in expenses the administration chose to cut half that, or even a third of that. But there are no substantial cuts to city spending, and that’s why I view this budget proposal as unworkable.

Because of all of this, I will not be engaging in the process of amending this budget. It is too fundamentally flawed from the beginning. I’ve likened it to the expression rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.

My fellow council members may choose to nitpick the budget, reducing some lines here, adding to some lines there. They may eliminate a position or two, perhaps add one or two. I’m not going to engage in that process, as the budget that was submitted to Council is simply unacceptable. Even if my colleagues reduce the budget by a few hundred thousand dollars, it still will have the city spending more than it should. Much more.

I’ll vote on any amendments my colleagues may choose to submit, but unless there are serious spending reductions I’ll be a no vote on this budget.

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# NORTH TONAWANDA

## Public Officials & Residents Discuss the Fate of Memorial Pool

### Brendan McDonough

Built in 1947, it is no secret that Memorial Pool in North Tonawanda is in dire need of repairs. This notion was reinforced after a Cleveland-based architecture-engineer firm conducted a feasibility study on the pool.

This past week Nancy Nozik presented her findings to the Common Council as well as residents.

"If we were going to really repair this facility to make sure that it lasts another ten to twenty years," said Nozik. "there is a lot that needs to be done now."

She says there are some concrete repairs that need to be made with the existing pool. Once such example is the locker rooms where wholesale improvements need to be made to flooring and replacing the existing lockers.

According to the feasibility study, the last pool liner was put in the pool in the 1980's. As you can imagine, the engineering firm recommended this be updated as well.

"To really repair this we would recommend new pool walls, a new gutter system, and an entire new concrete deck," said Nozik. "The majority of that concrete deck is original from 1947 and has a lot of problem areas."

The feasibility study also pointed to the current guardrail needing to be replaced as it does not meet current safety codes.

The pool is currently operating at a loss of about \$75,000 a year. To bring the pool up to code and fix all of the recommended repairs, Nozik says the cost would be somewhere between \$2 and \$2.5 million.

On the other hand, Nozik says building a new pool would cost somewhere between \$6 and \$6.5



million.

Nozik further said that it would be years before the City saw any profit from the pool if they did a wholesale replacement. In fact, it would be nearly impossible to say just how long that would be.

"Some years you will make money and some years you won't," said Nozik, "but in an average year it will be closer to breaking even than anything else. Our goal is break even and not be burden to the community."

One idea that has gained momentum is adding a concession stand. The feasibility study found that such an addition would help offset some of those costs and bring in much needed revenue. It's something the current pool does not have.

"When we anticipate revenue, concessions are included in that,"

said Nozik. "Concessions become part of the revenue that help offset the cost of operating the facility and it helps keep people there longer during the day."

Another suggestion to bring in money was to have the Memorial Pool open seven days a week.

No decisions have been made with the pool and Nozik noted that they are only about half way through the feasibility study.

In her findings, about half of the community wants to keep the current pool while other want a new pool. There was also 19% of people in the survey who want a combination of the two.

The Common Council will continue to have future discussions on the fate of the Memorial Pool in the coming weeks.



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# Children's Remembrance Garden Cont.

come and remember those whose lives were taken too soon.

For Mary Beth Kupiec it's a place to come and remember her son Brandon. He passed away five years ago; he was just 20-years-old.

"It just means the world to me that the City and other partners would donate their time and talent to build something like this in memory of our children," said Kupiec.

The City received a



\$50,000 grant from Senator Robert Ortt's office and another \$42,000 from Assemblyman Robin Schimminger's office.

For the past three years residents and volunteers have been working to build this park. A park which, if not for the persistence and passion of Mayor Art Pappas and his wife Linda, would not have been able to come to fruition.

"Good things come to those who wait, better things

come to those who try, best things come to those who believe in their efforts," said Mayor Pappas. "This project started three years ago and, if you look around, it exceeds all expectations."

At the entrance of the memorial are the names of children being remembered. Benches are all around for people to sit and reflect.

For Kupiec, the sculpture of doves flying in the middle of the memorial has an extra special meaning because her son was a welder.

"Brandon was dedicated to the community as well," said Kupiec. "He was a welder, so the sculpture in the middle - which is welded metal - is pretty sentimental to me."

Tearing up, Kupiec finished by stating, [Brandon] would be absolutely thrilled."

As two doves were re-



leased during the ceremony multiple songs were sung by local North Tonawanda stu-



dents.

"This is something that is really unique to North Tonawanda and is one of those things that people will remember when they think of North Tonawanda," said Senator Robert Ortt. "They are going to think of this remembrance garden."

Paula Benadyczak has been one of the people who made this garden become a reality. She lost her 16-year-old son Jordan seven years ago an

"Losing a child is the worst pain a parent can endure," said Benadyczak. "We now have this garden where we can find peace. I have incredible solace knowing that our loved ones will never be

forgotten by our community."

The memorial is open for anyone to experience. For family members a place to remember loved ones taken too soon as tears of sadness



are filled with comfort while remembering loved ones and the joy they brought to so many people during their short time here.





# Common Council Seeks to Slow Down Drivers in NT

By: **Brendan McDonough**

People across North Tonawanda could soon be driving a little slower. Members of the Common Council put forth a motion to reduce the speed between Tremont and Goundry Streets to 25 MPH, the current speed is 30MPH. However, due to current traffic safety laws, they cannot lower the speed to anything under 30MPH.

City leaders wanted to reduce the speed because of all of the business and people that travel along Webster Street. The only way to change the speed would be to comply with all the traffic safety codes and laws.

"We, as a traffic committee, thought it would be a good idea to drop the speed down to 20MPH just because of the all the business there," said Rob Frank, Traffic Safety Board.

In the end what was decided was

not to change the speed limit but to have a recommended speed limit of 20MPH on the curbs.

"It is just a recommended speed," said Frank, "it does not actually change anything. So that is what we think now might be the best remedy."

It's not something the City will be able to issue tickets on, but officials are hoping the existence of new signs will slow people down.

"I like the warning sign idea," said City Attorney Luke Brown. "At least it raises awareness and people are going to see it and say okay this is an area that I need to be cautious at."

Webster Street is quickly becoming one of the busiest areas in the City, and, while most people really can not drive that fast because of the crosswalk and other stop signs, they are hoping this latest move will be one additional step to make the area a little safer.



## Reducing the Risk for Vibration Injuries

Construction workers often operate handheld power tools like jackhammers, grinders and plate compactors. Unfortunately, this everyday equipment can put them at risk for injuries caused by exposure to vibration. Hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS) can lead to numbness, tingling and pain that can make it impossible to work. It's estimated that half a million construction workers in the U.S. are at risk for developing hand-arm vibration syndrome.

To reduce this risk, workers need to be trained to operate this equipment, educated on the potential hazards and encouraged to speak up if they experience or witness a problem when using these tools. Operating a jackhammer or any handheld tool that vibrates exposes the body to pulsing and shaking that can affect circulation in the hands and fingers. Over time, this can permanently damage the blood vessels, nerves and muscles in the hand and arm. Depending on the level of vibration and the duration of exposure, HAVS can develop in as little as six months. Other times it may be years, but once HAVS occurs, the damage is irreversible and can lead to permanent disability. Symptoms include:

- Numbness
- Tingling sensations
- Discoloration of fingers
- Muscle fatigue or weakness
- Poor range of motion in the hand, arm joints or fingers
- Permanent or temporary loss of use of hands or arms

OSHA does not have a vibration standard, but provides recommendations that can help employers protect workers:

- Maintain vibrating tools in proper working order.
- Arrange tasks so vibrating and non-vibrating tool use can be alternated.
- Limit the number of hours a worker uses a vibrating tool. Allow employees to take 10 to 15 minute breaks from tool use every hour.
- Train workers about the hazards of working with vibrating tools. Instruction should include the sources of vibration exposure, early signs and symptoms of HAVS and work practices for minimizing vibration exposure.
- Instruct workers to keep their hands warm and dry and to not grip a vibrating tool too tightly. Workers should allow the tool or machine to do the work.

HAVS can be prevented. By following the recommendations above, employers can help protect employees from developing this debilitating condition so they can stay on the job and remain productive in both their professional and personal lives.

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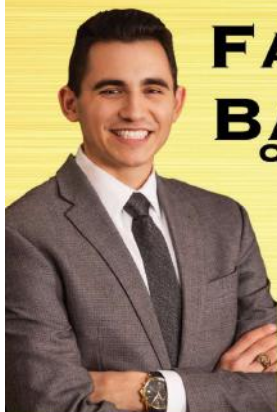


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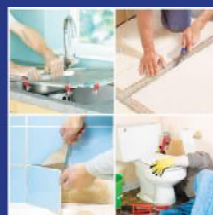
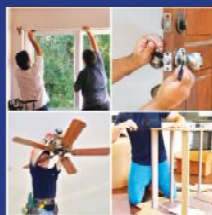
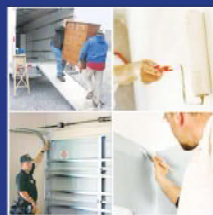


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