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Even With Casino Cash, Tough Decisions Remain for Niagara Falls

By: Tony Farina

Analysis

Assuming the Seneca Nation pays the state approximately \$200 million in back casino payments as a result of losing the gaming arbitration ruling, the City of Niagara Falls could eventually end up with about \$10 million after deductions to replenish the casino reserve fund and support capital projects moving forward.



"We had been averaging about \$16 million a year, and it looks like we would receive \$29 million to \$30 million

for the years they [Senecas] didn't pay the state under the favorable 2 to 1 ruling," said Niagara Falls City Council Presi-

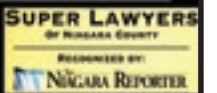
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PAGE 4

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'Wetland Woes' in North Tonawanda

By: Brendan McDonough

A wetlands issue could squash Ascension Industries plans to expand in North Tonawanda. The company currently employs more than fifty people and is hoping to add another forty jobs.

Ascension, who recently developed a new product, want to embark upon a \$2.5 million expansion project. The company is headquartered on Erie Av-



(Cont. on pg. 6)

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NIAGARA FALLS

Casino Cash Cont.

dent Andy Touma.

Touma said the approximately \$10 million represents the amount the city would have left over after all the other entities, like the Housing Authority, Memorial Medical Center, and the school district receive their share of casino money and the \$12.3 million loan promised to the city by Gov. Andrew Cuomo to close the 2019 budget gap is put into the spending plan, replacing the loan commitment.

"It would give us breathing room, but we have to fix our structural deficit between now and 2023 when the gaming compact is up for renewal," said Touma. "There are many difficult decisions to be made and we hope to receive a three-year plan from the administration to begin that work."

The structural deficit, of course, represents the difference between revenues and expenses and for the last several years, the city has been using casino funds to balance the budget against the advice of the state comptroller.

But even before the planning begins, still to be determined is for the state and the Senecas to come together and agree on a

figure on the back payments, said Mayor Paul Dyster. Complicating that issue is exactly what the Seneca Nation is going to do about the ruling, pay or something else.

Seneca Nation President Rickey Armstrong was unclear whether the payments will continue despite the ruling that went against the Senecas.

Despite the 2 to 1 decision in favor of the state under the 2002 compact, Armstrong said "We continue to believe as anyone who has read the compact, that the Nation's obligation was fulfilled, and we believe we had an obligation to the Seneca people to defend the compact, as it was written and agreed upon."

Armstrong said after the ruling that the decision is being reviewed as to how to respond, and sources now tell this newspaper as of this writing that no final decision has been made as to the next step by the Senecas.

Nonetheless, and amid the uncertainty still pending, Niagara Falls and the two other host casino cities are moving forward with plans on how to repair the financial damage caused by the stoppage in payments covering



the final quarter of 2016, all of 2017, and the first three quarters of 2018.

Assuming that eventually the money will begin flowing again, Touma is warning that Niagara Falls must be prepared to tackle the structural deficit, even with the resumption of casino payments.

"We need to look at the structural deficit," said Touma, mentioning the garbage user fee considered and rejected during the budget process last year, and more parking meters to help boost revenue. Garbage user fees are used by many cities, including Buffalo, to help increase revenue to maintain services without raising taxes.

Touma also said that lawmakers are looking at reworking

police club schedules, as recommended by the city's financial advisory board, to help save as much as \$700,000 in costs, including on overtime. Also possible are discussions about municipal contracts, including reopening them in some cases, to attack the structural deficit issue.

"I'm looking forward to working with the Senecas moving forward," said Touma, "and would like to meet with them on a regular basis," emphasizing that even with the favorable ruling this time, there is much work to be done to get Niagara Falls on track for the future.

"There are difficult decisions ahead, and we must be prepared to make those decisions," said Touma.

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, Markside 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

Sanborn: Smokin Joes (gas station and store) & Tim Hortons

Wilson: Lakeside Market

Youngstown: Anchor Spirits & Wines, Bandanas Bar & Grill, Public Library, Rite Aid, Village Diner

Together We Will Win the Battle & Make a Difference



**City Council
Candidate Candace Corsaro**

Born and raised in Niagara Falls my parents: Clifton and Anne (Eodice) Van Epps. I am the middle of six children with family members with Union and Military background. I attended local schools. In 1964-1968 I attended Trott Vocational High School and obtained my New York State License in Cosmetology to follow in my mothers footsteps and opened a number of salons in our city. I am a mother of three fantastic children and a grandmother to six wonderful children.

What I've heard while talking with residents and business owners is that we all want safe and affordable neighborhoods, and share a vision of our City with a thriving business base community where common-sense and responsible development enhances our

quality of life.

I will work diligently to ensure that your voice is a part of the decision making process. Holding public hearings at City Hall isn't enough. For those community members with children, or who work third shift or who are homebound, I will create opportunities to ensure that you have a voice in to help shaping the direction of our City.

With the combination of my extensive experience an along with qualified residents and personnel in local and state government, WE will make measured decisions that keep our neighborhoods safe, unique, and affordable. As a city council member, I plan to form committees made up of residents from all of our neighborhoods. These committees will provide a well rounded group of representatives of the diverse needs of our city. I will also ensure our community has the tools it needs to address growing safety concerns.

I will knock on many doors to get input from community members about their needs from City government and about the concerns and ideas they have. NO... I can not and will not be controlled by anyone. I am running because I am tired and disgusted with where we are and afraid of where we are going along with promises that are not keep, as many of you are..

I believe that if you want to run for

office and represent your community, you have an obligation to meet your community members. Good government puts people first, and you can't do that without putting in the legwork to hear their voices.

We need to run our city in a way that addresses the needs of the many, not a few. We need to follow the rules, city charter and the protocols set forth by our city government. We need to build our business and create jobs, City government has promised but we are getting NO where. Our businesses are suffering when they should be thriving. Our neighborhoods should be safe and YOU not afraid to leave your home, we need to address our blighted areas and vacancies.

We have had many years of false promises and a blundering city government. Our city is on the verge of a control board. The residents have LOST confidence in our leadership and will not be reassured. We demand constructive leadership.

IT IS TIME! We set the political parties aside and work together to accomplish our needs. Not one person can accomplish these goals. My qualifications and my desires are plentiful to help mold our city into the next century.

Here are just some of my accomplishments

Real Estate Agent for over 15 years

to present

Owned and operated business's since 1968 in Niagara Falls

2017-18 Governor of New York State Kiwanis International

Served on the Niagara Falls City Assessors Board

President of US Federal Government Weed and Seed program for crime (past)

Continue to support our Citizens, Business's, Fire and Police Departments, and our Unions.

Former President of the Niagara Falls Block club council

Former member of Niagara Falls Beautification committee

President of the Kiwanis Club of Niagara Falls

Board of Director for Niagara Falls Community Memorial Day Parade

Join our TEAM! To turn our City around: I am asking for your support to be your voice as your new City Council member.

Please join us on Tuesday January 29th, 2019 at 6pm: JR's Stone Room, Niagara Falls Ice Pavilion 911 Robbins Drive, Niagara Falls NY for my formal announcement and fund raiser. Cost \$25.00 pr. Person.

Contributions may also be sent to and made out: Committee to Elect-Candace Corsaro. c/o 1323 Pine Avenue Niagara Falls, NY 14303

GUEST VIEW: A look into Our Future



Glenn A. Choolokian

Another holiday season has past. Again, we were blessed with the occasion to unite with our family and friends and embrace the spirit of joy and giving that surrounds us. This is a wonderful time of the year, when a sense of community and togetherness prevails as we each share in the celebration of our religious beliefs, traditions and values. This season also brings us the opportunity to pause and reflect as another year in our city comes to a close.

The city of Niagara Falls is home to a world famous natural attraction that draws more than five million annual visitors from across the world. We have a renowned hydroelectric facility that powers a large part of the US and Canada. Our city is located on one of the world's busiest international borders; we are only a stone throw away from the bright lights and the big city of Niagara Falls Ont. We also host a very successful downtown casino.

Yet, with all of these positives, our city is broke and declining rapidly.

What happened? With all of these natural and man-made blessings how has our city gone so wrong?

When you think about the candidates who are looking to represent our city, do you envision them trying to serve themselves, their political party, the individuals and private companies that are behind them or the people that they represent? Which do you think is right? I think most of us would agree that, first and foremost, politicians should serve the people.

It seems every four years when there is an upcoming important election the same individuals and companies always get involved because they are looking to gain valuable investments in our elected officials. Many are organized to extract high paying jobs, free money and special favors from our local government. These individuals and groups use these elections as a lever to benefit only themselves. We have had years of overspending, bad management and different rules for those in power.

It is no secret we have plenty of room for improvements across the entire city and those needs are growing daily. With a city that is struggling in so many areas, from decaying streets, sidewalks and a failing infrastructure to high taxes, the daily rise of crime and lack of services.

Today it takes vision, hard work and determination to build a city and to keep it vibrant and efficient. The city of Niagara Falls is under redevelopment. Our leaders must have a clear vision for the future, they must be willing to roll up their sleeves and see that this redevelopment happens in a way that pre-

serves our rich heritage and continues to meet the needs of our entire community. They must use all these principles to move our city forward. There are so many very important issues that must be addressed now.

With so many cities struggling throughout the country the city of Niagara Falls is no different. With the right marketing strategy private money and investments is the way that the cities revitalization should happen. I believe that government, working with the private sector, should have a balanced growth. While we push for Downtown progress, it is very important not to lose sight of the needs of the rest of our city.

The city of Niagara Falls greatest strength comes from the spirit of our people. People who work hard, who strive to do their best, and who have pride in their community. The most meaningful investments that our cities leaders can make or encourage are the ones that enhance the quality of life for people and families wherever they happen to live. As leaders in our community it is our turn to renew the promise of this once great city and to leave it in a better way than we found it. With everyone working together I believe this can be achieved.

Niagara Falls can do two things to encourage business and development: hold down taxes and step out of the way of real developers. If you can hold down the cost of doing business and keep from obstructing legitimate business then you have gone a long way toward assisting overall development. Grants and special government incentives of all types and manner won't

guarantee success if the business is wrong, if the city is taxing the business to death or if the city is hamstringing the business with paperwork and regulations. A city has to work to create a positive business climate and then let nature -supply and demand - take its course. Let's face it there are plenty of questionable and failed projects across the city, the state and the nation that would have never been built but for easy access to "public money." Just because you funded it, built it and then cut the ribbon doesn't make it a success.

I believe in responsible budgeting, accountability to the taxpayer and government transparency. I certainly don't believe in using taxpayer dollars to fund bad projects just so a claim of "development" and "activity" can be made so we can all pretend that things are moving in the right direction.

Responsible spending, holding down taxes and letting the magic of the marketplace do the development for us are the keys to Niagara Falls getting back on its feet.

The future leadership of Niagara Falls must make a commitment to its residents. A commitment to improve all parts of our communities. We have to work together to address our problems and meet the challenges of tomorrow. Together we must have a vision and we must dedicate ourselves in helping to change the things that can be and should be better in our city.

Glenn A. Choolokian is a former Niagara Falls City Councilmember and lives in Niagara Falls with his wife and two children.



THE CRIME



-Niagara Falls Police responded to 15th and Ashland Avenue in the evening hours of January 7th, 2019, after an SUV slid into a building due to slippery conditions. However, instead of staying in their vehicle, the driver attempted to flee the scene but was later apprehended by police. No injuries were reported.

-Niagara Falls Police are investigating reports of shots fired inside of the Fashion King store in the evening hours of Monday, January 7th, 2019. At least one shell casing was recovered from the scene. No injuries were reported.

-Niagara Falls Police made a Driving While Intoxicated arrest in the early morning hours - 12:53am - of Saturday, January 12th, 2019, at the McDonald's on Niagara Falls Boulevard. Police responded after reports that the driver had struck something and tore the bumper off of her vehicle. The driver was still in the drive-thru attempting to get food when police arrived. No injuries were reported.

-Niagara Falls Police reported to the 1900 block of Falls Street in the early evening hours of Saturday, January 12th, 2019, after reports of a robbery. According to



WEEKLY HEADLINES

police, the victim stated that a young kid - a juvenile - came up to him with a gun and took items that were on his person including money and a phone. The suspect was later apprehended and is in police custody.

-Niagara Falls Police are seeking a 19-year-old man who allegedly broadcast an assault 'live' on Saturday, January 12th, 2019, via Facebook. Police immediately received called from residents who viewed the assault online. Police then responded to the 500 block of 6th Street where they found a trail of blood in the apartment. Police followed the blood up the stairs at which time they found a 21-year-old Youngstown man covered in blood. A woman who was still inside the residence told police that the victim was visiting her boyfriend when he made advances toward the girl prompting the boyfriend to develop a rage. According to police reports, the victim told police that the attacker allegedly "pistol whipped him" and then proceeded to "stomp on his head" while wearing boots. Police also say that they found a pellet gun on the kitchen counter. The attacker is not yet in custody.

-Niagara Falls Police engaged in a foot chase following a traffic stop at Jordan Gardens. According to police, the suspect pulled over his car and then proceeded to get out of his vehicle and run away. Police did catch up with him and he was taken into custody.





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NORTH TONAWANDA

Wetlands Cont.



enue and built another facility on Wurlitzer Drive with the intent to expand. However, shortly after purchasing it about 10 years ago the area was designed as a wetlands area.

"They have to find a way to accommodate this customer and this product," said Mike Zimmerman, Executive Director of the Lumber City Development Corp., "and if they cannot do it there is a very real possibility that they will have to find a different place altogether. Which means not only missing out on these forty new jobs but potentially moving the fifty jobs that are already in the facility."

City Engineer Dale Marshall says the company owns 16 acres of land on Wurlitzer Drive. In order to build on the land, Ascension would need to pay to have an equal or larger piece of land converted to wetlands.

"The critical thing is that they wanted to build last year. So, they are ready to go," said Marshall.

Dave Lemma, Ascension's Vice President of Engineering and Development, has been meeting with City Officials to try and come up with a solution that works for everyone.

"We have been trying to do this for over a year now. Due to these wetlands, it is getting very expensive. We are expanding this facility for our customers and we have been trying to do this for over a year now," said Lemma.

The North Tonawanda Common Council wants to work with Ascension to come up with a plan. The problem is funding costly environmental studies and who is going to pay for them.

"Why are we paying for them to do a project?" Said Alderman-At-Large Austin Tylec. "Even if the consultant fees are \$10,000.00-\$20,000.00, why are they not paying us? We could do the consulting and then they could just never follow through with the project. I don't want to pay for it."

Lemma says he has to consult



with company owners to see if they are willing to pay for those consulting fees but says it may be very good possibility.

In addition to costs another problem, there could be opposition from neighbors who live in

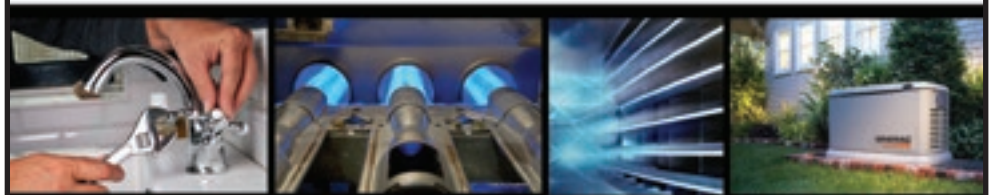
the area.

It's a complex project and members of the Common Council agreed more discussion is needed before any final decisions can be made.

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A New Face in NT Clerk/Treasurer's Office



Brendan McDonough

These is a new face at North Tonawanda City Hall. Matt Parish is the new Clerk/Treasurer as he replaces Dan Quinn who resigned to take another position in the Niagara County Clerk's office.

Parish previously worked as a deputy in the Niagara County Clerks office. Before that he a manager at the North Tonawanda Department of Motor Vehicles.

Parish says he plans to run in the November election. It is a 4-year term.

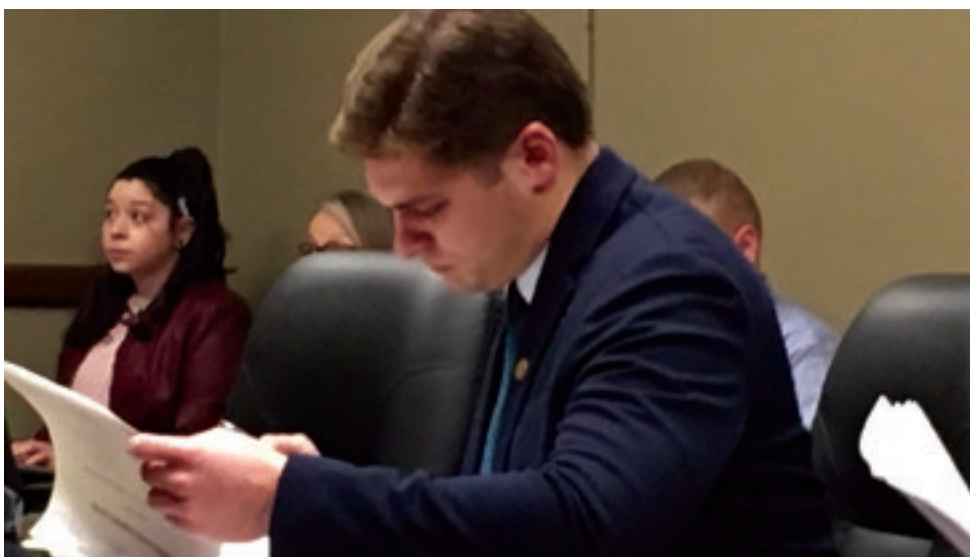
The Clerk-Treasurer position in North Tonawanda pays \$54,000.00 a year.

In a statement made to the public last week, Common Council President Eric Zadzilka said the following about Parish:

"We look forward to Matt Parish coming on as our new Clerk/Treasurer effective January 8th, 2019.

I know from our conversations, Matt offers a new drive, a tenacity, and an energetic hit the ground running mindset we will need for the challenges that lie ahead.

The CFO of the city is an important and crucial role that can't be vacant for even a short time in starting on our budget when we have such a highly qualified candidate with pertinent experience to execute these duties effectively. His qualifications on Formulating and weighing in on County budgets speak volumes so he needs to be appointed as North Tonawanda Clerk/Treasurer."



North Tonawanda City Clerk/Treasurer Matt Parish.



BUY AMERICAN – THE JOB YOU SAVE MAY BE YOUR OWN

We need look no further than a mirror to find a major part of the blame for any economic problem this country faces. Despite constant reminders that significant parts of the United States are economically depressed, face high unemployment and are suffering through bleak economic times, we as a nation, still fail in large part to support US companies that employ US citizens and produce goods made... wait for it – in the United States. It is a point made very public time and again when high profile purchases are made from foreign companies operating outside the borders of the United States. Everything from clothing and produce to steel, bridges, furniture and electronics are imported and purchased from China, Southeast Asia and Mexico on a daily basis.

But lately, especially coming out of a busy few months of purchasing, it is refreshing to see a number of products proudly marked Made in America. From flatware to frying pans, boots and gloves to major automobile companies, everyday products we used to import from overseas, are all made right here in the United States employing Americans who in turn spend their income in our local communities. There are an increasing number of news stories about huge corporations bringing jobs and investments back to this country. It is always heartwarming to see a story that takes place in a small town in Ohio or Pennsylvania making quality goods with the Made in America label. Volvo, Toyota and Mazda are all building billion dollar factories in the United States to produce their cars – once made abroad – to employ thousands of Americans. We fortunately have a store focused on American made products in our own backyard. Now in multiple locations around Western New York, the Made in America store is packed with quality merchandise ALL made in America. From hats and shirts, to sandals and wind chimes, summer wear to winter protection, the Made in America store can outfit you from head to toe. From home goods to hardware, groceries to games, they make it easy to buy American. In addition to these convenient outlets, there are hundreds of American companies online to purchase thousands of products all Made in America by American hands. We and we alone have the power to change our economy. We need not wait on an incompetent Congress or count on our President to make the necessary changes to build this country to greatness once again. We need not look beyond a mirror to see who can choose to purchase goods made in this country by our neighbors and refuse to purchase an inferior good made overseas. We possess the power every time we decide whether or not to purchase that imported product. Take a close look. There are thousands and thousands of quality products made in the United States by US citizens. Buy American – the job you save may be your own.

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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)

**TREATING YOUR HOME AS
OUR OWN SINCE 2002**