

ERIE COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY

2019 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

MANAGEMENT

- The Board of Commissioners adopted and implemented a new management structure. The Authority's day-to-day management is now under the control and supervision of the following Division Heads:
 - Secretary of the Authority
 - Chief Operating Officer
 - Chief Financial Officer
 - General Counsel

- The Division Heads, along with the Executive Engineer, regularly hold Executive Staff meetings to promote collaborative planning and decision-making.

- In 2019, the Board recruited and appointed individuals to the following key management positions:
 - Chief Operating Officer
 - Chief Financial Officer
 - Comptroller
 - Director of Administration

- The Authority has restructured its Claims/Risk Management Unit, as part of its Legal Department.

- The Board of Commissioners created an Independent Ethics Panel (IEP) with each Commissioner appointing an individual to serve on the IEP.
 - The IEP annually reviews, and recommends changes to, the following:
 - Code of Ethics & Conflicts of Interest Policy
 - Whistleblower Protection Policy
 - Annual Financial Disclosure Statements

 - The IEP reviews Annual Financial Disclosure Statements filed by Authority personnel and then
 - Conduct follow-up inquiries with personnel; and

- Reports its findings and makes recommendations to the Board of Commissioners.

OPERATIONS

- The Authority has developed and implemented a Comprehensive Infrastructure Strategic Plan.
- The Authority executed direct service agreements with the Towns of Aurora and Eden and has accepted the properties and facilities of the water districts located within these Towns.
- The Authority has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Village of Hamburg setting forth the preliminary terms by which the Authority will accept the properties and facilities of the Village water system.
- The Board has reinstated the Apprenticeship Programs for construction contractors and subcontractors.
- The Authority has hired a consultant to perform an office and operation space study.
- The Authority has recruited and hired two Senior Production Engineers.
- Successful completion of a Lead and Copper Study. A collaborative effort between Water Quality, Distribution, Legal, Customer Service, GIS, & IT departments and the Meter Shop. The study is required to be performed by the EPA every three years. This past study was the most comprehensive study ever performed by the Authority. Prior to actual sampling and testing, the Authority performed an extensive customer outreach, sent ECWA employees to homes to confirm service line material in person, and provided a thorough educational program on the Authority's website to identify lead plumbing and minimize the risk of exposure to lead in water.
- Planning and development of a new analytical chemistry laboratory. Equipment purchased will give the Authority the ability to test several regulated and unregulated compounds in-house in 2020. These include disinfection by-products, total and dissolved organic carbon, metals, PFOS/PFAS, cyanotoxins and volatile organic compounds.
- Surveillance of PFOS/PFAS sampling and analysis to establish a baseline of these chemicals in our watershed prior to be mandated.

- Distribution System Compliance Sampling Site Replacement Planning with the Distribution Department. Nine current compliance sampling locations were investigated to assess reasons for low chlorine. Alternative sites were scouted and assessed and were found to be more representative of our distribution system water.
- Hired a new Environmental Microbiology Technician who has expertise in microbiology, zebra mussels, and phytoplankton biology and identification.
- Developed a Harmful Algal Bloom plan to monitor and treat for cyanotoxins in Lake Erie and the Niagara River.
- The Authority has implemented and continues to implement a comprehensive security plan.
- The Engineering Department continues to improve its operational efficiencies and to increase the standardization of its distribution system through SCADA.
 - Approximately 95% (72 of 76 pump stations and water storage tanks) of the distribution system is operated automatically based on remote pressure and tank level setpoints at the various pump stations and water storage tanks.
 - The increased automation through SCADA has allowed the distribution system to operate more consistently in terms of turning water storage tanks over for water quality reasons and cycling pumps to provide more even run times.
- Optimal Corrosion Control Treatment Study was completed in 2019. The study incorporated the latest science and research on lead and copper release and included harvesting lead services which were physically examined to better understand the existing corrosion control mechanism and effectiveness of the scale being formed. Based on recommendations from the study, the Authority has moved forward with coupon testing which will provide the data required for a full-scale loop study.
- As part of routine maintenance operations, the Line Maintenance Unit repaired 1,072 main leaks, 80 valves, and 105 services. The Restoration Department worked on repairing leak sites from the previous year for an estimated dollar value of \$2,500,000.
- The Engineering Department awarded twelve professional service agreements in 2019 totaling over \$3,500,000. The design contracts covered distribution

and transmission main design, storage tank inspections, safety improvements and water treatment plant improvements.

- The Engineering Department awarded five construction contracts in 2019 totaling over \$14,800,000. The projects included large valve replacement, distribution main replacement and replacement of a storage tank at Ball Pump Station.

FINANCE

- In December of 2019, the National Government Finance Officers Association awarded the Authority the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for its 2018 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.
- In 2019, the Authority was the recipient of a New York State Water Infrastructure Act Grant in the amount of Three Million Dollars.
- The Authority has reviewed, revised and published its Tariff for 2019.

OVERSIGHT

- The Board reviewed and revised the Authority's By-Laws.
- The Board adopted a new Employment Policy & Procedures (Policy No. 92).
- The Board adopted a Policy for Defense and Indemnification of Members, Officers and Employees (Policy No. 94.0).
- The Board has revised the Authority's Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy in accordance with State Finance Law § 139-L.
- Office of the Secretary conducted Annual Sexual Harassment Prevention Training.
- The Authority's contractors and subcontractors must certify they have adopted a sexual harassment prevention policy and conduct annual sexual harassment prevention training.
- The Authority revised and adopted a Code of Ethics & Conflicts of Interest Policy.
- The Authority adopted an Annual Financial Disclosure Statement.

- Authority personnel filed Financial Disclosure Statements with the Authority's Independent Ethics Panel.
- The Independent Ethics Panel reviewed the Financial Disclosure Statements submitted by Authority personnel and submitted a report of its findings and recommendations with the Board of Commissioners.
- The Legal Department conducted a legal audit of the 2018 FOIL files and reported its finding to the Board of Commissioners.
- The Legal Department has revised the protocol for builders, developers and contractors to obtain Main Extension Agreements for new subdivisions. The new protocol changes the requirements for payment and maintenance bonds consistent with the provisions of the Authority's Tariff.
- The Board of Commissioners reviewed and revised the following policies and procedures:
 - Policy No. 8 Travel and Training Expenses
 - Policy No. 29.0 Timekeeping
 - Policy 42.0 Bereavement Leave
 - Policy No. 93.0 Media Relations Procedures and Guidelines
 - Policy No. 61.0 Leave of Absences
 - Freedom of Information Law Policy & Procedures

PUBLIC ACCESS & TRANSPARENCY

- The Authority has launched a new website, in compliance with guidelines published by the Authorities Budget Office.
- All Board and Committee Meetings are not streamed live.
- The Office of the Secretary received and responded to forty-nine (49) requests for information pursuant to the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL).
- The Buffalo Niagara Coalition for Open Government recognizes the Authority as the only public entity within Erie and Niagara counties posting Board agenda and packets on its website one-week in advance of any open meeting.