

# NT Common Council finalizes 2023 budget

## Cuts mayor's proposed raises for elected officials, doubles unallocated reserve funds

The North Tonawanda Common Council voted at Tuesday's special session in favor of 13 amendments made to Mayor Austin Tylec's proposed 2023 general budget, cutting the proposed tax increase down to 5%. Among those amendments was the removal of the proposed \$25,000 raise for the mayor and approximately \$20,000 worth of raises for the council.

Citing the recent report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics of inflation reaching 8.2%, Council President Bob Pecoraro stated, "Our residents are reminded of economic hardship when they fill up their tank or while paying for groceries. This council has worked hard to mitigate any unnecessary financial burden on our city's hardworking residents and families."

He explained, "The Common Council understands it is a privilege to serve the residents of this city as their elected representatives and would never ask nor expect a raise during these challenging times like we are in now. That is why we are cutting any raises to elected officials proposed in the mayor's budget, including the council, clerk-treasurer, and even the mayor himself."

In addition, the Common Council said it undertook measures to help double the unallocated reserve fund to over \$500,000, and increase the overall financial health of the city.

"The last time an in-rem auction was held was in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic, and currently are in possession of \$800,000 worth of properties," Pecoraro said. "Aldermen DiBernardo and Schmigel will be introducing a resolution for the next regular session to standardize our in-rem procedures and get these properties back on the tax rolls as soon as possible."

The council also budgeted \$40,000 to work with a human resource consultant to approve HR policies at City Hall, recommended the mayor reinstate the city hiring freeze (except for Water & Sewer personnel), and adjusted the police and fire budgets to reflect the most up-to-date contract negotiations.

"The council will continue to be proactive in finding cost savings for our city," stated Pecoraro, pointing to additional savings and revenues such as opting into the Marijuana Regulation & Taxation Act (MRTA), saving the city \$750,000 by switching to a self-funded insurance model, and participating in various incentive/rebate programs for city services.

"I would like to thank each council member for rolling up their sleeves immediately to address these issues and working diligently to correct them," he said. "The budget presented by this body will make a considerable difference for our residents during these difficult times."

# State Parks: \$500,000 grant to support preservation work at Old Fort Niagara



File photo courtesy of Old Fort Niagara

The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation announced a \$500,000 federal grant award to support the ongoing efforts of a significant historic preservation project at Old Fort Niagara State Historic Site.

The grant is from the National Park Service (NPS), which has awarded \$7 million in the inaugural round of funding for their Semiquincentennial Grant Program commemorating the 250th anniversary of the founding of the U.S. Created by Congress in 2020 and funded through the Historic Preservation Fund, the first round of grants supports 17 cultural resource preservation projects across 12 states, including masonry preservation at Fort Niagara.

Fort Niagara, located at the intersection of Lake Ontario and the Niagara River in Youngstown, is nationally and internationally significant for its architecture and its

military history, but also as a site of generations of cross-cultural contact between Europeans and Native Americans. With its earliest structure dating to 1726-27, the fort was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1960.

State Parks said, "Today, through a strong partnership between the Old Fort Niagara Association and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Old Fort Niagara preserves and interprets the historical record of the struggles of various nations to control the Great Lakes region from 1726-1815. Profoundly significant to the founding of America, the fort retains a high degree of integrity, but some of its oldest masonry structures are deteriorating and need restoration."

Masonry preservation at Fort Niagara, which is slated to start in summer 2023, is being supported in part by a \$500,000 Semiquin-

centennial Grant from the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. The project scope for the \$1.8 million masonry restoration project includes stabilization of the north wall of the French Castle; repointing of the historic masonry of the French Castle, North Redoubt and South Redoubt; and the restoration of the west section of the casemates.

State Parks said, "These structural interventions will correct known problem points of the historic buildings, and interrupt a vicious cycle of deterioration stemming from a freeze-thaw cycle that is causing mortar loss and cracking the fort's stones."

"The Old Fort Niagara Association uses the historic fortifications as gateways to tell the diverse stories of the many different people that came together at Fort Niagara, sometimes in peace and partnership, and sometimes in conflict and crisis. This complex history is explored through OFNA's exhibits and public programs, which align with Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation's 'Our Whole History' initiative that seeks to tell the stories of all the people who were involved in the creation of our nation. Stabilizing and restoring the fort will ensure the preservation and interpretation of New York's history for generations to come."

### Shop, Dine & be Entertained close to home first!

SUPPORT YOUR LOCALLY OWNED BUSINESSES

Niagara County Tribune/Sentinel  
**WNYPAPERS.COM**

**LEWISTON-PORTER CHURCH DIRECTORY**  
**Lutheran Church of the Messiah**  
 Pastor Timothy Anas  
 915 Oneida Street, Lewiston  
 Phone: 716-754-4944 Fax: 716-754-0903  
 www.messiahlewiston.org

Come worship with us at 8:15am and 10:00am  
 Coffee and Sunday School Hour at 9:00am

**SHARE YOUR MESSAGE CALL US AT 716-773-7676**

**Learn Something**  
**"NEWS"**  
**Every Day!**  
 wnypapers.com

# OUTSTANDING RESPONSE

**BASEMENT WALLS • RIVER BREAKWALLS  
 DRAIN LINES • INSTALLED & REPAIRED  
 716-773-4775  
 Whr2389@aol.com  
 TOM RALL CONTRACTING**

*I've gotten a lot of work from my PennySaver and Dispatch ads.*  
**Tom**  
 Tom Rall Contracting

**Let NFP's Local Papers work for you!**

**Niagara Frontier Publications**  
 Proud Publishers of:  
 Grand Island PennySaver • Island Dispatch • Niagara County Tribune/Sentinel  
 Ph: 716-773-7676 • www.wnypapers.com

**"VIEWPOINT"**  
 Telephone Call-In Talk  
 716-297-1059  
 Monday - Friday 9-11 am

**Tom Darro**

**WE BR AM 1440**

Listen to NFP's editors each Wednesday at 10:15 am

**"VIEWPOINT" IS THE NATION'S FIRST TWO-WAY TELEPHONE TALK SHOW**

**LISTEN ONLINE AT WEBRRADIO.COM**

**you can't fast forward this newspaper ad**

Newspapers **deliver** a loyal, local, repeat audience!

That audience always includes the most powerful consumers, the most educated citizens, and the most involved business and political leaders!

**WHAT CAN WE HELP YOU SELL TODAY?**

**Niagara Frontier Publications**  
 Proud Publishers of  
 Grand Island Dispatch  
 Grand Island PennySaver  
 Niagara County Tribune/Sentinel  
 Ph: 716-773-7676  
 Fax: 773-7190  
 WNYPAPERS.COM