

## Town of Niagara looks to bolster security measures

BY TIMOTHY CHIPP

Town of Niagara officials are investigating options to increase security at town-owned facilities after an incident months ago.

Niagara police Chief James Sutor has been investigating a pair of new security options to better protect the employees at both Town Hall and the recreation and senior center in the aftermath of an arrest made months ago at Niagara Town Hall.

Sutor said an "irate and intoxicated man" entered Town Hall, causing a disturbance that led to the arrest. Shortly after, town employees asked the Town Board to upgrade security at the facility, which also hosts the town's court.

"The majority of our clerical staff was concerned," Sutor said following Wednesday's Town Board work session, where councilmen discussed Sutor's findings. "There are no control points for determining how people can come and go. They asked the town to look into the cost to change that."

That cost is controlled by a state bid, Sutor said. Buffalo-based LINSTAR Inc. provided the town with a July quote of roughly \$18,600 to provide a little peace of mind to the employees who experienced the disturbance.

Sutor said fitting the senior center with similar technology would be about \$3,500 extra.

Essentially, the options include both a video surveillance system and a radio frequency identification (RFID) system designed to restrict access to several offices without proper credentials.

So, anyone looking to visit Town Hall or the senior center would need to be buzzed into the facility while outside under scrutiny by an office staff member viewing the situation on video.

To see these videos, the purchase price also includes three tablets that will display the scene, allowing proper discretion.

Eight wall-mounted swiping mechanisms will also be installed across Niagara Town Hall's various offices.

Such a system already exists at the town's Highway Department facility, while video surveillance, albeit one that is not as technological, does exist in the courtroom portion of Town Hall.

Councilmen chose to not address the potential purchase at

Tuesday's regular Town Board meeting, opting to table the discussion until at least September's work session, scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 14. Supervisor Lee Wallace said there wasn't yet enough information available to make a decision and questions, which were expressed at the Aug. 10 work session weren't answered completely.

Councilmen wondered how efficient any system could be, should expansion cover the entire Town Hall facility. But increasing the capacity for video would essentially require a new system anyway, Sutor said, replacing and not piggy-backing on what the court uses.

The age of Town Hall also plays a role in what the town could do, he said.

"It's common for government facilities to have these kinds of security measures," Sutor said. "But our facility, built in the 1960s, wasn't designed with these measures in mind. It's very expensive to retrofit a facility like this. So, we're trying to balance between safety and security and cost."

The work session also featured questions about the general effectiveness of any such security system. Councilman Marc Carpenter said limited access can help prevent some situations, but it's easy to fool the person on the other end of the camera.

A visitor could hide a weapon easily, he said, and do harm if that's the intention.

"You buzz someone in, you don't know their intentions," Carpenter said. "They could say they're going to the assessor's office and then do something else entirely."

But there's something to also be said about the psychological effects of increased security measures, both on visitors and for those working in the facility, Wallace said.

Councilmen completed Tuesday's regular meeting by paying bills and approving five measures in a session lasting four minutes total.

They purchased a 2018 Chevrolet pickup for the parks department, which was previously leased, at a total of \$34,425.

Councilmen also approved a measure spending a bit more than \$5,000 to continue a street light replacement program.

## Deadlines approaching for Peach Festival

Applications for 'Taste Off' recipe contest, festival parade still open

Planning continues for the 64th edition of the Niagara County (aka Lewiston Kiwanis) Peach Festival, set for Sept. 8-11 at Academy Park in the Village of Lewiston.

Kiwanis spokesman Jerry Wolfgang reported the deadline for entries in the annual Peach Festival "Taste Off" recipe contest is fast approaching.

Entries, which must include the applicant's name, address and phone number, need to be mailed no later than Friday, Aug. 26, to

Barbra Walck, Niagara County Community College, 3111 Saunders Settlement Road, Sanborn, NY 14132.

Sponsored by the Niagara Falls Culinary Institute, Niagara Publications and the Niagara Gazette, the 2022 "Taste Off" will be among the opening events at the festival at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 8.

Wolfgang also announced the annual Peach Festival parade, set for 11 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 10, is still taking applications for

units. The parade, which features a number of police, fire, government and community organizations, begins at the intersection of Fourth and Center streets. It proceeds east on Center Street to the Portage Road side of Academy Park.

To download applications, visit [www.niagaracountypeachfestival.org/parade-application](http://www.niagaracountypeachfestival.org/parade-application). For more information on participating in the event, Wolfgang can be reached at 716-628-5029.

## Niagara County pizzerias called to enter 3rd annual 'Festival of Slice'

Event set for Saturday, Dec. 17

Registration is now open for the third annual "Festival of Slice" pizza celebration, set for 5-8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 17, at the Niagara Falls Convention Center.

Organizers said, "In a city where people take their pizza very seriously, there will be fierce competition for top honors in the categories of Best Cheese Slice, Best Specialty Slice and a People's Choice Award."

The last time the festival was held in 2019, over 1,000 pizza lovers attended the event and close to 20 vendors participated.

To participate this year, Niagara County pizzerias can find additional information and register

by visiting <https://www.niagarafallsusa.com/festival-of-slice/>. Registration forms can also be



obtained by calling Destination Niagara USA at 716-282-8992.

Participating pizzerias will be asked to provide a copy of their catering, or Niagara County health permit, in order to participate; as well as a \$100 registration fee, of which \$50 will be returned upon attendance and completion of the "Festival of Slice" event.

The registration deadline is Oct. 15.

"Festival of Slice" is made possible by Destination Niagara USA, the Niagara Falls Convention Center, and Old Falls Street USA. For more information, visit <https://www.niagarafallsusa.com/festival-of-slice/>.

## History Center program on sanitation workers past & present

On Saturday, Aug. 20, the Niagara History Center will present the next installment in its "Other Voices" programs on Niagara's history. "Hidden Workers: The Sanitation Industry Past and Present" will be held at 11 a.m. in the History Center's meeting room at 215 Niagara St., Lockport. The program will feature representatives from Modern Disposal Services in Lewiston.

A brief history of how garbage was collected, and by whom, will be highlighted by Niagara History Center staff. This will be followed by a presentation by Mike McInerney, CEO of Modern Dis-

posal; Dennis Moriarty, vice president of post collections; and Julie Berrigan, vice president of communications and public relations. Speakers will outline the history of the company and the necessity of their employees for everyone's safety.

Of the importance of the industry, Berrigan stated, "When one really considers the deep impact our work has on our communities and our environment, the sanitation industry is often overlooked and underappreciated."

A press release stated, "In 1964, Steve Washuta incorporated Modern Disposal Services to expand his seasonal paving company into a business that could provide a steady source of income for his family. As the region's industrial base grew, Mr. Washuta's dedication and strong work ethic helped his new business develop from a humble two-truck operation in Western New York into the 20th-largest waste removal company in the United States.

"Today, Modern is still a privately owned waste management

solutions company, and employs over 700 people in Western New York, as well as Southern Ontario."

Modern said, "Safety of our employees and our environment is part of our DNA. Modern is committed to the most innovative and responsible methods of materials management and recycling. It is simple – we accept nothing less. Modern is dedicated to the community and committed to the environment. We enthusiastically support more than 200 nonprofit organizations each year. Modern received the 2017 Outstanding Philanthropic Corporation Award from The Association of Fundraising Professionals Western New York Chapter."

"Other Voices, Past & Present" is a series of talks funded by a Verizon Community Benefits Grant through the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo. It focuses on groups whose voices have been under-represented in history and the present. Admission is free to the public.

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