

Press Release – April 22, 2020

Statement from Mayor Robert M. Restaino

City of Niagara Falls

Friends it has been a long and difficult month for all of us. The effort put forth by our frontline heroes; doctors, nurses and healthcare personnel, has been uplifting in what have otherwise been difficult days. Not only the changes in how we interact with family and friends, respond to the news that someone we know has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and also grieving the loss of those who have succumbed to the virus.

All of these things have created stress and strain for all of us. Added to that are the many people who have been laid off from work or have had to close their business because of this pandemic – creating uncertainty about what lies ahead financially for you and your families as we move forward.

Like all of us, the City of Niagara Falls has been affected by the loss of revenue from the necessary closure of businesses to stop the spread of the virus. While these issues are not unique to our city, we know that Niagara Falls is unique in two ways:

- 1) Niagara Falls relies heavily on tourism and hospitality.
- 2) Niagara Falls has always enjoyed robust cross-border traffic/ trade with Canada.

These two elements generate significant revenue for city government and fund the city's services. Since the inception of the closure orders, Niagara Falls has recorded significant reductions in revenue, and my administration has been working over the last several weeks to

examine options to address the loss of revenue while continuing to provide essential services.

Some public officials have suggested tax or fee increases to solve the problem, while others have resorted to recommending unrealistic cuts to personnel, a proposal which ignores how draconian personnel cuts can impact service delivery as well as the many contractual requirements.

As Mayor I can assure you that my administration recognizes that these uninformed suggestions will only make your personal circumstances all the more difficult. Rather than ignore the financial strain that residents and business owners currently face, my administration will examine ways to adjust spending through a diligent review with department administrators for cost saving solutions. In addition, we will ask our city workforce representatives for their help in creating cost savings to benefit all of you that are currently struggling financially.

Finally, as Mayor I believe it is important for city government to review all reasonable options to keep our city finances in order, especially during this very challenging time. While New York State struggles with its own fiscal challenges and the Federal government debates stimulus scenarios, we can't rely on any of this to solve our challenges as these challenges are real and immediate. I am confident that all of us working together, in the public's best interest and no other, we can work through this tough financial time and emerge stronger and better.

As always, I am asking that all residents of Niagara Falls be safe and stay well.