

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
Telephone: (716) 286-4310

July 24, 2023

The City Council
Niagara Falls, New York

**RE: Reallocation of Tribal-Compact Revenue
(Pursuant to State Finance Law Section 99-h)**

Council Members:

As you know, as a municipal government that hosts a tribal casino, the City of Niagara Falls receives payments pursuant to a tribal-state compact for costs incurred in connection with services provided to said tribal casino. The payments are governed by the provisions of State Finance Law Section 99-h. Section 99-h (4)(a)(ii)(7) provides that \$50,000.00 from the total amount received by the City in each year shall be transferred to the Western New York State First Response and Preparedness Center. However, the City has received notice from Niagara County Manager Richard E. Updegrove that this organization is no longer a viable entity. Accordingly, no payment that was earmarked for this organization has been made; as a result, a total of \$350,000.00 remains in the City's Tribal Revenue Account.

Section 99-h (4)(d) provides that in the event that any monies to be distributed pursuant to the tribal compact cannot, for any reason, be received or utilized, such monies "shall be distributed to the City of Niagara Falls for economic development projects within such city." Inasmuch as the State Finance Law originally intended that this money be distributed to a law enforcement-based organization, it is hereby proposed that these funds be reallocated for a similar purpose.

Accordingly, it is recommended that \$250,000.00 that was originally allocated for the Western New York State First Response and Preparedness Center be distributed to the Niagara County Law Enforcement Academy ("NCLEA"). As you are aware, NCLEA, which is jointly operated by the Niagara County Sheriff's Department and the Niagara Falls Police Department, trains newly hired officers or those hoping to be hired by police agencies throughout Western New York. NCLEA is currently constructing a new state-of-the-art training facility located at Niagara County Community College and this proposed funding from tribal revenues will contribute toward improved training facilities and infrastructure for local law enforcement.

It is also proposed that the remaining \$100,000.00 of this tribal revenue be allocated toward the development of an Unmanned Aircraft Program here in the City of

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Niagara Falls. Remote aircraft has a host of potential applications including law enforcement and monitoring, safety assessments and building code enforcement. Accordingly, this program, based on the use of drone technology, would be utilized principally by our Police and Fire Departments, the Department of Parks and Public Works and Code Enforcement. This forward-thinking program would provide for the purchase and licensing of unmanned aircraft as well as appropriate training and risk protocols for our employees.

The proposed reallocation of the \$350,000.00 that was originally intended for the Western New York State First Response and Preparedness Center will advance the economic development of the City through the promotion and protection of the health, safety and welfare of our residents, businesses, and guests. It is therefore recommended that the City Council support the same in all respects.

Will the Council so approve?

Submitted by:

ROBERT M. RESTAINO
Mayor