



A MESSAGE FROM MAYOR BYRON W. BROWN



My Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Recommended Budget reflects the difficult challenges our community is facing while also laying a foundation for future economic recovery and continuing innovation. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Buffalo's economic and fiscal outlooks were bright and moving in the right direction. Investment throughout the entire City was up, unemployment was down by over 50% from the 2008 Recession and for the second year in a row the City was going to end the fiscal year with a projected surplus.

Today, we live in very different circumstances. COVID-19 has taken a significant toll on human life, as well as an economic toll that has propelled us into uncharted territory. The steps our community took to help slow the coronavirus' spread and keep our healthcare system from being overwhelmed were difficult but necessary. My Recommended Budget looks toward the future and lays a strong foundation for an accelerated recovery that keeps our City workforce intact, continues to provide critical services to residents and makes investments that will help make our municipal facilities more resilient in any emergency.

My Administration will accomplish this through a dual strategy. First, I have challenged our Department Heads to rethink our plans for delivering services, retool our processes in a modernized way that will sustain us in a perpetual "new normal", and reignite our economy by being an Intelligent-Smart City. The other vital component for our recovery will be a direct injection of federal disaster relief that will be used to make up for the shortfalls we are projecting in the City's various forms of revenue and due to the expenses to address COVID-19. Federal relief is necessary to ensure that the members of our workforce, who are also City residents, continue to receive their pay so that they can help speed our recovery through spending at local businesses, restaurants, and in rents or mortgage payments. By creating a sustainable environment where people feel secure in their economic future, we will help to create a better future for our entire community.

If the federal government does not provide relief in a timely or sufficient manner, the City of Buffalo will be forced to make painful decisions that will impact essential city services and greatly harm the economic advances we have made in Buffalo over the last decade. The City is prepared to borrow in order to meet its financial obligations and keep our workforce and services whole. This is a less desirable option and will require working with our partners in State government to achieve the desired net positive impact, but my Administration is committed to doing whatever it takes to protect our employees, residents and their families during the greatest economic challenge any of us have ever faced.

Achieving and maintaining a balanced budget during these difficult times will require discipline, cooperation and our collective good will. I am confident that if we approach this challenge in that manner we will succeed and return Buffalo to its previous path of substantial growth and investment. This is the best path forward for our City of Innovation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Byron W. Brown".

BYRON W. BROWN
Mayor