



A MESSAGE FROM MAYOR BYRON W. BROWN



My 2023-2024 Recommended Operating Budget reflects on the difficult challenges our community has faced in the last year by making needed changes to adapt to Buffalo's evolving future. This is a critical point in time for the City of Buffalo. With significant funding between the operating budget, capital budget, annual action plan and the Better Buffalo Fund, we must work deliberately and boldly to ensure that City government works effectively for all of its residents.

Following the mass shooting on May 14th, 2022, it is imperative we continue the progress we've made in East Buffalo while leveraging City resources to bring additional development to all of our neighborhoods.

This recommended budget invests in programs like Legacy Cities which is a plan for the development of infill housing creating affordable home ownership opportunities for residents to live and build generational wealth. Additionally, we are allocating funds to continue the transformation of Jefferson Avenue into a premier business corridor as well as a complete streets program on Bailey Avenue to improve accessibility and mobility options on the street.

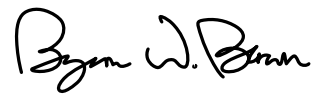
In the aftermath of this winter's November Storm and the Christmas Blizzard, we are continuing to fund important improvements that will combat intense weather events. We will be purchasing new snow-fighting equipment to modernize the fleet, while allocating an additional \$500,000 for snow removal contractors should we face another historic once-in-a-generation storm.

In the present economy, we must continue to pay close attention to our finances. In April, Moody's Investors Service maintained an A1 rating with a stable outlook while S&P assigned an A+ rating also with a stable outlook for the city. Both ratings reflect the City's prudent decision to expand our fund balance policy and to grow our reserves to prepare for a potential rainy day.

The Recommended Budget includes a 3.83% increase in the property tax levy generating approximately \$5.85 million in additional revenue. This means that this year a home assessed at \$100,000 would rise from \$1,027 to \$1,073, a home assessed at \$200,000 would rise from \$2,054 to \$2,146, a commercial property assessed at \$200,000 would rise from \$3,634 to \$3,744, and a commercial property assessed at \$500,000 would rise from \$9,085 to \$9,360. Buffalo remains one of the most affordable cities as our

homestead and non-homestead property tax rates remain the lowest in the region and among other cities in the State of New York. Additionally, to address the changing global economy and the rise of costs in labor, equipment, and supplies, we are proposing a User Fee increase of 8% on average for residential properties and 11% on average for commercial properties to make the refuse enterprise fund self-sufficient.

While difficult decisions must be made, it is critical that we make the most of this moment to build an inclusive and prosperous Buffalo. I am looking forward to working with my partners in government and the members of the Common Council, as well as all community stakeholders to create a budget that reflects our values and meets the growing needs of our growing City.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Byron W. Brown". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'B' at the beginning and a long, sweeping tail that loops back under the name.