

For Immediate Release

## **Clerical union foregoes Cost of Living increase to help utility maintain budget**

Holland, MI, July 1, 2009 – The members of the clerical bargaining unit at the Holland BPW have voted to forego their cost-of-living increase scheduled to become effective July 1, 2009. The clerical unit is affiliated with the Technical, Professional, and Office Workers Association of Michigan (TPOAM).

“The members of the union are aware that the City of Holland and the Holland BPW are having a financially difficult time,” said Debbie Murphy, local vice president of the clerical unit. “The Fire Department has written to the city stating they are giving up their raises for Fiscal Year 2010. As a union we wanted to offer the same gesture to the HBPW as the other unions have done – and forego our 1% raise for the next year.”

In June, the HBPW utility workers bargaining unit, also affiliated with the TPOAM, voted to forego any wage increase for the first year of their renewed contract.

Members of the clerical unit indicated that they wanted to show the City and HBPW management that they care about the bottom line, and could be counted on in difficult times.

“When we last bargained for our contract, at the time we didn’t foresee the community being in this position economically. Many of our members live in the community and are also ratepayers. Each of us is feeling the same financial pinch as everybody else in town,” Murphy added. “We feel that this is the right thing to do.”

In response to the announcement, HBPW General Manager Loren Howard said, “The three-year agreement with the clerical unit provides for annual pay increases of 1-5% based on the consumer price index. The clerical workers action to forego their cost-of-living increase helps manage our costs and keep our rates also as low as possible in these difficult times. This action is appreciated by all at the Holland BPW and will be appreciated by many of our customers.”

The Holland Board of Public Works is a municipally owned utility, providing electricity, water filtration, wastewater treatment, and fiber optic data services to the City of Holland and the surrounding communities.

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