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## **PARK TOWNSHIP & HOLLAND BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS PROPOSE RETAIL WATER AGREEMENT**

3-13-20, Park Township, MI — Park Township and Holland Board of Public Works (HBPW) officials are proposing a new partnership that would bring much of the township's water distribution system into a full-retail relationship with HBPW. Pending the approval of the Park Township Board, HBPW Board and Holland City Council, HBPW could begin serving about 4,000 Park Township water customers as early as July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Under the potential new agreement, only customers who currently receive quarterly water bills from Park Township would transition to monthly billing with HBPW. HBPW would replace existing meters with smart meters, which are read remotely and create a way for customers to track usage through an online portal. The smart meter upgrades will come at no cost to customers.

"This regional partnership brings high value to both HBPW and Park Township ratepayers," said Dave Koster, HBPW general manager. "A combined system reduces risk for both service areas and creates a lower and more predictable cost structure for the township."

Park Township does not have dedicated water utility staff to manage planning and maintenance of the system. The township already relies on HBPW and Holland Charter Township for maintenance and installs. The new agreement would transfer billing, proactive planning and maintenance to HBPW, but leaves Park Township with control over any significant expansions to its water service area.

"HBPW has a strong reputation locally and across the country for reliable service, future-focused planning and community investment," said Howard Fink, Park Township manager. "In entering a full retail agreement with HBPW, our customers would benefit from a highly advanced utility provider, ensuring the system is prudently operated and maintained over time."

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The Park Township Board will meet on this issue during its March 26<sup>th</sup> session and may take action at that time. The agreement would also need to be approved by the HBPW Board and Holland City Council before taking effect. If approved, the agreement could be implemented as early as July 1<sup>st</sup>. If the Park Township Board requires additional time, they would handle the proposal at their April meeting, which would likely push the potential implementation to an October start date.