



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MENASHA EMPLOYEES WORK TOGETHER TO BALANCE BUDGET

MENASHA, WI – March 16, 2011. Unions that represent parks, public works, clerical, custodial, and engineering employees are working with management in an effort to ensure that service levels are maintained for city residents and businesses for the remainder of 2011. This involves our union employees making voluntary changes for the current year, while non-union employees shift wages into their retirement funds.

Union employees will take six furlough days, amounting to a 2 ½ percent reduction in take home pay. In an effort minimize disruption to services, and maintain construction schedules for street work, parks and public works furlough days will be scheduled on Mondays: March 21, April 25, June 20, August 22, September 26, and October 31. Garbage pickup those days will be rescheduled to the following Tuesday. Other union employees will be scheduling their days on a rotating basis. Non-union employees will begin contributing to their retirement plans in April.

City of Menasha employees have repeatedly stepped up over the past two years, delivering the high quality services we expect despite the financial challenges that resulted from seriously flawed administrative decisions in the past. Working together, we have done more with fewer people on the payroll, innovated to form partnerships, and received concessions from three of our four unions. Even before the passage of SB10 our employees had agreed to contribute to their retirement and pay a greater share of their health insurance premiums in 2012.

Mayor Don Merkes notes, “Though uncertainty at the state level is a cause for concern, I am confident that the dedicated people who work for the City of Menasha will maintain the momentum as we move toward a final resolution of the steam utility litigation, and begin new development at Lake Park Villas.”

While offering competitive compensation packages is important, we must also show the people who work for Menasha that we appreciate the work they do. Changes contained in SB10 decrease our ability to compete for quality employees to ensure our continued recovery. Recent retirements throughout the city, many occurring as a result of uncertainty at the state level, represent a loss of institutional knowledge that is difficult to replace. We need to come together as a community to work through these changes together in a spirit of cooperation.