

**Mission officials cut pay**  
**Water Street workers agree to short wages**  
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All of Water Street Ministries's 80 full-time and 30 part-time employees have agreed to accept pay cuts of between 3 and 8 percent for 2010.

The alternative was a cut in services, officials said. Leaders of the Lancaster institution felt that "it was not morally right to cut services at a time when the demand for those services was going to increase," said Jere Shertzer, Water Street's president and chief executive officer.

The move is expected to save the cash-strapped ministry some \$150,000 in its budget.

"It's a hard place to be," financially, Shertzer said Tuesday, "but it's also, I think, a good place to be for our ministry.

"And our staff members have really responded with a passion, a commitment and a trust" that the move was needed.

The Christian ministry at 210 S. Prince St. received 80 percent of its operations funding through donations, and as the national economy tanked in late 2008, officials knew they would have to rely on a surplus, thanks to generous donors over the years, to get through 2009.

Heading into 2010, they knew they needed to take the next step.

The pay cuts were assigned, but staff could offer to give more or ask to give less, officials said.

The organization sent a letter two weeks ago to key ministry partners to notify them of the plans, Shertzer said.

The mission, which had been saving funds by leaving some vacant positions unfilled, will lay off one full-time employee and two part-time employees by the end of the year.

The number of job cuts and program cuts would have been higher without the salary reductions, officials agreed.

Shertzer, Water Street's top official since early 2004, and other top staff people took a higher-percentage pay cut as an example to others, employees said.

"Rather than just expecting us to help carry the load, they're setting a good example for us," said Maria Schaszberger, Water Street Ministries' director of communications.

Shertzer said Water Street is continually trying to answer the question, "How do we hold to what the community needs, as well as be wise in overseeing our resources?"

When Shertzer works late, he said, he sees the people who would be hurt by any cut in Water Street's programs.

They come into the chapel each night for a chance to sleep inside on cots. Otherwise, they could be out on the cold winter streets.

The salary reduction, which will be re-evaluated next year, also has "been kind of a cool spiritual ministry to walk through," Shertzer said. He called it "a chance to live out (a Christian walk) and let God have control."

Homeless men and women in Water Street's recovery programs and shelters often find employment and then move into independent housing.

Now, "we have clients staying on with us" since they can't find work and don't have the resources for an apartment, Shertzer said.

"The reality of it is, even if the economy begins to recover, the individuals who are with us" may be there for a while.

"So I'm expecting we'll probably be in this situation for quite some time," and likely throughout 2010, Shertzer said.

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