



Metrolink commuters board "Red Line Emulator" buses, Wednesday morning, on Patsaouras Plaza. Alicia Grondin, right, of Risk Management, directs commuters. PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD.

Bargaining Talks Resume; Continue into Afternoon

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(Sept. 20) Negotiators for the MTA and UTU were back at the bargaining table at 10 a.m., today, for a negotiating session that continued after a lunch break. It was the first substantive discussions since union leaders called a strike, Sept. 15. Later, officials on both sides reported some progress, although there was no possibility of reaching a settlement today.

In a brief meeting with local media prior to today's meeting, CEO Julian Burke characterized Tuesday's preliminary meeting with the UTU as "cordial and a beginning." Asked about today's bargaining session, he said, "Hope is my gut instinct."

Echoing Burke's optimism, UTU General Chairman James Williams said, "We are prepared to start negotiations...We'll be there as long as it takes. Things are going to move forward."

Some tentative agreements

Prior to the breakdown in contract talks, the MTA had submitted a comprehensive written proposal to the UTU. The two sides had negotiated a number of tentative agreements.

The MTA is asking the UTU to provide responses to contract items still at issue. These include wages, pensions, benefits, operator scheduling and work rules.

Meanwhile, MTA negotiators are in communication by phone with ATU negotiators. No face-to-face meeting has been scheduled.

A meeting has been scheduled Tuesday, Sept. 26, for negotiations with the TCU. The MTA and TCU are already in agreement on many contract issues.

AFL-CIO Rally Planned for Gateway

MTA Security officials are preparing for a protest rally by AFL-CIO members sometime between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., Thursday, at MTA Headquarters. Some 3,000 to 6,000 protesters are expected.

Security officials warn that streets around MTA Headquarters may be

blocked. Although the rally is expected to be peaceful and orderly, MTA staff, they advise MTA staff to avoid scheduling travel from the building during the rally period. Staff members should be prepared to remain in the building between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., or until the area clears of protesters.

Council calls for strike's end

The Los Angeles City Council adopted a motion, Tuesday, calling on the MTA and UTU to "return to the bargaining table immediately to resolve the strike." The motion said the strike is affecting the poor, seniors, students, city employees and others, resulting in "massive disruption in the workplace, in the economy and in the education system...."

An amendment to the motion requested Governor Gray Davis "to negotiate with the (MTA) and the (UTU) to bring this strike to an end."

Paychecks Friday for strikers

Paychecks for the pay period of Sept. 3 - 16 will be distributed to strikers starting Friday and continuing through Monday. At most operating divisions, the staff will set up a table near the front entrance to distribute checks.

Paychecks for bus division employees will be distributed between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Paychecks for rail division and ROC employees will be distributed between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.

For union employees who work at MTA Headquarters, the Payroll Department is making arrangements for distribution of paychecks at the Customer Relations desk on the Plaza level from 8:30 a.m. until 3 p.m., Friday. Employees should use the double door entrance to Customer Relations. Pay envelopes not picked up by 3:00 pm will be placed in the mail.

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