

BREAKING NEWS...

CEO Announces 'New Process' for Labor Talks

(Sept. 22) CEO Julian Burke announced late Friday afternoon that a new process is being initiated to help the labor negotiations along.

The new effort was discussed Friday morning during a conference call that involved the CEO, Board Chair Yvonne Burke, Assembly Speaker Robert Hertzberg, Mayor Richard Riordan and Miguel Contreras of the County Federation of Labor.

As a result, Speaker Hertzberg put together a fact-finding team whose members include Assemblyman Herb Wesson of Los Angeles, a retired California Supreme Court Justice and, possibly, others. Wesson was expected at the Pasadena Hilton Friday evening to meet with MTA and union negotiators. In the meantime, further negotiations have been suspended.

The CEO called the development one that "can only be helpful, not harmful, for negotiators to get a clearer picture of both sides' positions."

"This is a start of another process so we can communicate better," Burke said.

**Bargaining Talks Moving in Fits and Starts;
But Negotiators Were at the Table Friday**

(Sept. 22) Bargaining talks between the MTA and UTU inched forward in fits and starts, Friday, interspersed with caucuses by one side or the other.

The original meeting time of 10 a.m. came and went, but during the noon hour, the negotiating teams reassembled at the bargaining table. Those on-scene for the talks included CEO Julian Burke, Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky and Chief Financial Officer Dick Brumbaugh, along with members of the MTA labor relations team.

In the early afternoon, UTU General Chairman James Williams told media assembled at the bargaining site to stand by for an important announcement at 4 p.m. - a statement reporters took to be a positive sign. It seemed very unlikely, however, that a contract settlement would be announced.

Meanwhile, out on the streets

On the streets, meanwhile, municipal bus lines and Metrolink were bearing the brunt of getting transit-dependent commuters to their destinations.

However, MTA contractor First Transit managed to roll 55 of the 89 buses it provides to serve 12 Metro Bus lines, mostly in the South Bay, South Central and Harbor areas. Pickets that had been patrolling First Transit bus yard entrances were absent Friday. In the Valley, Coach USA continued to provide its 18 buses for lines 96 and 167.

And, in downtown LA, the "Red Line Emulator" continued to ferry passengers from Patsaouras Plaza to subway station stops as far west at Westlake/MacArthur Park.

[Back to MTA Report](#)