



MTA Board Chair Yvonne Burke, flanked by Board members, addresses media at Wednesday news conference.

PHOTO BY JOSÉ UBALDO

## Board Chair Burke Calls for 'Seasoned Federal Mediator' to Intervene in Bargaining Talks

(Sept. 27) MTA Board Chair Yvonne Burke today called for a "seasoned federal mediator who is experienced in transit issues" to intervene in bargaining talks between the MTA and the UTU. Her proposal was announced during a pre-noon news conference at the Hall of Administration.

Burke also raised the possibility that negotiations are at an "impasse." She called on UTU negotiators to provide a written description of their contract demands.

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"If they give us that written response," she said, "we will be back at the table at any point and any time."

"They walked away from a package that was worth \$43 million more in wages and benefits than the MTA is currently paying," Burke said. "They walked away from a 2.7 percent annual wage increase...that amounts to 8.1 percent over the course of three years."

### **Urged a return to table, work**

Burke was joined by fellow Board members and the top leadership of the MTA. Board members appealed for UTU negotiators to return to the bargaining table and to send striking employees back to work.

"Sit down with us and we will give you a fair contract," Mayor Richard Riordan offered the UTU during the news conference. "(A contract) that gives the average bus driver a higher income and one that improves on the efficiency of the MTA so that we can put more buses on the road and give the transit-dependent a much, much better transportation system."

With striking UTU members picketing MTA Headquarters and operating divisions for the 12th day, no new negotiating sessions have been

scheduled. The UTU said it plans a rally, Friday, probably at City Hall.

Meantime, the Board has cancelled its September meeting, having already postponed monthly committee meetings. The next regular meetings are scheduled in October.

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