

MTA LABOR NEWS UPDATE

Wednesday, November 5, 2003

Day 23

Mechanics to Vote Friday on MTA's Last, Best, Final Offer

Striking mechanics are scheduled to vote, Friday, on the MTA's last, best and final multi-year contract offer. Results of the balloting should be announced sometime Friday evening. At a news conference, Tuesday, the president of the ATU advised members to vote against the contract and he again demanded that MTA agree to binding arbitration in the 23-day-old labor dispute.

During a separate news conference, MTA Board members repeated their opposition to binding arbitration. Faced with a serious budget deficit, they said MTA cannot offer the mechanics more than the \$30 million in the last, best and final offer for wages and benefits.

The Board members said MTA cannot turn over the negotiations of employee contracts valued at hundreds of millions of dollars to a third party that is not accountable to the taxpayers. If an arbitrator should award the ATU more than is currently on the table, MTA would be forced to cut service and raise transit fares.

As the best option to end the strike quickly, they urged ATU members to ratify the proposed contract. The proposal includes wage increases totaling 5 percent over three years, an immediate cash infusion of \$4.7 million to the ATU Health & Welfare Trust Fund, along with increased contributions to the Fund by MTA.

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