


[Home](#)
[CEO Hotline](#)
[Viewpoint](#)
[Classified Ads](#)
[Archives](#)
[Metro.net](#) (web)

Resources

[Safety](#)
[Pressroom](#) (web)

[Ask the CEO](#)
[CEO Forum](#)
[Employee Recognition](#)
[Employee Activities](#)
[Metro Projects](#)
[Facts at a Glance](#)
(web)

[Archives](#)
[Events Calendar](#)
[Research Center/ Library](#)
[Metro Classifieds](#)
[Bazaar](#)

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[30/10 Initiative](#)
[Policies](#)
[Training](#)
[Help Desk](#)
[Intranet Policy](#)

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Members of Metro's Major Unions Approve New Labor Contracts

- Members to receive 10.5 percent wage hike; health fund increases
- Catoe credits interest-based negotiations for early agreement

(July 7, 2006) Members of all three of Metro's largest unions – UTU, ATU and TCU – have now voted their approval of the three-year contract agreements announced June 27.

The latest to approve their contract were members of TCU, who voted Thursday, with 99 percent in favor of the agreement. Members of the UTU voted overwhelmingly for the new contract, July 2, while the ATU membership gave their approval on June 29 with 62 percent voting in favor.

"Thanks to interest-based negotiations, we've ushered in a new era in labor relations that will benefit our employees, customers and taxpayers," said Deputy CEO John Catoe, Metro's chief labor negotiator. "The work doesn't stop with these agreements; we will build upon and strengthen our relationships with the unions."

Members of the three unions will receive a 10.5 percent pay increase over the three-year life of the contracts, with an increase of 3 percent in the first year. They will receive a 3.5 percent wage hike the second year and a 4 percent pay increase in the third year.

Bus operators, for example will receive a new top hourly rate of \$24.30 for those hired before July 1, 1997. Those hired after that date will earn up to \$20.55 an hour.

Health care funding for the unions will increase by 8 percent to 10 percent, depending on the contract.

Catoe noted that the agreements are within the Board's authorization. He said they balance Metro's fiscal constraints with the 7,000 union member's needs, and are comparable to what other employee unions in the area recently received.

