



NEWS

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MTA BOARD PROPOSES NEXT STEPS IN EFFORT TO REACH AGREEMENT IN CONTRACT TALKS

The MTA Board has proposed steps it believes can result in a new contract with the United Transportation Union whose 4,300 members have been on strike since Sept. 16.

Speaking at a Board press conference at the Hahn Hall of Administration today, LA County Supervisor and MTA Board Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke said the bus drivers' union again walked out on negotiations with the MTA.

"Once again, the union leadership walked away without entering into any real negotiations," said Burke. "They walked away from a package worth \$43 million more in wages and benefits than the MTA is currently paying."

Burke said she sent a letter to union leaders formally requesting three things:

- a written response to the MTA's proposals, asking them to tell the MTA what they think it would take to end the strike.
- agree with the MTA to call in a federal mediator. Only a seasoned expert in mediation, with a background in the transit industry, can help move negotiations along if it appears the two sides are reaching an impasse.
- allow our employees to come back to work while negotiations continue.

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Los Angeles Mayor Richard J. Riordan and LA County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky were among the other nine MTA Board members at today's press conference.

"We are unanimously in favor of having a better contract that will give better service to the transit dependent of LA County by cutting out antiquated, increasing expensive work rules," said Riordan, who urged striking bus and rail operators to come back to work and union leaders to negotiate.

Riordan said the MTA's proposals would give bus and rail operators a higher average income and "improve on the efficiency of the MTA so that we can put more buses on the road."

Yaroslavsky said that several major issues must be dealt with, including wages, transit zones, benefits and work rules, but that resolving these issues requires communication from union negotiators.

"The union and the MTA owe it to the people of this county to engage in bargaining, to actually negotiate," said Yaroslavsky. "We cannot negotiate with ourselves. We can't negotiate when there's nobody on the other side of the table, and the union has now twice walked out on negotiations."

Yaroslavsky said the strike is a "terrible tragedy" for the people of the county who depend on public transportation.

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