

County of Milwaukee
Interoffice Communication

DATE: 8/7/2018
TO: John Weishan, Jr., Chairperson, Transportation, Public Works and Transit Committee
FROM: Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Department of Transportation
SUBJECT: Status of Contract Negotiations with Amalgamated Transit Union

BACKGROUND

For the past three years, employees represented by the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local #998 have been working under a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with a term of April 1, 2015 thru March 31, 2018. The labor agreement is between ATU and Milwaukee Transport Services, Inc. (MTS), a quasi-governmental instrumentality of Milwaukee County responsible for managing and operating the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS). Negotiations toward a new CBA began earlier this year:

February 22, 2018	Negotiations kick-off
March 6, 2018	Initial proposals were exchanged
May 11, 2018	ATU responded to MTS's proposal
May 30, 2018	MTS responded to ATU's proposal; ATU requested Federal Mediator

There were no negotiation sessions in June/July due to limited availability of the Federal Mediator

August 7 to 9, 2018	Negotiation sessions were scheduled with assistance of a Federal Mediator
---------------------	---

At the time of writing this informational report, we had not yet engaged with the Federal Mediator.

The backdrop for these negotiations is persistent fiscal issues affecting Milwaukee County and Transit. For example, State dollars, which provide for the largest funding source, has not increased in over 5 years. Despite frozen funding levels from the State, Milwaukee County has helped Transit to continue to provide for increases in wages and to pay higher costs for healthcare, etc. In turn, MCTS has sought out efficiencies that are often met with opposition by its Union.

To further describe the fiscal constraints on Milwaukee County and Transit, consider quotes by the Wisconsin Policy Forum within their annual review of the County budget (2018):

“The County’s structural imbalance has been widely analyzed and discussed for years and its causes certainly should be well known. . . Either revenues need to be increased, or services need to be reduced.”

Rob Henken, President of the Wisconsin Policy Forum, a nonpartisan,
independent public policy research organization

According to the review, under state law, the county lacks local tax options beyond the property tax (the annual growth of which is capped by the state) and the sales tax (which is limited for counties to the half-

cent Milwaukee County currently imposes). That leaves fee increases — such as the vehicle registration fee, bus fare increases and parking fees — as its only options on the revenue side.

Negotiations Update Website

MCTS established a website for updates on progress towards negotiating a new CBA: <https://www.ridemcts.com/laborupdate>. It contains frequently asked questions (FAQs), timeline information, and contract related documents. The website is a reliable source of information about proposals made by both MTS and ATU. Additional updates will be posted as negotiations progress.

Finally, MTS's goals for negotiations were presented to ATU at the negotiations kick-off meeting:

- Uphold the mission (our purpose):
 - Provide reliable, convenient and safe public transportation
- Employee Engagement and Satisfaction
 - Provide a stable work environment and family supporting wages
- Responsible Budgeting
 - Accurately project costs/revenues
- Preserving service
 - Maintain existing Bus Hours of Service, as possible
 - Explore route efficiency/effectiveness and propose changes when needed
 - Provide paratransit services as required
- Preserve reasonable fares
- Control costs and manage to our budget

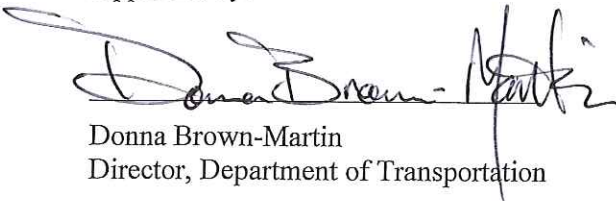
RECOMMENDATION

This report is for informational purposes unless otherwise directed.

Prepared by:

Dan Boehm, President & Managing Director, MCTS

Approved by:



Donna Brown-Martin
Director, Department of Transportation

cc: Chris Abele, County Executive
Raisa Koltun, Chief of Staff, County Executive
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, County Board of Supervisors
Joe Lamers, Budget Director, DAS - PSB
Steve Cady, Research Director, Office of the Comptroller