

County of Milwaukee
Interoffice Communication

19-08

DATE: 8/16/2019
TO: Theodore Lipscomb, Sr. Chairman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
FROM: Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Department of Transportation
SUBJECT: Status of Contract Negotiations with Amalgamated Transit Union

BACKGROUND

The Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) and Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) began contract negotiations 18 months ago. Since the last update in July, MCTS and ATU met with the assistance of a mediator from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service on July 24th, and July 25th, as well as on August 1, 2019.

At the first meeting in July, MCTS took a significant step toward settling the ATU contract. Per ATU's request, MCTS dropped its proposal for union members to pay co-insurance for healthcare. This has been the biggest concern expressed by ATU about the MCTS package proposals. Instead of co-insurance, MCTS developed a package proposal with minimal changes to healthcare costs. In addition, increases in wages ensure that ATU members experience a net take home pay increase, even if they meet healthcare out-of-pocket maximums.

The wage package includes honoring ATU's request for quarterly wage increases in the form of cost-of-living adjustments known as COLA, as well as annual wage increases for mechanics, bus operators and other represented positions. Of course, the backdrop for these negotiations has always been the fiscal constraints on Milwaukee County and MCTS. Despite stagnant State and Federal funding sources and decreasing ridership that results in declines in passenger revenue, MCTS has always pursued a fair deal for its employees that provides for wages consistent with industry best practices, and a benefit package that remains attractive to existing employees and new recruits alike. The final package proposal presented by MCTS to ATU is consistent with these pursuits as well as enables a balanced budget for 2020.

Should there be new developments after the deadline for this report, an additional verbal update will be provided in Committee.

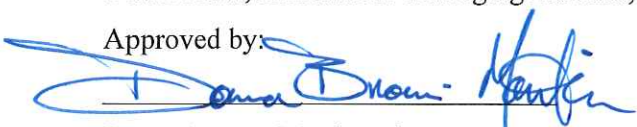
RECOMMENDATION

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
Joe Lamers, Budget Director, DAS - PSB
Steve Cady, Research Director, Office of the Comptroller