

Evans, Kelsey

From: Thomas Stawicki <legislatedirector@atu998.org>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 12:23 PM
To: SH County Board Transportation, Public Works, and Transit
Cc: President@atu998.org; 'Michael Bautch'; tjstawicki231@gmail.com
Subject: Items 5 (20-327) and 6 (20-328)

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Good Morning Mr. Chairman and County Supervisors.
Below, please find our responses to the above items.

Item 5, Paratransit. This Union has not changed its position on recommending that ALL Paratransit functions be brought in-house. We feel that by having all paratransit functions become a division of MCTS and cutting out the middle man, the County could realize a savings that could be spent on expanding paratransit service and increasing benefits for paratransit drivers.

Item 6, COVID-19 Response. This Union feels that the response from management of MCTS at the onset of this health emergency has been slow. ATU998 was forced to depend on its members and the generosity of the riding public for face masks and rubber gloves during the first weeks of this emergency. We also feel that management should have been on constant contact with ATU998 so plans and strategies could have been drawn up and implemented that would have benefited both.

President Macon, Vice President Bautch, and myself strongly agree that communication is essential for the smooth operation of a transit system, and this was not the case.

Although this report is dated April 17, 2020, it is clear that the operations plans of MCTS changed week to week, in some cases due to the fact some plans were not in the best interests of passengers or operators. It was only through the insistence of this Union and the Milwaukee County Board that the company put into place a policy of rear door boarding and no fare when it did. It was not until almost one month after the health emergency was declared that MCTS began furnishing PPE to its front line workers. This can be confirmed through communication with Mr. Nate Holton and through various news articles.

There have been many changes in procedures in the last month since this report was generated, and sadly to say, some terminations. Two operators from National Express, one of our paratransit providers, were discharged for speaking out about working conditions during this pandemic. Tyrone McShan and Union Steward Taresa Cooper were discharged in April for releasing a video documenting the lack of PPE and working conditions at National Express. We feel this is an attempt by National Express to intimidate its employees and union members to not bring to light conditions that its operators face every day. And it is much worse that MCTS management has sat silent on this subject.

We also have major concerns about the lack of COVID-19 funds reaching the Paratransit providers. As of May 5, National Express has communicated to us that they have not received any supplemental funding from MCTS, and was at risk of having its credit cards canceled. We have not heard back yet from First Transit.

This Union is also questioning a Bonus Pay policy the company put in to effect recently and back dated to Mid-March. Although this Union greatly appreciates some aspects of this pay, we question others. This bonus (\$200), an incentive to keep operators from taking extra off time, can only be achieved if an operator works his entire 5 day work week. Operators become ineligible for the bonus if they take a personal day, if they take a sick day, or they are out on union business. The company somehow, seems to think this virus can only affect those operators who work their 5 day workweek and not only 4 days. We feel that high attendance can be maintained if the company agrees to amend this policy by paying its front line and essential workers a flat \$40 dollars per day bonus. This would be fair to all employees and would greatly increase moral.

In closing, we would like to thank the County Board Members, both past and present, for their continued support as we work through these difficult times. We look forward to working with all of you the next two years.

Respectfully,

James Macon, President ATU998

Tom Stawicki, Legislative Director ATU998

Michael Bautch, Vice President ATU998