

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Bill Watterson, General Manager
(802) 864-2282 or bwatterson@cctaride.org

CCTA UPDATE: No Union Commitment to Bring Proposal to Drivers

Burlington, VT (March 22, 2014) – CCTA today delivered another compromise contract proposal to the Union in the hope of ending the driver strike that began on Monday, March 17.

Unfortunately, after seven hours of negotiations today, the Union ultimately rejected CCTA's proposed compromise and walked out of negotiations without notice while the CCTA team was still actively engaged with the federal mediators at 8:20 PM. CCTA is disappointed an agreement was not reached and is deeply concerned about the impact on its passengers.

CCTA's proposal included compromises in areas identified by the Union as priorities. However, Union demands continue to be out of line with CCTA's obligation to operate a safe, affordable and reliable public transportation system.

Compensation

CCTA drivers are the second highest paid transit drivers in northern New England. The base wage, not including overtime or benefits, for a CCTA driver with one or more years of service is \$42,494 per year. Total compensation ranges from \$53,893 to \$71,535.

- **Union Position** – Despite public statements suggesting wages are not an issue, the Union sought additional wage increases and refused to accept CCTA's offer of a guaranteed 2% increase each year of the contract.
- **CCTA Position** – Drivers have received wage increases each year during these difficult economic times and CCTA believes its recent proposal of guaranteed 2% annual raises for the duration of the contract is fair compensation that exceeds average increases in the cost of living.

Cameras on Buses

As the region's public transit provider, CCTA must maintain the ability to ensure public safety and manage risk. Use of on-board cameras to substantiate complaints is integral to CCTA's ability to protect its passengers and employees. CCTA's ability to investigate all concerns brought forth by the public also gives peace of mind to the parents who rely on our service to get their children to and from school.

- **Union Position** - Anonymous complaints concerning drivers cannot be used as either the basis for discipline or even the basis to commence an investigation. Even if the statements made in an anonymous complaint could be proven completely true through the use of on-board cameras or other evidence, CCTA would not be allowed to bring the incident into the progressive disciplinary process.



- **CCTA Position** - CCTA has agreed that an anonymous complaint cannot be the sole basis for the imposition of discipline. However, CCTA cannot accept the notion that an anonymous complaint should not be subject to review. Acceptance of this Union proposal would represent a complete abdication of CCTA's responsibility to ensure the safety of its passengers and the public.

Part-Time Drivers

- **Union Position** – The Union proposed to remove part-time positions from the collective-bargaining agreement and reject CCTA's offer to reduce from 13 to seven part-time positions. Instead, the Union proposed to create highly restrictive reserve positions.
- **CCTA Position** – The Union proposal would limit the use of their proposed "reserve driver" until after other full-time drivers have had the opportunity to take voluntary overtime at a pay rate of time and a half. Essentially, CCTA would be hiring full time reserve employees that could only drive after other full time employees have exhausted all of their opportunities for overtime. The result would be multiple drivers being paid to be on stand-by, not performing any service to the public, while other drivers provide the service at an overtime rate. This proposal greatly increases costs to CCTA, its passengers and its communities, and ultimately would do little to address the concerns the Union has expressed about fatigue.

Spread Time

- **Union Position** – The Union proposed to limit the maximum scheduled spread time to 12.5 hours, a retreat from the Union's earlier proposal to increase it to 13.5 hours. (Some statements from Union spokespeople, and subsequent reports from media have erroneously suggested the 13.5-hour spread time proposal was CCTA's.)
- **CCTA Position** - Improvements to full-time driver schedules and the preservation of existing full time jobs have been a focus of CCTA in negotiations. In response to drivers concerns, CCTA offered to cap any spread time at 13.5 hours, removing the possibility of spread time exceeding 13.5 hours due to either voluntary or involuntary overtime. To provide service when it is most needed by the public, CCTA focuses on peak commuting periods with more buses during busy commuting hours, which makes split shifts (working in the morning and the late afternoon and evening, with the middle of the day off) a necessity and commonplace in public transportation throughout the nation. Without an increase in spread time to 13.5 hours, CCTA will not be able to create more full-time 40-hour schedules.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON NEGOTIATIONS

Customers seeking additional information on the labor negotiations, including the text of the most recent proposals and findings of an independent Factfinder, should visit

<http://cctaride.org/news-and-events/>