



On The Move

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SEPTA Storms Out of Bargaining Session, Refusing to Address Important Non-Economic Issues

Negotiations took a big step backward today as SEPTA's bargaining representatives refused to address *non-economic issues* affecting operator and public safety. Some of the issues involve contractual provisions the union wants enforced, but SEPTA managers think they can ignore the contract and do as they please.

Since negotiations broke down, the Union has been trying to get SEPTA back to the table to discuss economic issues, such as pension reform, health care and wage improvements. However, SEPTA is refusing to present a reasonable economic package. Instead, they are opposed to any and all improvements in our pension, while pushing a hard line on health care concessions, including an inferior health care plan with the option of maintaining our current benefits, but at the cost of *over \$400 a month for family coverage*.

SEPTA's position on pension reform is particularly outrageous when you consider that last year management gave themselves a pension increase of more than \$500 a month! At the same time, they're telling us there is no money to raise the pension benefits of our members. Here's the bottom line.

The chances of a strike at 12:01 a.m., November 1 increased significantly today. Last night, a well-attended meeting of "Solid 234" union activists stepped up the Local's strike preparations. Today, the leadership met with politicians at every level of government in the hope that progressive minded political leaders will press the Republicans in control of the SEPTA Board to come to their senses, particularly Pat Deon, the strike happy chairman of the SEPTA Board. It's important to remember that Deon led the infamous attack on our members in 1998, causing a 40 day strike, the second longest in the Local's history.

As we've been saying, it's time to get ready to rumble. Our jobs and our livelihoods are on the line. Nothing is more important. We must have the will to fight.

WE MUST AND WE WILL!