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## CCTA bus drivers 'prepared to strike'

Written by

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Bus drivers for the Chittenden County Transportation Authority say they are contemplating a strike over the authority's push for shorter work weeks and an increase in the number of part-time drivers.

The drivers said Thursday they are planning an informational picket at noon Monday at the corner of Church and Cherry streets in Burlington.

The drivers, who are represented by Teamsters Local 597, says management wants to cut drivers' hours 2.5 hours per week. The latest offer is in the process of being voted on by the drivers.

"Our goals," chief steward and negotiating committee member Mike Walker said, "are protecting decent full-time employment for Vermonters, achieving a rational and respectful discipline system, and reaching a negotiated agreement with CCTA management, rather than having a unilateral 'last offer' forced on us."

While the drivers would prefer a negotiated settlement, "we are definitely prepared to

strike if there is no other way to get management to talk with us," he said.

CCTA issued a statement later Thursday.

"CCTA negotiated with the Union for eight months, and reached a tentative agreement with the Union Stewards and Business Agent," the authority said. "The Drivers' Bargaining Unit voted against the agreement. More recently, the Mechanics' Bargaining Unit and the CCTA Board of Commissioners approved the Mechanics' contract."

Mediation between CCTA and the drivers was followed by a fact-finding process. After that was completed, another tentative agreement was reached that is now being considered by the drivers.

Read the factfinder's report and recommendations at <http://www.cctaride.org/news/labor.html>.

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