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CCTA to unveil new offer to bus drivers

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Burlington, Vermont - April 13, 2011

There's a new proposal on the table to avert a looming strike by bus drivers in Chittenden County.

CCTA won't announce the details until this afternoon, but they hope it will convince the drivers to keep the buses rolling.

This offer comes in advance of one final mediation session planned for tomorrow between CCTA and the bus drivers union. CCTA officials say they are willing to compromise.

"CCTA will be coming to the table with a real interest and desire to come to an agreement and figure this out to avoid a strike. We don't want that, and we're hopeful and expect the union and the drivers will be coming with the same intentions," said Meredith Birkett of CCTA.

"I think the company is positioned right now to go to the bargaining table, to do what needs to be done to try and get this settled. It's going to take some of our own people's understanding to reach that," said Ron Rabideau of the bus drivers union.

The drivers have already rejected two tentative agreements. They remain opposed to CCTA's plans to hire more part-time workers to cover peak ridership hours.

CCTA has about 9,000 riders a day. It serves 10 communities.

Melinda Davenport will be at the CCTA press conference this afternoon and will have an update on the Channel 3 News at 5 p.m.

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This sounds very positive. Applause to CCTA for having a positive and proactive approach. Attempts to make this fit the traditional narrative of Union strife seem inappropriate. These two groups do not seem far apart and seem to want a good relationship, but they are trapped in the structure of bargaining rules designed for more adversarial scenarios.

I hope for the best, but will not be on the bus Friday without my regular drivers.

Despite my hopes for a settlement and my respect for the CCTA organization, I support the drivers and am making back up plans for Friday just in case. I advise other CCTA commuters to do the same. Drivers should also prepare for more time for Friday's commute, in case some of CCTA's 9,000 riders using cars cause traffic.

Keeping my fingers crossed and tuning in at 05:00 pm.

Thanks WCAX

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