



TEAMSTERS LOCAL UNION NO. 1205

AFFILIATED WITH THE INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS

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Contract Negotiations Update: 8

September 27, 2015

Dear Brothers and Sisters working for Baumann Buses,

On Friday, September 25, Baumann Buses sent to the press and to its customers something it called an “information release.” That piece of writing—allegedly about our contract dispute—could more truly be characterized as a “*misinformation release*,” since it contained a lot of deceptive and definitely counterproductive doubletalk.

For example, Baumann first says in the release that the offer it provided to the Union in writing the week before was not really an “offer on which employees could vote” but merely a “recap of where the company stands.” Then later in the release the company describes that same written document (which it just said we shouldn’t vote on) as “a fair and competitive offer,” and “an offer that provides a balanced agreement,” a “fair agreement that has everything in it that the company can possibly put on the table.” It sounds as though the company is trying to give school districts the impression that somehow Local 1205 members will not be voting on whether to accept or reject an “offer”/“recap”/proposal—call it what you will. (And by the way, the Union has a right to call for a vote on *anything*, no matter what kind of shifty terminology the company uses.)

Unacceptable!—Seven Examples

The deceptiveness that matters most is in the section of the release the company describes as a “recap [of] where the parties are currently situated.” It’s a fact that we’ve made important progress in recent weeks as we’ve bargained for a new contract. And the company lists several matters that have been thus far discussed (without indicating that some have been agreed to and some not). The company uses various phrases, like “significantly increased” and “substantial wage increases,” about which some people might say, “You can put lipstick on a pig but it’s still a pig.” However, the main and wildly dishonest thing to comment on is what the company leaves out of this supposed “recap.” The company fails to “recap” other matters, which Baumann is insisting on and which our Negotiating Committee cannot agree to. I’ll mention only 7 examples:

1. Baumann insists on eliminating all presently earned sick and vacation days (earned and owed under the current contract);
2. Baumann insists on eliminating all present employer contributions to medical premiums for family members (something scores of employees currently benefit from under the current contract);
3. Baumann insists on no wage increases in the first year for 95% of the entire group (virtually every bus company on Long Island has provided wage increases to their employees this school year);
4. Draconian work rules (which don’t exist in the expired contract)—that could have employees immediately fired for certain minor mistakes and that deny them recourse to the Union’s grievance procedure;
5. A “Uniform Policy” (which doesn’t exist in the expired contract) that would force employees to spend

large sums of their own money on the purchase and cleaning of company-designated apparel. Further, if employees do not wear the specific items the employer insists on but which the employer will not provide, employees will be fined an unspecified amount of money and perhaps lose their jobs!

6. Baumann refuses to allow extra work to be bid on by seniority. (Favoritism would rule.)
7. Baumann refuses to commit to repair and/or alleviate dangerous working conditions, conditions that OSHA has stated “can lead to death.”

I could mention 20 other matters that still separate the parties, but that is not the purpose of this document. In the last paragraph of the release, Baumann states that no one should question the idea that the company’s current position is “fair”! Well, we most certainly do question that. And we’ve given here just some of the evidence of the company’s unfairness; and of the dishonesty with which Baumann negotiates; and of the company’s disrespect for its employees.

Carefully Reviewed and Unanimously Rejected

So we say to Ron and Connie Baumann: No matter what you call your present position, it was carefully reviewed and unanimously rejected by the elected Local 1205 Negotiating Committee. (And the minor tweaks you presented via email on Friday, the 25th, do nothing to address our objections.) If substantive moves are not forthcoming, you can bet that Local 1205 members will indeed be on the street—protesting not only the unjust terms the company is presenting, but the bad faith with which the company representatives have been “negotiating.”

Brothers and sisters, as I’ve said all along, withholding our labor is the last resort. And it is a fact that we’ve worked diligently since last winter to negotiate in good faith, hoping to renew the contract on terms that are reasonable and fair. But, as we see the situation at the moment: 1) we will continue our commitment to inform the public, so they can make any needed contingency plans; 2) we will, this week, set a firm date by which a contract the Negotiating Committee and membership deem acceptable must be arrived at; 3) if such a contract is not arrived at by that date, we will exercise our federally protected right to withhold our labor.

We will continue to request that the public—our neighbors and friends—urge Baumann to be a respectful corporate citizen. It is a fact that Baumann’s wealth has been generated by taxpayer money. Local 1205 members are residents of and taxpayers on Long Island—and hardworking, proud, and professionally trained employees, caring for and transporting our most precious cargo. Baumann employees should be treated and compensated with the respect every person deserves.

In solidarity,

Timothy Lynch

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Cc: School Districts
The Press
Others