

City of Racine: Mayor urges council to recognize Transit Workers' Union

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Common Council will vote today to honor contract of Teamsters Local 200, hire transit workers as city employees

City of Racine – Today the City of Racine Common Council will vote on a proposal from Mayor Mason to make all RYDE transit system employees City employees. Formerly, the City contracted with a private company to manage the system and the employees. However, the private company's contract is set to expire at the end of the month and when put out to RFP, no other companies bid on the contract. To ensure no disruption to bus service, the best solution is to directly hire the more than 90 RYDE employees and create a new City Department of Transportation. What is unique in this instance is that the City is also recognizing an additional labor union, General Teamsters Local Union 200, as well as their three-year contract which had previously been negotiated with the outgoing private company and ratified by members of Local 200.

“At a time when many employers are fighting against unionization in the workplace, I am proud to honor the contract that the Teamsters negotiated in good faith and to recognize the transit workers' desire to be represented by the Union. I come from a labor background. When I served in the legislature, I fought to protect labor unions during the Act 10 battle. Transit workers are some of the few workers that retain legal authority to collectively bargain. Many of our transit employees are City residents, who know this City and our residents like the backs of their hands, and I'm glad and grateful to be able to bring these unionized workers into the City's workforce. I want to thank Tom Bennett from Local 200 for working with us and his members to make this a smooth transition. Our residents who rely on the RYDE system for transportation won't notice anything different in terms of their bus

service, but this is an important and exciting transition for us internally,” **said City of Racine Mayor, Cory Mason.**

Tom Bennett, the Secretary Treasurer of Teamsters Local 200 which represents the RYPD employees said, “The City of Racine has set a course to proactively serve the community with a strategic plan to manage the RYDE public transit system in the near future. With the approval by the City Alders, the foresight by the City shall create opportunities for not only those that utilize the public transit system, but to secure a sound environment for the current and future Bus Operators and Employees of RYDE. Our organization and its members are excited to be part of this new path the City of Racine is undertaking.”

The Common Council will vote tonight, at their regularly scheduled meeting which starts at 7pm. The meeting is held virtually via Zoom but can be viewed live on the City’s Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/CityOfRacineWI>