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IMMEDIATE

TRANSCRIPT: NYC Transit Interim President Feinberg Appears Live on WCBS Newsradio 880

NYC Transit Interim President Sarah Feinberg appeared live on WCBS Newsradio 880 with Steve Scott to discuss the resumption of front door boarding on buses and the agency's dire financial situation.

A transcript of the interview appears below.

Steve Scott: 7:03 at WCBS on Monday, August 31. There are changes today for people who ride MTA buses for one thing. You'll have to start paying fares, again. Live on our newslines, New York City Transit Interim President Sarah Feinberg. Good morning.

Sarah Feinberg: Good morning. Nice to be with you.

Scott: It's great to have you on. No more free rides on city buses, tell us about the resumption of fare collections today.

Feinberg: That's right. Alas, we do need to start collecting fares again. As you and others are aware the MTA is in a really serious financial situation. And now is really the time that we have to start collecting fares again. Of course, making sure that our riders are safe and our bus operators are safe is our top priority. So, while we're collecting fares we're also opening up the bus a little bit to make sure that there's an additional ability to social distance.

Scott: Yeah, front door boarding is resuming today. We've heard anecdotally from riders about some crowding issues on some bus lines, will front door boarding help with that, you think?

Feinberg: I think it will. Look, this is New York City and a lot of people ride the bus and the subway. So we're always going to have some crowding issues, and you're probably never going to be able to get the six feet that you would like, but we do think that this will help quite a bit. So this really opens up the front of the bus, gives people the ability to spread out a little bit while, you know, maintaining a lot of space between riders and bus operators. We've put up a barrier between the operator and riders so we can really minimize sort of the air circulation between the two, but also give riders more space.

Scott: Some bus drivers have said the MTA has not done enough to protect them. How would you respond to that?

Feinberg: Well, look, we have been hit incredibly hard by COVID. You know, we spent months where we had thousands of people quarantined, many became sick, we've unfortunately lost 131 of our colleagues. And so, you know, there is a lot of anxiety at MTA among our workforce and for good reason. These were the heroes who were out every day, you know, all day, all night moving the folks who needed to get to work, not just moving New York through this crisis, but really giving New York the ability to survive this crisis. So look, I mean, this is what we're doing to protect our workforce and also to protect our riders. Masks are readily available, we give PPE to all of our operators, we've put this barrier up between the operator and the riders to protect the operator. You know, but we also we also realized we need to do more, and so over the fall we're going to be installing an even more significant barrier between operators and riders, as well.

Scott: I want to segue to the subways. Can you update us on broken windows on subway cars? Any more of those over the weekend?

Feinberg: This is so frustrating. We had one incident over the weekend. It just, you know, it really feels like a kick to the stomach to all New Yorkers. You know, we have had a tough couple of months. You know, we are trying as a city to get through this, to get to the other side of it. And then you've got some some, you know, person out there, who's decided that for whatever reason, whether they're working through something themselves or just lashing out, they're kicking in windows, they're smashing windows with a hammer. You know, look, each of these windows costs New Yorkers. It costs taxpayer dollars to replace the glass. We have to take the train out of service. And by the way, you know, it's not safe. You got kids riding on these trains, we've got broken glass, it's just, it's outrageous. I'm so frustrated. You know, the MTA workforce is frustrated. You know, I know the police are frustrated 'cause they've been unable to catch whoever's doing this. So look, this is a perfect example of see something, say something. If you see someone doing this, if you see someone behaving like this, please, you know, let folks know. Raise your hand, you know, let the ticket booth know, report it to a police officer. We investigate every single one of these and we're gonna hold folks accountable.

Scott: Before we let you go, do you think overnight subway service will resume anytime soon or have we seen the end of that in New York City?

Feinberg: No, look, I think it's going to come back at some point. This is the city that never sleeps, so it needs a subway system that runs 24/7. I can't promise it's going to be soon. We've got a long way to go to continue to get to the other side of this thing. But it's absolutely going to come back at some point.

Scott: So that is something that New Yorkers who work the early shift can count on, that at some point it will come back?

Feinberg: That's right.

Scott: All right. New York City Transit Interim President Sarah Feinberg. Great to talk with you. Thanks for coming on today.

Feinberg: Great to talk to you. Have a great day.