

Staff Summary

Subject AGREEMENTS WITH VARIOUS MTA UNIONS PROVIDING EXTENSION OF ADDITIONAL DEATH BENEFITS RELATED TO COVID-19	Date September 15, 2021
Department	Vendor Name N/A
Department Head Name Paul Fama Chief People Officer	Contract Number N/A
Department Head Signature	Contract Manager Name N/A
Project Manager Name	Table of Contents Ref. #

Board Action						Internal Approvals			
Order	To	Date	Approval	Info	Other	Order	Approval	Order	Approval
1	MTA Board	9/15/2021	X			1	Chief People Officer		
						2	Chief Financial Officer		
						3	General Counsel		
						4	Chairman/CEO		

Purpose:

To obtain the Board's prospective approval of Agreements to be reached through collective bargaining with various MTA unions.

Discussion:

The MTA's heroic workforce has continuously provided critical transportation services during the pandemic, moving health care workers, first responders, and many other essential employees throughout the region. As of September 13, 2021, the agency has sadly lost 170 MTA employees due to COVID-19-related infections.

In April 2020 the MTA Board unanimously ratified the first-in-the-nation COVID-19 Family Benefits Agreement to provide payment of \$500,000 from the MTA to the spouse, beneficiary or estate of any worker who died as a result of COVID-19, in addition to providing health insurance for three years to the spouse and any dependent children (up to the age of 26).

Per their original terms, the supplemental death benefit agreements reached in April 2020 expired on April 13, 2021. In recognition of the ongoing toll of COVID-19 and to honor the heroic service of our colleagues, the MTA subsequently engaged with its Unions to discuss extension of these supplemental death benefits.

Those agreements extended the availability of the supplemental Family Benefits Agreement until August 31, 2021. Eligibility rules remained unchanged except an employee would relinquish eligibility for the supplemental benefits if an approved vaccine was made available to him/her and the employee was not vaccinated, unless the employee has a valid documented exception to vaccination. The vaccination requirement went into effect on June 1, 2021. This Staff Summary requests the Board's Adoption of a further extension under the same terms as those approved in April of this year until December 31, 2021. Verbal agreement on the extension has been reached with the Transport Workers Union, representing the majority of represented employees at NYCT, and is currently being used as the template for discussions with the MTA's other bargaining units. In addition, the extension would apply to non-represented employees under equivalent terms, as with the original agreement.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the MTA Board prospectively approve extension of the earlier agreements through December 31, 2021 and authorize the Chairman, or his designee, to execute such agreements without further approval on the same terms with any certified representatives of MTA employees which have not yet executed such agreements. Further, the Chairman would be authorized to extend the supplemental benefits to the non-represented workforce under the same terms.