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## **Sarasota County imposes pay and benefit changes for the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1701**

In accordance with state law, Sarasota County Government today notified the ATU Local 1701 president/bargaining agent that it would impose the terms set forth by the county commissioners in the Sept. 8, 2009 impasse public hearing. Under those terms, effective April 24, a wage freeze for bus operators will go into effect. On May 22, the transition to different leave and medical insurance plans will be completed, which is intended to manage costs and promote employee health and productivity.

In a memo to the county commissioners on Tuesday, County Administrator Jim Ley wrote:

“Our role as stewards of taxpayer dollars is not an easy one, particularly during difficult economic times. I continue to appreciate the response from the majority of our employees as they have demonstrated sensitivity to public sentiment and financial realities.

With the exception of the bus operators, all non-bargaining and bargaining employees have shifted to more sustainable health insurance plans that encourage wellness and wise cost-of-care decisions. In addition, most employees have accepted wage freezes and changes to leave plans understanding that we are living in a community that has been significantly impacted by this recent recession.”

Three tentative agreements have been taken to the collective bargaining unit since January 2009. All failed ratification by ATU employees.

“The county plans to continue its legal obligation to negotiate in good faith”, Ley said. “I am committed to serving the public, mindful of their economic struggles, alert to our shrinking revenues and unswerving in our role as community stewards.”

A \$40 million general fund revenue shortfall is projected in fiscal year 2011.

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