The delegates to the 59th Convention of the Amalgamated Transit Union unanimously voted John Costa to serve as international president for the next three years. The General Executive Board previously appointed Costa to serve the remaining four months of the term of the late international president, Larry Hanley, who passed away in May.

“I’m honored to stand here today. I am honored,” said Costa as the delegates chanted ‘Costa, Costa, Costa’. “But the energy that you give me to do this job is remarkable. This is a great union. We are one big family. And I just want to recognize and thank everyone here for your support. It’s just been a remarkable week.”

International Executive Vice President Javier Perez, Jr., was re-elected to another three-year term. And, International Secretary-Treasurer Oscar Owens defeated Local 113 Financial Secretary Kevin Morton, to serve another three-year term.

The 59th Convention of the Amalgamated Transit Union reconvened on Thursday, September 26, 2019, at 8:48 a.m.

Invocation

The Invocation was delivered by Rev. Ralph E. Williamson of the First AME Church here in Las Vegas, NV. Williamson prayed, “Lift us above unrighteous anger. and mistrust with a simple steadfast reliance on service by doing the best we can in our various capacities.”
Resolution 3

The Chair recognized Marquel Williams, 241-Chicago, IL, who “asked for clarity on Resolution 3,” which was referred to the Maintenance Committee for consideration on Day Three.

Chair John Costa responded, “Brother, we are dealing with that in the Maintenance Committee – that resolution. We will [deal with it] when that comes up.”

Credentials Report

Credentials Committee Chair Eric Tuck gave the final Credentials Committee report, saying that no additional delegates had registered since the previous day’s report. Tuck reported that the committee found 663 credentials to be in order. Of those delegates, 640 are voting delegates; 23 are non-voting delegates, consisting of 21 international officers, one delegate from ATU Canada, and one delegate from the New Jersey State Council. The delegates represented members from 208 locals.

The credentials for the 640 voting delegates have been reviewed and are found to be eligible for participation in the election of International officers and AFL-CIO convention delegates and alternates.

The Convention seated 663 delegates, including 640 voting delegates, from 208 locals, one joint bargaining council, and ATU Canada. The report was adopted by unanimous voice vote.

School Bus & Paratransit Committee

The School Bus & Paratransit Committee presented its report, making its recommendations on three submitted resolutions:

The Convention adopted a version of Resolution F, as amended by the committee, “Protecting Workers’ Jobs and Safety as Mobility Alternatives Emerge,” submitted by ATU.


And, the Convention adopted the committee’s recommendation of concurrence with Resolution S, “Supporting Paratransit Members.”

‘We are looking to you’

Desmond Drummer, co-founder and executive director of New Consensus, began his presentation
saying, “I’m here to talk a bit about the Green New Deal…”

“ATU, we are looking to you for your continued leadership… You know what it takes to increase ridership, you know what it takes to integrate new technologies into fleets, you know what it takes to invest in our transit infrastructure, you know what it takes to lead this fight on this front in every city that has an ATU local.

The Environmental & Occupational Health & Safety Committee

The Environmental & Occupational Health & Safety Committee presented its report on its consideration of Resolutions A, F, N, and O:

The Convention voted to accept the committee’s motion for concurrence with Resolution A, “Not One More, Stopping Attacks on Transit Workers.”

The Convention voted to accept the committee’s motion for concurrence with Resolution F, “Protecting Workers Jobs and Safety as Mobility Alternatives Emerge.”

The Convention voted to accept the committee’s motion for concurrence with Resolution N, “Supporting a Green New Deal.”

The Convention voted to accept the committee’s motion for concurrence with Resolution O, “Providing for the Health and Safety of ATU Members.”

‘Extraordinary Organizing Efforts’

The Convention received the report of the General Executive Report (GEB) Committee, which reviewed the minutes of the Spring, Fall, and Special Meetings over the last three years.

The committee said, “Extraordinary organizing efforts in the face of challenges for ATU members and all working families have led to 51 successful representation campaigns over these three years, bringing nearly 2,600 new workers into our union families.

“… It is apparent to this committee that these results could only have been obtained through a close and productive working relationship between the GEB and our international executive officers, combined with a strong sense of responsibility and commitment to the members of the Amalgamated Transit Union.”

The delegates approved the report by unanimous voice vote.

Campaigns Video

The Convention viewed a video on the recent successful organizing and collective bargaining campaigns undertaken by the Union.
‘ATU has your back’

International President Costa, next introduced Jason Chalifoux one of the organizers of the recently successful campaign to secure a first contract for VTA workers in Martha’s Vineyard. Chalifaux reviewed the long history of the VTA workers’ attempts to organize which culminated in a 28-day strike.

Chalifoux told the delegates what they did to gain the support of the public and the efforts they undertook to get a first contract which they had been told was impossible.

“If there’s one thing I would like everyone to take from our experience it would be to realize no matter how small or how large your local is, everyone that is part of the ATU has your back,” he said. The delegates cheered.

Local 1548 President Chuck Ryan also came to the podium to declare, “We are not going to give up, we are going to get it done.”

Gary Maurer Organizing Awards

IEVP Perez and Chris Townsend presented the Gary Maurer Organizing Awards to locals that organized two or more properties in the last three years. The awards went to:

- Local 627-Cincinnati, OH
- Local 689-Washington, DC
- Local 732-Atlanta, GA
- Local 998-Milwaukee, WI
- Local 1005-Mpls/St. Paul, MN
- Local 1091-Austin, TX
- Local 1181-New York, NY
- Local 1309-San Diego, CA
- Local 1338-Dallas, TX
- Local 1763, Rocky Hill, CT

‘You’ll have no stronger friend’

Former Vice President Joe Biden, D, a candidate for the Democratic nomination for U.S. president, addressed the delegates by video, asserting, “I want you to know that if I have the honor of being elected your president, you’ll have no stronger friend, no more reliable partner, no better advocate in the White House than me. I’ll stand with you in the fight. I’ll stand next to you in the fight. I’ll stand behind you because I know how hard you’ve had to fight to defend the rights you have earned.”
Nominations and Elections

INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

IEVL Javier Perez assumed the Chair to conduct the election of for international president.

John Costa was enthusiastically nominated by NJ Council Chair Ray Greaves, after which the delegates rose and chanted “Costa!” Costa was unopposed and unanimously elected by acclamation.

INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Costa reassumes the Chair for the election of the IEVP.

Javier Perez, Jr., was nominated for re-election. Unopposed he was unanimously elected by acclamation. Holding back tears, Perez delivered a stirring call to arms for ATU and the union movement.

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER

International President Costa opened the nominations for International Secretary Treasurer.

IST Oscar Owens, and Local 113 Financial Secretary Kevin Morton were both nominated. Owens won that election.

INTERNATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT

The following officers were nominated, ran unopposed, and were unanimously re-elected:

Richard Murphy as 1st IVP.

Janis Borchardt as 2nd IVP.
Paul Bowman as 3rd IVP

Ken Kirk as 4th IVP.

Marcellus Barnes as 5th IVP.

Ray Rivera won the election between himself and IR Antonette Bryant who were both nominated for 6th IVP.

Yvette Trujillo as 7th IVP.

Gary Johnson, Jr., as 8th IVP.

Robin West as 9th IVP.

Chuck Watson as 10th IVP.

Bruce Hamilton as 11th IVP.

Michelle Sommers as 12th IVP.
James Lindsay as 13th IVP.

Manny Sforza as 14th IVP.

John Callahan as 15th IVP.

Curtis Howard as 16th IVP.

Natalie Cruz as 17th IVP.

Anthony Garland as 18th IVP.

The convention adjourned at 6:35pm and we will reconvene for the last day, Friday, September 27, at 8:30am.