

NY Times, union agree to new contract

November 14 2012



The New York Times logo is seen on the headquarters building in New York City. Union members at The New York Times approved a new contract through 2016 which offers modest raises and a revamped pension, ending a deadlock of more than a year and a half.

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A Newspaper Guild statement said members vote 521-to-64 with one

abstention in favor of ratifying the contract.

"The vote followed a vigorous internal debate over top management's willingness to lavishly reward itself and its former CEO while refusing to come across with higher pay increases for the staff that actually produces the newspaper and website," the statement said.

Newspaper guild unit vice chair Steve Berman told AFP: "No one is jumping up for joy but we got much more out of the company than they were offering 20 months ago."

"This is not anywhere near the recompense we deserve, because we are the best journalists on earth, but in this macroeconomic and industry climate, by keeping our [solidarity](#) and activism alive, we have the greatest of hopes and expectations that the next contract will be even better," he said.

The agreement with the Newspaper Guild of New York calls for a one-time payment of three percent of gross annual pay, and a boost in pay scales of two percent in each of the next three years.



In this photo illustration, the NYTimes.com website is seen being displayed on a laptop, in 2010. Union members at The New York Times approved a new contract through 2016 which offers modest raises and a revamped pension, ending a deadlock of more than a year and a half.

The guild represents 1,100 text, photo, web and video journalists at The Times, along with several other newsroom, advertising and other professional and administrative employees.

The current pension plan will freeze at the end of 2012 and be replaced at the beginning of 2013 by the new adjustable [pension plan](#), with a company contribution of at least \$7 million per year.

Employees on the traditional newspaper side of The Times and the company's digital operation will be covered by a single, unified contract expiring on March 30, 2016.

The talks which began in February 2011 were marked by bitter disputes

over financial issues, which led to a brief rally by union members in October and an online letter complaining about plans to cut wages and benefits.

A tentative agreement was reached October 28 with the help of a private mediator.

"The level of engagement and activism among members at The Times has been greater than anything I've seen in my 24 years at the Guild," New York Guild president Bill O'Meara said. "Without it, we would never have been able to accomplish what we did."

There was no immediate comment from Times management, according to an articles on The Times website on the deal.

The [New York Times](#) Company, seeking to manage a shift to a digital platform, recently reported net income for the third quarter of \$2.28 million, a slump of 85 percent from a year ago.

Overall revenue fell 0.6 percent from a year ago to \$449 million, hurt by weakness in advertising, but partially offset by gains in paid digital subscribers.

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