Beachwood Prosecutor Tom Greve reviewed the charges against Lane and Hughes and submitted them to Shaker Heights Municipal Court.

The hearing is set for Nov. 6, at the Shaker Heights court.

By JAMES W. WADE III
Staff Reporter

Monday, RTA bus driver Artis Hughes walked into the Beachwood Police station to turn himself in. Hughes is facing assault charges for punching Shidea Lane, who allegedly spit on him and grabbed his throat while he drove the bus.

Dozens of supporters mostly bus drivers from the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 268 (ATU 268) was in Beachwood as Hughes walked in with his wife, ATU president William Nix Sr., and Black on Black Crime's Art McCoy.

Hughes, who was indefinitely suspended by RTA, posted bond and was released. He told the media and his co-workers how much he appreciated their support.

"Do your job. Do your job. That's all I tried to do was my job," said Hughes.

The charge against Hughes is a first degree misdemeanor, a serious charge. He's going to be arraigned on November 6, Election Day of all things. If convicted, he faces six months in jail.

"As a young child, my mother taught me not to put your hands on anyone let alone spit on a person. All we do is try to get people to their destination safe," said RTA driver Penny P, who was there to give her support to Hughes.

Hughes has been on indefinite suspension without pay since the video became viral. The ATU 268 Union President is trying hard to get Hughes back to work. "They are changing what they say everyday and all it boiled down to was a firing," said Nix.

The RTA drivers, who yelled in support of Hughes, feel their job is constantly under contact from passengers. The driver's union also wants the City ofClevelandto draw up some kind of law to better protect bus drivers.

"We are going to stand by him and hope this is a wake-up call to the dangers my drivers face every day. Brother Hughes did his job. Once Brother Hughes told the young lady get behind the yellow line that was it. He was putting her off, but she kept on. She kept on antagonizing and everybody heard that. It wasn't that Brother Hughes was going out there to beat up our passengers," said Nix.

The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA) filed disorderly conduct charges against Lane for her actions on the number 5 bus on Sept. 18th. RTA filed these charges in Beachwood, Ohio, where the incident occurred.

“There were concerns about safety for the customers on the bus and the operator,” said RTA spokeswoman Mary Shaffer. Misconduct on public transportation is a crime. Now it seems like RTA is trying to work with the union after this very public incident.

In a letter written and signed by RTA Board President George Dixon and RTA CEO Joe Calabrese they state, “Overthepastfewweeks,someveryunfortunateinstancesoccurredwhereour O
peratorswere
confrontedbyunrulycustomers.Makenomistakeaboutit,RTAsupports,andwillcontinueto support,itsemployees.

Wehaveloggedapproximately 80instancesofassaultsonRTAemployees overthepast5 years. AsI’msureweallagree,evenoneistoomany.”

The public feels this was only done due to that fact that the video went viral.

“We need some type of protection, a shield, a tazer, something to protect us from some of these crazy passengers. We have had hot water thrown on us, spit on us, hit and cussed out. All we have been doing is trying to make an honest living,” said RTA driver Lisa Fair.

“I have concerns and the big concern is, if that bus driver had of lost control because of the rider influence with him driving, then we could have fatalities on the bus, even with pedestrians passing by,” said Cleveland City Councilman and Safety Committee Chair Kevin Conwell.

At next week’s council meeting, Conwell shared he plans on introducing a resolution. It calls for the state legislature to make it a felony inOhioto interfere with a transit driver. “We need to be protected, if Brother Hughes had ran into something because of her grabbing on him or spitting in his eye and he harm the passengers, RTA would have law suits all day,” said Nixs.

Shaffer says Lane didn't seek to file charges against Hughes immediately after the incident, leading them to believe she never painted herself as the victim.

"There were no reports or filings byMs. Laneto indicate there were any problems on this vehicle. The only report we received was from the operator, stating that he was assaulted on that run," explained Shaffer.

In a statement from RTA, they informed us that every weekday 200,000 people ride RTA and operators can pull over and call transit police if they are concerned for their safety.

At the RTA Board meeting on Tuesday, a lot of the bus drivers showed up in support for Hughes who will be meeting with RTA on Wednesday about his job. ATU's International Vice President Paul Bowen came in fromCanton,Michiganalong with the union's Black Caucus President Elder Fred Westbrook.

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