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Lhota Says He'll File for Mayor this Week

By Anna Sale



Former MTA chairman Joe Lhota (right) set the stage for a mayoral run at the New York Building Congress annual meeting. (WNYC/Anna Sale)

Former MTA chairman Joe Lhota says he plans to formally enter the mayor's race this week. Lhota resigned from the MTA at the end of last year to explore a campaign, and he told reporters in Manhattan today that he's ready to take the next step.

"I think later this week I should be a full-fledged filed candidate," Lhota said.

A Republican, Lhota was a deputy mayor during the Giuliani administration. Before Gov. Andrew Cuomo tapped Lhota to be MTA chairman in 2011, Lhota was an executive at Cablevision for nine years.

Lhota was very warmly received at the annual meeting of the New York Building Congress, where he made his first public remarks since leaving the MTA. At one point, the group's president referred to him as "Mayor Lhota," and Lhota urged the audience to imagine what he "could do with a much more complex organization" if they liked his legacy in transit.

But it was clear that Lhota, who is known for his blunt style, is still getting used to the cautious talking points of a candidate.

As he described the quick restoration of subway service after Sandy, he noted that "a lot of that time was waiting for ConEd to give us power back." That drew some nervous laughter from the construction industry crowd, and Lhota quickly adjusted.

"Sorry," he said sheepishly, prompting more laughs. "I'm going to have to go to them for contributions, so I'll apologize later."