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# NEW TRACK

## Ex-MTA boss Lhota says he's running for mayor

BY CELESTE KATZ  
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HE'S onboard.

Two weeks after stepping down as chief of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Joe Lhota removed all doubt Monday:

He's jumping into the mayoral race.

He made his intentions clear in a warmly received speech before 500 real estate and construction executives — his first public appearance since leaving the transit agency. “I would not have left the MTA, a job and position that I loved, if I was not going to run for mayor of New York,” he told the New York Building Congress luncheon.

Lhota, a Republican who served as a deputy mayor in Rudy Giuliani's administration, talked up his accomplishments in running the mass transit agency

especially in getting the subways and trains running so quickly after Hurricane Sandy.

Lhota then quoted Shakespeare, asking the audience to consider the bard's assertion in “The Tempest” that “What's past is prologue.”

“If you agree that the MTA is in better condition today than it was a year ago, then imagine what I

can do in my future with an even more complex organization,” Lhota said, inviting listeners to imagine him running the show at City Hall.

Building Congress President Richard Anderson continued the theme, asking if anyone had questions for “Mayor Lhota.”

In his speech — and in talking with reporters afterward — Lhota offered no specifics on what he would do as mayor.

“Later this week, I should be a full-fledged, filed candidate,” Lhota said,

promising to talk about his plans after submitting the city paperwork that would make his candidacy official.

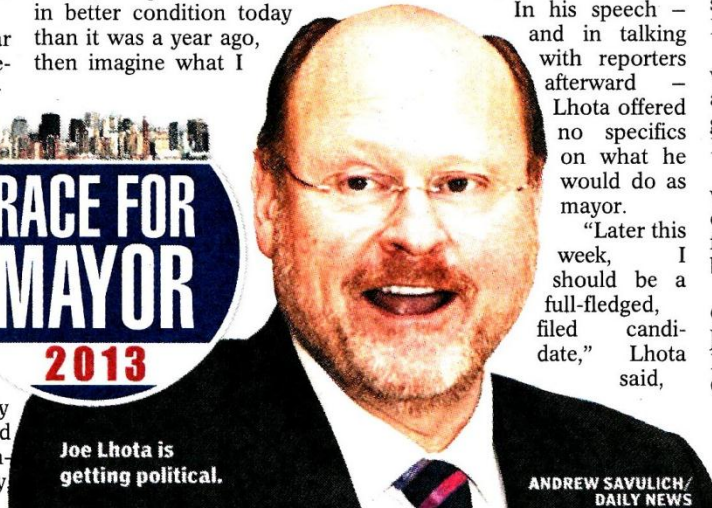
But he already is talking like a politician. After remarking that subway service would have returned even sooner than it did after Sandy if Con Edison had restored power more promptly, Lhota cut himself short.

“Sorry,” Lhota said as the well-heeled crowd chuckled and applauded. “I'm going to have to go to them for contributions, so I'll apologize later.”

Lhota has spent the past two weeks courting Republican power brokers, but four of the city's five GOP county leaders are still backing other candidates.

The Manhattan and Queens GOP bosses support billionaire John Catsimatidis; the Bronx and Brooklyn leaders back Adolfo Carrión.

Giuliani, however, is supporting Lhota, and the Staten Island Republican chief is leaning toward the former MTA boss.



Joe Lhota is getting political.

ANDREW SAVULICH/  
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