Governors Step Into Supermarket Feud Fray

Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — The governors of Massachusetts and New Hampshire have stepped in to try to broker a deal to end a monthlong standoff at a New England grocery store chain.

Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick and New Hampshire Gov. Maggie Hassan participated in negotiations Sunday with the owners of the Market Basket chain — feuding cousins Arthur T. Demoulas and Arthur S. Demoulas — as well as several other shareholders.

The grocery store chain, known for its low prices, has about 25,000 employees and 71 stores in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine.

A long-running feud between the two cousins culminated in the ouster of Arthur T. Demoulas as CEO. His firing prompted worker protests and customer boycotts that have brought the private company to a virtual standstill. The company has lost millions of dollars over the last four weeks as warehouse workers have refused to make deliveries and customers have opted to shop elsewhere, leaving the stores with only a trickle of business.

Arthur T. Demoulas has offered to buy the 50.5 percent of the company owned by his cousin and other relatives on his side of the family.

Heather Nichols, a spokeswoman for Patrick, said the two sides made "real progress" on the terms of the sale and operating control of the company during the Sunday negotiating session. She said the governors are encouraged that a resolution may be "within reach."

No new negotiating sessions with the governors have been scheduled. The company's board of directors was scheduled to meet Monday.

Neither Demoulas cousin commented.

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