

Telephone Town Hall – June 8, 2023 @ 7 p.m.

1. **Meeting called to order** at 7:01 pm by Dan Goodman.
2. **Roll Call of officers:**
Dan Goodman, **President**; Charles Pratt, **Secretary-Treasurer**; Alicia Whitehead, **VP #2**; Susan Espin, **VP #3**; Sandra Peters, **VP #4**; John Lewinski, **VP #6**; Sandra Geldart, **VP #7**; Kirste Hawgood, **VP #10**; Doug Insley, **VP #11**; Dawn Stevenson, **VP #12**; Dale Juvelin, **VP #13**;
3. **Adoption of Agenda**
m / s / c to adopt the agenda
4. **Adoption of February 23, 2023 Minutes** as posted on UFCW 247 website
m / s / c to adopt the minutes
5. **President's Report**
 - Welcome to Kirste Hawgood as VP to the Executive Board replacing David Haere. David Mowatt will also be vacating his position on the Board.
 - The recent InTouch Newsletter had an article entitled “your Union is listening” that focused on a program involving members talking to members via store visits. Sinead Wilson, a Shop Steward from the Abbotsford Superstore has been visiting Real Canadian Superstores and engaging with members, talking about our Union, making sure members are aware of their rights and benefits and seeking feedback on the Local. Sinead just completed her first round of visits and provides reports after each stop. We are utilizing the comments and feedbacks to help chart the course of our Local moving forward.
 - With our members feedbacks being a big factor, we made changes to our Union Reps territories which will become effective June 19th; with Guy Fraser’s upcoming retirement, it gives us an opportunity to make changes while clarifying expectations. We have two members who will take own territories for the next 6 months on a trial basis. We’ll also be asking Dawn Stevenson, a longtime shop steward, to carry on the engagement process for Sinead. Now that Sinead’s initial tour is finished, we have asked her to give us her thoughts based on her conversations and interactions with members on how we can continue and develop the engagement module, and what changes to the concept we should be considering.
 - An update on some FG Deli issues – In September 2022, the employer took away employees’ rights to five paid sick days as required under the Employment Standards Act because they believe that health & wellness time credits in the collective agreement met the requirements of the legislation. We disagreed they could do this and filed a grievance. We tried to resolve the things through the grievance procedure. The Company denied our grievance and then went further by altering the terms of the collective agreement by reducing the rate by which employees earned HWT to account for the five days of sick leave that now would’ve had to front load for each employee in January. We wouldn’t agree to these proposed changes, but the Company implemented them anyway, forcing us to file another grievance. Companies can’t change a collective agreement with our consent. Those grievances are now going to arbitration, and we will be heard by Arbitrator Mark Brown via written submissions.
 - In regards to the ammonia leak at the plant on February 10th earlier this year, employees were laid off pursuant to a worksafe BC stop work order (obvious response to the emergency situation). When members were recalled, the Company did not call people back by plant seniority and ability as set out in the Agreement. Instead, it seems they went by department. It also

appears they had Supervisors performing work. We have filed four grievances related to this situation. Our Rep and stewards held a grievance meeting with the Company and the Company has not been forthcoming with specific information about how this went down. The Company claims there was no layoff and thus no recall. From a legal perspective, this is a leaky argument. We have notified the Company of our intent to send these grievances to arbitration as well. These are a reminder that even though we have language in an agreement, we often have to push to ensure it is respected and retains its meaning.

- We have started the Unionware Analyze U portion of Unionware. Support Staff are meeting with them twice a week for two hours at a time. The next steps will be involving the Communication team to join in the meetings as we'll be discussing the modes of communication with our members. This phase, which they call Analyze U, will probably take about three months to complete, most likely until the end of August. We will continue to provide updates.
- We recently had two big Conventions take place, our UFCW International Convention and the Canadian Labour Congress Convention. The International Convention was quite interesting, with lots of spirited debates. All of the leadership incumbents were re-elected, including National President, Paul Meinema, and the other Canadian International Vice Presidents. Canadian Representation was certainly front and centre as Kelly Tosado, who is the Secretary-Treasurer of UFCW Local 175, chaired the election committee. Lucy Figueiredo, President of UFCW Local 1400 co-chaired the Constitution Committee, and I had the privilege of chairing the Resolution Committee. There were lots of Canadian content on the various committee as well.
- The previous two International Convention saw delegates approve mandatory per capita increases immediately, and then discretionary ones later on, which resulted in dues increases in Locals. This time due to the health of our International's finances, there will be no automatic increase, and instead, there was a 2024 discretionary increase built in. The International Union has some concern that if we do not increase our overall membership, the finances will be impacted quickly. The US membership is down after COVID, while Canada is slightly up.
- On May 11, 2023, part five of Bill 24 received royal assent in BC, which amends the Employment Standards Act to make the National Day of Truth & Reconciliation a holiday for all employees to whom the ESA applies, including all unionized employees, regardless of what their collective agreement says. We have yet to hear from the big employers, although recently Safeway tried to make it a bargaining issue at the table. We clearly believe the language in the bill removes any barriers to the day being recognized.
- Bargaining update – Prince Rupert Cleaners Union Rep, David Baillie reached a recommended deal which was ratified on June 7th. Dave also reached a deal with KUTE, a recycling plant based in Kitimat, which was ratified this week. With Stong's, we are still waiting for the Company Spokesperson to agree to start dates. Fresh Street will resume bargaining on June 20th. No Frills stores located in Dawson Creek & Castlegar ratified a new collective agreement. Wages are protected as they have a minimum wage plus scale, and the new rates start June 1st. A new benefit package for part-timers was the main new item that helped get them both ratified by a large margin.
- We were contact in April by the Company for Grand Forks Extra Foods, who told us they had plans to convert the Extra Foods banner to a No Frills banner. The membership was given an option of closing down or converting. Current employees had a package to look at, convert and receive a buyout, a buy-down, or severance. If they voted to convert, then a No Frills contract would be in place. On May 16th, members voted 97% in favour of converting to the No Frills banner.
- Bargaining has started with Kootenay Markets in Elkford, and we were confident that we would be able to reach a deal, but additional dates are still needed. At the last set of bargaining, the employer had several proposals that we cannot live with. They want new hires to not have any access to the grievance procedure, which is not a legal position we can agree to, and we told them that we cannot bargain, this is an impasse.

- With Five Corners Meat Co., we had a difficult year, trying to even get a package that we could come close to recommend to our members. Bargaining started off with the Company wanting to open the agreement early, as they were having a hard time attracting new employees, and we agreed. During bargaining, headlines in the news started talking about a recession. This company is always wanting to keep their labour costs to a bare minimum, and they had the idea that it would trigger higher unemployment, thus leading to more people willing to apply there. They started stalling on responding or agreeing to additional bargaining dates, and then ended up past the expiry of the last agreement. We had a final counter in November 2022, and they said they would respond in two days at most. They never responded until March 2023, after many requests from us. They agreed to our last position from November, and we held the vote on March 21. The memorandum was rejected by 97%, with a large turnout, and we informed the company that night. Their spokesperson said they would get back to us. They took several weeks to tell us they had no intention of continuing bargaining. This agreement has a final offer selection clause instead of a strike or lockout option, so we had a date of scheduled for May 5th. The FOS process is one that the arbitrator has to select one party's package as a whole. They cannot take parts from one and then parts from the other. The arbitrator gave his decision on May 16th. He gave opinions on each party's position and said that had he had the ability to modify instead of choosing, he would've done so. Ultimately, he went with the Company's package, as he cited the union's position was more than just a tweaking.
- The Safeway bargaining Committee last met with the Company on May 15-17th. The Committee continued to discuss in more details the outstanding non-monetary proposals. We were able to work through a few more of the non-monetary items, but the other remaining non-monetary proposals this bargaining session continue to center around the employers need for more scheduling flexibility. While some progress in bargaining has been made, other issues have stalled, and the consensus on those remaining items may be difficult to achieve. As non-monetary items are important, your Committee felt it would be beneficial to proceed to the monetary phase of negotiations. We will be meeting again on June 12-14, and we'll update everyone after that.

m / s / c to adopt the President's report as read.

6. **Audited Financial Statements**

- The 2022 Audited financial statements was read.

m / s / c to adopt the 2022 Audited financial statements as read.

7. **Secretary-Treasurer Report**

- There were discussions with Loblaw over what determines if members were considered cross-trained and eligible to access shifts in other departments. We believe that letting members utilize old, outdated department codes undermined the new process. We directed the Company to remove the old outdated department codes and have huddled conversations to advise employees what was happening. We believe this to be the fairest resolve and stay true to the settlement and the agreed upon process.
- We are now proceeding on the four-day workweek trial we agreed to in bargaining. The two locations selected to be tested, 1556 Guildford and 1558 Abbotsford. Both would be considered to be medium-sized stores and were selected due to the size of divisional managers giving them the best change of a successful pilot project. It involves 12-13 full-time night grocery members on a voluntary basis. Basic workweek remains 37 hours. It consists of four nine and a quarter hour days, plus a half hour unpaid lunch, for a total of 9.75 hours scheduled. Site premium will be paid as per the current agreement, and that applies during normal hours. Looking at June 18th start date, and this was shown on the schedule posted May 31st. The trial is scheduled to last for 4 months but may be terminated early if it's not successful.

m / s / c to adopt the Secretary-Treasurer's report as read.

8. **Engagement & Education Report**

- A three-day introduction to Stewardship course is taking place in Kelowna this week, with another one scheduled for June 20-22 in Surrey. Last month, we offered two in-person Indigenous culture & activism courses. They were attended by our Shop Stewards and E-Board members. Elder Ric Flatt from the Ebb & Flow First Nation in Manitoba shared his teachings with us, and we plan on expanding on this in the months to come. Eric Flatt also co-created the Indigenous Right and Activism Course that is available for all our members through the online platform webCampus.
- After being made aware that our Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) committee members have not been receiving the eight hours of employer-paid mandatory training as required by law, we quickly organized an OHS Part-One course and invited 19 OHS members to participate.
- We're releasing a new two-day Steward Course next week called the AWESOME workshop, which stands for Action Workshop, Empowering Stewards and Organizers through Member Engagement. It will focus on being an empowered steward, engaging coworkers through action and building an awesome union. It is our intent that it will help Stewards walk away with strategic ways to empower and engage coworkers who may not see the benefit of standing together.
- UFCW Canada \$1,000 Scholarship applications for members & eligible dependents enrolled in full-time studies are available now until September 30th. Our Local's \$1,000 scholarships and \$750 Education Grant applications will be available on our website, starting July 1st.
- We created respect buttons in response to the increased reports of customers' poor behavior. They are available to all front-end retail members who wish to wear one.
- We will be part of the Surrey Pride Festival on June 24 from 4 to 8 pm at the Civic Plaza in Surrey. We'll also be part of the Vancouver Pride Parade on Sunday, August 6 at Noon. We hope to see members at these events. If you're interested in volunteering, please contact Ximena, our Engagement & Education Coordinator or your Union Rep. We also have pronoun buttons available for any member who wants them.
- Union Bulletin Boards at your workplace has important information on your right to refuse unsafe work, among other relevant information. Take the time to visit the lunchroom and view the board regularly.
- We are preparing to commemorate International Overdose Awareness Day on August 31st. We have ordered purple shirts. Keep an eye on your email, our website and social media pages for a special announcement on being part of this important campaign.

9. **New Business**

- No new business.

Q&A PERIOD - 6 questions in the queue answered.

10. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

Member Draw - was conducted electronically. 3 winners were picked; each receiving a \$100 gift card.