

Telephone Town Hall – May 30, 2024 @ 7 p.m.

1. **Meeting called to order** at 7:04 pm by Dan Goodman.
2. **Roll Call of officers:**
Dan Goodman, **President**; Charles Pratt, **Secretary-Treasurer**; Margaret Robins, **VP 1**; Kirste Hawgood, **VP #10**; Doug Insley, **VP #11**; Dale Juvelin, **VP #13**; Cathy Shannon, **VP #14**;
3. **Adoption of Agenda**
m / s / c to adopt the agenda
4. **Adoption of February 15, 2024 Minutes** as posted on UFCW 247 website
m / s / c to adopt the minutes
5. **President's Report**
 - UFCW Local 1518 President, Kim Novak passed away suddenly and tragically in early May. It was a shock to us all. Kim was elected President of Local 1518 in January of 2019. During her time, we had conversations about bringing our Locals closer, and supporting each other whenever possible. The best example of that was last year, when she held off on voting her Safeway members on the memorandum of settlement so as not to impact our bargaining and vote. She will be greatly missed.
A moment of silence was observed in her memory.
 - There are some changes to our Local 247 Executive Board and staff. Susan Espin & Sandra Geldart, long-term Executive Board members have left Loblaw and therefore vacated their Executive Board positions. We wish them well. Union Representative Bruce Jackson recently retired, and that resulted in some small changes to the territories. Bruce was on staff almost 18 years. He was a big part of the partnership with the Thompson River Meat Cutting Program.
 - We have received Unionware's Analyze U report. This report summarizes all of our requirements and procedures that they have gathered over the last year, a result of two meetings per week for over a year. We've been meeting with Unionware to go over each requirement and procedure and approve each step in each module. The modules are core, which is membership/finance, cases which is grievances, contracts, which is collective agreements and events. Once everything is approved, and we are aiming for May 31st, Unionware will provide us with a statement of work which will detail how long it will take to build our program and the cost. This is also the system that will allow Reps to log location visits and attach notes to individual members on issues they may be dealing with and keep better track of files. This process has required us to analyze every way in which the Local operates, and our goals moving forward.
 - We recently completed a renovation of one of our ground level units in our building. With PBAS moving in and taking what was the meeting area, we still wanted to be able to hold bargaining, education/training sessions, and board meetings on site, to be more effective and cost-conscious. We have already held multiple training sessions, and the space is a big improvement over our previous set up.

We sent a letter to Loblaw's CEO, Per Bank. Mr. Bank sent out a message to Loblaw colleagues which he titled Real Talk: Standing-up for our colleagues and our business. Mr. Bank is Danish, and he started off by quoting a native Denmark saying "Nok er nok", which loosely translated means, "Enough is enough". He then went on to talk about misconceptions about Loblaw's role

in the ongoing food affordability crisis. It was one of the more tone-deaf messages I'd ever seen. His focus was all about the view of the company in the public eye. To quote him, "For hearing people, who usually aren't even our customers, by the way, calling for boycotts of our stores, or encouraging people to steal, ultimately putting your safety at risk. We're hearing this country's elected leaders championing foreign grocery companies, rather than advocating for and defending Canadian business. That's what makes this situation so frustrating. Not only are we being unfairly blamed, we're also not getting credit for the values we're providing." Those were his words. It's a Poor Us message, and it did not resonate well with our members.

At the time it came out, we were at our national council meetings. I met with several of the other presidents who deal with Loblaw, and we all decided we needed to respond. We crafted and emailed out a response that let him know our members were not thinking about Loblaw's public image, but about skyrocketing food prices, the lack of protection in their workplace, and a host of other issues we push Loblaw to deal with every day. We told him that, and this is directly from my letter, "Asking grocery store workers to stand with you would land far better if they knew you stood with them." I pointed out that, "As president of UFCW Local 247, a local union representing thousands of Loblaw's employees in BC, it's part of my job to respond to you, and point out some of the things that are firmly in your control to do." We listed the following points to him, "Increase the wage of your employees, maintain or increase our members' hours, double the value of the employee discount program, and prioritize employee safety now."

We also sent out information to our members on the eve of the Loblaw Steal Day, that it is important for members to remember that their first priority is to stay safe, and not become involved in situations that may jeopardize your health and safety. The following would apply to any member, at any of the employers we deal with. Do not attempt to become security for the company. It is their responsibility to deal with theft or violence situations. If you see suspicious activity, report it to management immediately.

If you are involved in a situation where a customer becomes violent, follow the steps outlined in our "not part of our job" initiative.

If you have been injured, be sure to report it to WorkSafe BC online or by teleclaim. Remember, an employer telling you not to report a workplace injury or disease is against the law.

Our Local 247 violence in the Workplace initiative continues to draw interest from other locals in Canada. Locals 1006A and 401 have both asked for more information on the module, and we made a presentation to our National Council Workplace Rights Committee. We know we are not alone on this issue, but we are prepared to lead the way. An important part of our campaign is about member education, and we continue to hold online information webinars for shop stewards and members interested in learning more about the issue of workplace violence in retail. We are grateful to everyone who has attended these sessions and gained helpful feedback from them.

- Superstore members should now be seeing the small blue signage at the till referencing customer abuse. The signs say, "Let's respect each other. Our team is here to help you. We will not tolerate verbal abuse, or aggressive or violent behavior towards our team, or other shoppers." This is a small step in the right direction. These signs came about as a result of our efforts, but it is not enough, and we will continue to push all employers to do more.
- Last town hall, I spoke to the establishment of an engagement committee. We had just emailed out the information. Since then, we received numerous applications, and held one-on-one Zoom meetings with interested applicants. We now have a working committee, and you'll hear about it in Ximena's engagement and training report. Thank you to all the members who showed interest in being on the committee.

Cathy Speaking on Safeway:

- There were a few store locations with full-time positions, that went unfilled, after the recent full-time Grid B job postings were awarded in February; and a couple of positions that members changed their minds on and returned to their stores. The employer and the union met recently, and it was agreed that those vacant positions will be re-posted provincially on June 1st.
- All the Safeway members that qualified for the severance, 46 in total, were accepted by the employer. These members have now left or retired with only eight remaining members to return to work for the employer before they leave as well. The vacancies left from these severances, for both locals UFCW 247 and 1518, will remain unfilled for now. Both union locals, as well as the employer, have agreed that these vacancies will be posted sometime in September. This was agreed as not to impact the stores on the already selected vacations for members in the stores during the prime-time summer vacation period.
- Both the union and the employer have agreed and finalized the amended, and agreed to changes in the contract from bargaining. Now that that process is completed, we will be finalizing and formatting for printing. We will also be posting it on the website as soon as possible. Once printing starts, we'll start dropping copies of the agreement in the stores so that they are available to members.
- Safeway has told us their in-house meat cutter training program will change to the Sobeys National Training program. This change means that the training will be e-learning via the people portal system in the stores, and it does not include or require any classroom or travel. The next cohort group, group number seven, will start in September. They are now accepting applicants from the stores, until June 21st. If members in the stores are interested in becoming a meat cutter, they should approach their store managers and ask for the application or contact their union representative.

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

6. **Audited Financial Statement**

- Charles Pratt read the audited financial statement.

m / s / c to adopt the Audited Financial Statement as read.

7. **Secretary-Treasurer Report**

- Union Representative Bruce Jackson is retiring, and this will be a significant change to our servicing representatives' territories. Bruce had a large territory, both in the number of units he serviced, and a wide geographic area covered. A considerable number of our staff will see some territory changes.

Please check your union bulletin board, and our website, for specific information on changes to the representatives who services your specific location. The local union typically reviews the servicing assignments on an annual basis and makes needed changes based on the geographic size of territory, number of units in the territory, workload, as well as both staff and member input. While territory changes can present short-term challenges for both the members and the staff, we look at them as being mutually beneficial, and they represent the opportunity to engage and interact with new people in unique situations.

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

8. **Engagement & Education Report**

- We are pleased to announce the names of the 13 members who've agreed to help grow our Local through new engagement efforts and events. The 13 members are Ashley Baresinkoff from Safeway 4939 in White Rock, Christine Gormley from Superstore 1564 in Kelowna, Erin O'Leary from Safeway 4919 in Vernon, James Alridge from Superstore 1557 in Richmond, Jeff Shum from Superstore 1519 in Coquitlam, Michelle Forgo from Superstore 1558 in Abbotsford, Michelle Schmidt from Superstore 1559 in Mission, Nalini Nowrang from Superstore 1554 in

Delta, Sandra Nordstrom from Superstore 1522 in Kamloops, Sharon Kahn from Superstore 1520 on Grandview, Terri-Lynne Teindl from Safeway 4968 in Chilliwack, Tracy McCarthy from Superstore 1527 in Victoria, and Sinead Wilson from Superstore 1558 in Abbotsford, who is currently on a union leave of absence working at our Local.

If you work with any of them, please make the time to congratulate them, and maybe even offer your support for the work that's ahead of them. I want to also add that during our first virtual meeting with the committee, Dan, along with Sinead Wilson, proposed the idea of having the first event be an engagement conference.

Nalini Nowrang reporting on the Engagement Conference:

- Your Engagement Committee is excited about planning an engagement conference, that will set a new path for members to feel connected with our union. This member-driven Committee will allow us to connect with members and build a union we want to see. Our member engagement conference is now being planned for October 20th to 23rd, 2024. This will be fully planned by the 13 of us, with the support and guidance of UFCW 247 staff. We had our first in-person meeting two weeks ago, where we discussed the basics of what this conference could look like.

Everything from the application process, who gets to attend, how are we going to decide on things, the type of workshop we will offer, and who the guest speakers could be. We agreed that this conference has to be a steppingstone for something bigger, where members feel empowered to get involved. We wrapped up the meeting with a review of everyone's commitment to the work ahead, and members being asked to start thinking what the name and slogan of the conference will be. Our next meeting is scheduled for June 11th, when we have to end the day with a firm plan as to what the conference will look like, so that we can book and execute the great ideas.

Back to Ximena

- Our "Customer Abuse is Not Part of Our Job" campaign rolled out at the end of February. Members working in retail stores were emailed, and now a second poster is displayed on your union bulletin boards. Union member Dawn Stevenson has been helping us spread the word, by visiting many of our retail units, to share this campaign with members one-on-one. We also asked two of the members, who graciously agreed to be the face of the campaign, Michele Venables and Niki Rowland from the Campbell River Superstore, to visit the Superstores on Vancouver Island, to share their stories and bring awareness for this campaign. The recurring theme seems to be that members at the Superstores do not know about Code 88.
- We have also booked Occupational Health and Safety Committee education sessions through the BC Federation of Labour. This will be a one-day course, and all the Occupational Health and Safety Committee members and stewards will be invited to one of the following sessions. Please keep an eye on your email for more details. The sessions are July 3rd, Kelowna, for members in the Okanagan; July 23rd, Nanaimo, for members on the Island. And August 27th, in Surrey, at our office.
- A three-day Introduction to Stewardship course just wrapped up this afternoon. If the 16 members who participated are listening tonight, thank you for stepping up, and showing interest in serving as a steward. Members who attended this introductory course have been asked to contact their union representative to discuss the opportunity to be appointed as a steward, and sign a new code of conduct, that was introduced earlier this year, to serve as acknowledgement of the commitment required, to represent our members in their workplaces.
- In addition, many of you may have noticed an invitation to apply for the Young-Workers Internship Program, that was posted on our union bulletin boards. The program will be held in Calgary, from July 28th to August 2nd. Four young members from the Delta, Surrey, and Vancouver Superstores will be in attendance this year.

- Our new member booklets are ready, and the plan is for our union reps, stewards, and activists, to personally hand the booklet to new members as soon as they're identified as new members.
- Shop stewards, please keep an eye on your email for more details coming up in the next few days or weeks.
- We continue to support community events and so far, we have committed to participating in: Surrey Pride, June 24th; Vancouver Pride, August 4th; Comox Pride, August 24th. There may be more coming up.

9. **New Business**

- No new business.

Q&A PERIOD - 4 questions answered.

10. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:42 pm.

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