

Telephone Town Hall – November 14, 2024 @ 7 p.m.

1. **Meeting called to order** at 7:06 pm by Dan Goodman.
2. **Roll Call of officers:**
Dan Goodman, **President**; Charles Pratt, **Secretary-Treasurer**; Margaret Robins, **VP 1**; Alicia Whitehead, **VP 2**; Nalini Nowrang, **VP 3**; Sandra Peters, **VP 4**; Kirste Hawgood, **VP #10**; Doug Insley, **VP 11**; Dawn Stevenson, **VP 12**; Cathy Shannon, **VP #14**;
3. **Adoption of Agenda**
m / s / c to adopt the agenda
4. **Adoption of August 29, 2024 Minutes** as posted on UFCW 247 website
m / s / c to adopt the minutes
5. **President's Report**
 - The Local will be handing or mailing out service membership pins to anyone with the following years of service: 20-29 years as a member, a 20-year pin; 30-39 years as a member, a 30-year pin; and a 40-plus year pin. Between the groups, we have almost 2,000 members who may receive a pin. Some will be hand delivered by Reps, and some will be mailed. We will have to go through our records and establish timelines for people to make sure they have the proper years of service. We will have to deal with people's break in service.
 - Unionware has started the process of building our new program. We have customizations to be done. We'll be receiving our base program within the next week or two, and then they will start programming each customized item. For each item, we'll have to test the functionality of it to ensure it meets our requirement and needs. We anticipate this being done in the spring of 2026.
 - BC Tree Fruit closure; any member that was terminated by BC Tree Fruits in August and was eligible to receive funds through the Wage Earner Protection Program has been provided with an application. These have been distributed by the monitor that is overseeing the proceedings. For some, these forms have been confusing, and they have come to the office for assistance in completing them and then sending them off to the monitor and completing the online reporting to Service Canada. These payments have not been delayed, and if there were errors on their applications, the monitor has reached out to these individuals. The process seems to be going smoothly. However, the last report on application submitted was below 50%.

The Oliver Community Transition group held their last meeting on October 28, where it was decided that that would be the last meeting held. This group was set up to assist the impacted workers, contractors, employers that were affected by the BC Tree Fruits closure. Many service providers, such as Service Canada, WorkBC, Okanagan College, the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction attended to offer their support and they will continue to offer programs where needed in the future. WorkBC and Okanagan College continually have updated programs and courses that individuals can access. It was appreciated that the Town of Oliver could host these meetings.

On October 11th, the union submitted an application for employer successorship to the BC Labour Relations Board. This application arose from the employer's July 29th closure of its facilities and consequent termination of union members who have now been hired by Novum Pharmaceuticals at the Rutland facility. In September, Novum Pharmaceuticals started leasing the Rutland facility and has continued its operation in a recognizable form with the intention to

purchase this site, which will require the court's approval in the proceedings. Despite being aware of the existence of the union and the collective agreement, Novum has hired bargaining unit members and other employees to perform work within the scope of the bargaining unit but beyond the terms of the collective agreement. Novum has expressed anti-union sentiment to a member, stating that, "There would never be a union at Novum." As a result, the union's position to the board was that there was some urgency to this application.

As a side note, former members had been reaching out to our office as they have concerns for their safety and how Novum was managing an incident that took place. A forklift took out a support pillar in an ammonia-controlled atmosphere storage room, and their management removed the pillar and put it outside, which led to several calls to WorkSafeBC. No plan was implemented to ensure the safety of the workers and WorkSafeBC issued a stop work order. This order has since been lifted as they complied with the safety plan while making repairs to the structure with considerations to the ammonia system.

As expected, legal counsel for Novum has already responded to us claiming the application for successorship must be dismissed as they only required an asset, not a business or part of a business as required under Section 35 of the code. The union will be seeking some disclosure from Novum and responding to their asserted facts by written submissions no later than November 14th. These submissions will then be reviewed by a panel of the board where they will determine if a hearing is required.

- The Local will be holding our Local will be holding various holiday events for members. Our annual Lower Mainland Burnaby Village event will take place on December 2nd, and we are also holding six different movie nights with showings of Moana 2. We will be at the same locations as last year, which are Abbotsford on November 27th; Kamloops December 2nd; West Kelowna on December 4th; Prince George on December 9th; Langford on December 9th; and in Courtenay on December 11th. Registration information for all these events is on the Local 247 website. The West Kelowna showing is already sold out with a waiting list, so registration is closed for that event.
- You can go to our union website to view the list of Iorio Scholarship and Eddy Education Grant winners, which were announced at the end of October. UFCW Local 247 is committed to awarding up to 10 \$1,500 scholarships each year to active members or their eligible dependents for full-time enrollment as defined by the educational institution. We are also committed to awarding up to eight \$750 education grants for part-time continuing studies or academic upgrading of a part-time nature for members who are beginning or continuing their education.
- Our first-ever engagement conference that was held from October 20th to 23rd. Almost 150 Local 247 members attended after filling out applications and then being chosen by the engagement committee. This conference was about launching a consistent practice of emotional involvement and commitment of members to their Local, learning about their union, our national office, and getting educated on topics like health and safety, negotiations, contract language, the grievance process, and more. We had some incredible guest speakers, like National UFCW President Shawn Haggerty, and BC Federation of Labour President Sussanne Skidmore, and a great video on the role and importance of the Canadian Labour Congress from its national president and UFCW member Bea Bruske. It was a very busy two and a half days as members rotated between workshops and also heard teachings from UFCW Elder Eric Flett.

Ultimately, the conference exceeded our expectations because of the involvement of the member delegates. Everyone left feeling more empowered and engaged in their Local. We look forward to what other ideas the engagement committee will come forward with.

We have had numerous other UFCW Locals and other unions reach out to us after following the conference on social media to ask us how we did it. Our new communications rep, Daniel, ran a speaker's corner where members could film a video or take a picture with other delegates.

- members should have received an email in early November with a link to register for our new UFCW Local 247 Member Course Portal that is now available to all our members. This portal was

developed in a partnership with webCampus, which is a powerful platform offering free online learning for you and your family. This new portal is the first of its kind across Canada, and in collaboration with our UFCW Local 247 member-driven engagement committee, it was designed for members interested in learning more about democracy and how it happens at work through your union. So, there was a link in the email that was sent out for members to register and access the new portal, so we're hoping that people take advantage of that.

Daniel Tseghay's Communication Report:

- Here's a break down of some of the areas of the Communication focus in terms of campaign development, internal communications, external communications, and multimedia.
- For campaign development related to our violence in the workplace campaign, webCampus, our events, upcoming bargaining, and more; my role is to help shape the messaging, come up with strategies, decide on the communications tools we'll use, and suggest the rollout of materials.
- For internal communications, like sending regular emails to members, texting members, looking into new tools that can help manage and connect with members in our database, and creating flyers and posters.
- For external communications it could be putting out press releases about bargaining, preparing leaders and members to speak with the media, helping draft opinion pieces, and potentially running electronic petitions to help put pressure on targets like employers during bargaining, as an example.
- For multimedia like social media graphics, photography, and videos. This gives you a little bit of an idea of the work being done to help raise the profile of the union.

Cathy Shannon Safeway Report:

- This full-time Grid B 36-hour work week was for 10 test pilot stores only, and these stores were decided on by both unions and the employer committees. This updated information, along with the list of the 10 stores which were chosen for the pilot program, was emailed out to the members in the province. This test pilot program only allows for one UFCW 247 member per location to participate. These members who choose this 36-hour work week of scheduling will be committed to signing up for this for one year.
- As I mentioned on our last meeting, the Human Resources Department at Safeway still has no HR director. However, they have now hired a new HR representative to replace one of the other HR reps, Elena Lingen, that has since moved into the Labour Relations Department. You may have noticed the HR representatives in the stores more frequently, and they have now been assigned to do other job functions, such as health and safety audits. This change has now led to longer response times to the union's simple requests, like schedule requests. We again suggest that members use the Safeway Service Centre to get some simple questions answered, like your vacation entitlements or your hours.
- The full-time job postings that the employer committed to for the recent severance vacancies were posted and awarded last month. It came as no surprise that with the employer having the choice on the postings being either grid A or grid B positions, the employer chose to post only grid B full-time positions. This did not allow for any senior grid A members to post and possibly relocate to other stores. With this recent decision by the employer regarding those severance postings, we will continue to use the CBA, so the contract for grid A full-time job postings, and recently we were successful in getting two grid A full-time positions posted. We will continue to use the contract where we can do that again.
- The union also raised the issue of a backfill position for one of the employees who did post out of their store. We argued that their vacancy is a backfill posting and that that full-time position should be posted, so we should see another posting soon regarding that.
- We also had our UFCW Trustee Pension Meeting recently where we were provided with a poster to post on the bulletin boards in the stores. The poster has a QR code, so members can go directly to the pension website for pension information and to register for the often-popular pension seminar through the plan.

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

6. **Secretary-Treasurer Report**

- Loblaw has conducted a two-month seated cashier trial program in 10 non-union stores across Canada. They stopped the program early because apparently the cashiers were not utilizing the chairs. The complaint from the cashiers was that there wasn't enough space for the chairs and the employees found that the chairs were in the way. Basically, they would need to rethink the whole cash register area, which of course they were not willing to do during this short trial. However, it seems that the new CEO Per Bank, who's European, is not giving up on the idea. In Europe, cashiers do their job sitting down or have the option to sit or stand, and it seems that he thinks this would be a good thing for cashiers here in Canada as well.
- While we don't currently see this in the Canadian grocery industry, it can be seen in the United States. Aldi, the number three grocer in the States, utilizes seated cashiers and finds that there's a significant increase in productivity in doing so. While they credit the increased productivity to reduce fatigue, it'll be interesting to see how the ergonomics affects the rates of RSIs, or repetitive strain injuries, due to altered work postures and handling increased items per minute. Shoulder problems are common for cashiers and increasing the degree of shoulder forward flexion required to scan items and adding in more frequent movements and reduced rest times could well lead to more frequent injuries. If the ergonomics could be better engineered to reduce injuries, the opportunity to perform seated work could provide opportunities for an aging workforce to remain productive and accommodate those who require seated work for other reasons.
- You may have noticed people wearing customer support jackets working in the front-end area of Superstores. When we first heard of this, we investigated it and found that they're not hosts or customer service employees, but rather they're non-union asset protection staff who monitor the exits and gates. In B.C., in order to be a uniformed guard, you have to have a security license. This requires a 40-hour training program. These individuals working as customer support do not have the training to work as uniformed guards, and as a result, can't wear a guard uniform. The purpose is to monitor the exits and gates and call for asset protection if and when they're needed.
- Due to increasing retail crime and violent encounters, Loblaw began a three-month trial of managers and security staff wearing state-of-the-art Axon body cameras. Bargaining unit members are not involved in the current program. This program is taking place in both Superstores and Shoppers Drug Marts in Calgary and Saskatoon area only. The cameras are high-definition, wide-angle, and low-light capable. They're equipped with advanced audio capability and can isolate voices in noisy environments. The cameras livestream what they are recording to a command center where they're monitored, and additional support can be sent from. Wearers require training and the proper use of the devices. The data collected will be used for prosecution of theft and violent acts. It is hoped that the presence of these cameras will help prevent both violent behavior and reduce retail theft.

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

7. **Bargaining Report**

- After waiting months to hear from Stong's, we finally have dates with them. Members have been more than patient waiting for the next dates. We met last on November the 13th.
- No Frills bargaining started on November the fourth with the Abbotsford location. The committee reached a tentative recommended agreement on November the 8th. We're looking at dates and a location to schedule a ratification vote.
- We are working on dates for the Maple Ridge location, but the company is not wanting dates this close to Christmas after months of us trying to get dates.

- The Quesnel location converted from an Extra Foods banner to a No Frills after the membership voted on a conversion agreement.
- Fresh St. dates are being scheduled to meet with the committee this November and commencing bargaining with the company on December the 3rd.
- Negotiations start with Five Corners on November the 21st and 22nd. Members are looking for improvements after the last contract was decided by final offer selection, and some of our proposals didn't make it into the offer.
- Since the last Swiss Water contract, they've moved into a new facility in Delta, and this is the first bargaining since the move. The move went smoothly, but now that it's at full operating capacity, we have several items that need to be addressed. We meet on November the 18th to 20th.

8. **New Business**

- No new business.

Q&A PERIOD – 2 questions were asked & answered and others were unique and individual of nature therefore members were called back.

9. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:37 pm.

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