

Telephone Town Hall – February 20, 2025 @ 7 p.m.

1. **Meeting called to order** at 7:02 pm by Dan Goodman.
2. **Roll Call of officers:**
Dan Goodman, **President**; Cathy Shannon, **Secretary-Treasurer**; Brian Taylor, **Recorder**; Margaret Robins, **VP 1**; Alicia Whitehead, **VP 2**; Nalini Nowrang, **VP 3**; Sandra Peters, **VP 4**; Kirste Hawgood, **VP #10**; Doug Insley, **VP 11**; Dale Juvelin, **VP #13**;
3. **Adoption of Agenda**
m / s / c to adopt the agenda
4. **Adoption of November 14, 2024 Minutes** as posted on UFCW 247 website
m / s / c to adopt the minutes
5. **President's Report**
 - Charles (Chuck) Pratt's retirement as Secretary-Treasurer. He was a mainstay at this Local and had been with Local 777 since it's inception. He held numerous roles in his time, culminating with his time as Secretary-Treasurer. We want to thank him for his dedication to this Local and its' members and wish him all the best in a well-deserved retirement.
 - Chuck announced he was stepping down as Secretary-Treasurer at our most recent Executive Board meeting and right after his announcement, the Board unanimously appointed Cathy Shannon to fill the position for the balance of its term. Cathy is an excellent choice and will do a great job in the role. Whenever we have a vacancy on the Executive Board during someone's term, we have the rules and processes to follow as set out in the International Constitution, Article 36, sub-section 24 (d). The only variance is when there's a vacancy for the President position, then the timeline is slightly different. The International Constitution can be viewed online on our website or the UFCW Canada site.
 - Other staffing changes are Dean Patriquin is now Executive Assistant. He continues to be in charge of bargaining but will also take on more responsibilities in the operations of our Local. Eric Seto is now an Assistant to the President and our Loblaw guy. He'll continue to deal with WCB issues and will be more involved with member issues. Eric will also be filling the VP #14 position on the Executive Board, replacing Cathy.
 - Mike Toal will be returning to our Local next month, overseeing Communication and Organizing as Daniel Tseghay is no longer with the Local. Mike will not be servicing as communication work is what he is trained to do and we are happy to have him back.
 - BC Tree Fruit closure update – shortly after they filed for creditor protection, all of their properties were put on the market for sale. Properties in Vernon, Lake Country, Creston and Kelowna have now been sold and the Rutland cold storage facility was being leased with a conditional sale. Based on the purchasers, it is highly unlikely they will continue in a recognizable form (fruit production and storage). The Keremeos and Summerland cold storage facilities and Oliver main plant are still for sale. Although there was some interest in these properties with individual offers, the court monitor determined that they would not pursue thee as it could be detrimental to the industry if the Oliver Packing Plant is left as standalone facility without cold storage capabilities.
 - Based on what is sold to date, they have recouped approximately \$64 million, which may be enough to satisfy CIBC and possibly some high-level creditors. We believe there is a decent

change of employees seeing some recovery on any unpaid claims. This would be in addition to the WEPP claims that were processed last year.

- We currently have 3 Refrigeration Operators still operating in the South as this is a legal requirement as all facilities with ammonia based cold storage. As members are drawing from the Pension Plan, we have discussed the process of how to 'wrap up' this plan and ensure the remaining employees are not incurring any costs associated with this. Although there is a reserve fund within the plan, we sought advise from Koskie Minsky Law (partner firm of Koskie Glavin). When BC Tree Fruit ceased operation, the Union filed a Section 54 and last week, we were granted an extension to July for rendering a decision.
- Loblaw announced plans to open 80 new grocery and pharmacy stores this year, about 50 of which will be discount grocers. Loblaw says the new locations are part of an approximate \$10 billion investment over the next 5 years, including \$2.2 billion this year. I'll believe it when I see it. We hear these kinds of announcements all the time and when you look back a year or two later only a fraction of what was promised actually happened. In 2015 & 2016, Loblaw said they would open 50 new stores each year and create hundreds of new full time jobs. It never happened and in fact they closed 52 stores that year. In 2023 the announcement was 38 new stores and 2024 was 40 new stores. Their 2023 financials showed they opened 20 stores and closed 11 for a net gain of 9 stores. In BC we've been told there may be a small number of new smaller locations coming this year.

Eric Seto's Loblaw & Safety Report:

- Loblaw will pilot the use of body-worn cameras at select Superstores locations in BC in the first and second quarter of 2025. This initiative is part of the Company's broader commitment to enhancing the safety of employees and customers. The cameras will be utilized during incidents involving theft, violence, harassment or discrimination. They will only be activated in response to serious incidents. Footage will be used to provide unbiased and independent accounts of incidents, assist in investigations and aid law enforcement if necessary. Superstore locations involved in the pilot program are: 1518, 1522, 1523, 1556, 1558, 1562 & 1564.
- Loblaw introduced a new leave of absence form and procedure that requires employees to submit a medical certification and a Work Abilities Form (WAF) if they need extended leave for health reasons. The new process involves two parts. Legal advise confirms that employees cannot be required to engage in modified duties while on unpaid leave. Furthermore, the employer is not authorized to directly contact an employee's physician. If an employee is required to fill out the forms, employees' doctors can check "unable to work even on modified duties" and the WAF section is not necessary.
- The Union has been made aware of several delays in reporting workplace injuries, which have led to issues with WorkSafeBC claims. Timely and accurate reporting is essential for ensure that claims are processed correctly and are not denied due to delays or discrepancies. Employees should always report workplace injuries to their department manager or any available manager on duty immediately after the incident. Employees should ensure that injury reports are submitted on the same day as the incident occurs and verify the accuracy of the details provided by management in the report.
- Emails sent from @loblaw.ca addresses to the union are being blocked. This issue has resulted in some important communications not being received. Union members are encouraged to update their email addresses to the Union to ensure your communications are properly received. To update your contact information, visit the Union website.

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

6. **Secretary-Treasurer Report**

- Safeway has posted the 10 Full-Time Grid B positions on January 15th and all but one was posted in out of town stores. This was a disappointment to those members in the Lower Mainland. The employer is still obligated to post more Full-Time Grid B positions again in 2026.

- The Safeway Human Resources Department and now even the Labour Relations department continues to be slow responding to regular problems in the stores. More of the issues and grievances raised by Union Reps are falling back to the Store Managers to resolve.
- At our Surrey office, we had a long-term tenant, Benjamin Moore paint store, since 2005. The owner, who had 2 stores, was looking to reduce to 1 store and retire. He was able to get one of the other Benjamin Moore locations in South Surrey to take over the lease. The new tenant is doing renovations and will hopefully open sometime in March or April.

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

7. **Bargaining Report**

- We reached a deal with Stong's that was a long time in the making. We combined 3 different agreements into one. The new agreement covers both the Vancouver and Northwoods location and any future locations they may open in the Lower Mainland. Wage improvements were negotiated for all and 2,000 hours were removed from the scale for members to get to the top rate quicker.
- The members turned down the company's offer at Swiss Water Decaffeinated Coffee. The members are looking to try and gain back some of the increases of the last few high inflation years that were given to their management team. Since the last agreement, they have fully moved into a brand-new facility. The company feels with the high investment into a long-term site the employees need to help with the high debt incurred. The Company has indicated to us that they have had conversations with the Board of Directors, and this is their best and final offer. They are so worried about any upcoming tariffs that they may pull this offer and reduce some of the next wage increases. We are scheduling a new vote.
- We reached a deal with Fresh St on January 29th. It was voted in favour by a wide margin as there are substantial improvements to wages, premiums and benefits.
- We reached a recommended deal at Five Corners on February 5th. There were many issues that needed to be addressed in bargaining such as reduce number of hours needed before overtime is paid on Statutory Holiday weeks, calling in sick language improvements, refusing overtime to tend to family care matter and additional premiums for several classes.
- At No Frills in Maple Ridge, the members voted in favour of a new contract on February 6th. Members are happy with the minimum wage protection formula to ensure they keep moving up regardless of the scheduled increases to minimum wage.
- We are in the early planning stages of negotiations for members at FG Deli. We'll map out strategy, including reaching out to the employer to see if we can start early. The earliest we can serve notice under the agreement is August. We can't force employers to meet early.

8. **Engagement & Education Report**

- We have booked 3 separate Introduction to Stewardship Sessions to accommodate the 89 members who have expressed interest in getting more involved in their union and possibly become activists in their workplace.
- We are working on offering a new Scheduling course for members at Superstore. This 2-hour course is designed to assist members in learning the various articles surrounding their schedules, which sometimes can be missed or misinterpreted by employers, resulting in mistakes in workers' work schedules. Course dates, times & locations will be announced next month.
- Applications for this year's UFCW Charity Foundation Scholarships of \$8,000 are now available to all UFCW members in Canada and the United States. Deadline to apply is May 12. The link to the application is on our website, under the education tab.

- Coffee with your Rep/open houses continue to be well received. Some of our Reps are now also announcing their scheduled servicing visits as an effective way to connect with their members. Reminder to not wait until you see your Rep to discuss workplace issues; these issues may be time-sensitive so it's important that you contact your Rep when the issue arises.
- Our Engagement Committee met the first week of January to plan activities and events for 2025. Their proposed events are now being planned, and we anticipate being able to release those details next month, after they have been approved based on the individual proposals.
- Our committee also discussed the need to revamp our education efforts regarding Bullying and Harassment as a health and safety issue, which is separate from our currently Customer Violence and Abuse campaign.
- Last August we thought we were ready to roll out the Membership Milestone Anniversaries we first talked about a year ago. Many membership pins have already been delivered by Reps. The remaining pins for 2024 will be distributed in the coming weeks.

9. **New Business**

- No new business.

Q&A PERIOD – 3 questions were asked & answered and others were unique and individual of nature therefore members were called back.

10. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:42 pm.

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