

Telephone Town Hall – November 19, 2020 @ 7 p.m.

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1. **Meeting called to order** at 7:01 pm by Dan Goodman.
2. **Roll Call of officers:**  
Suzanne Hodge, **President**; Dan Goodman, **Secretary-Treasurer**; Brian Taylor, **VP #1**; Susan Espin, **VP #3**; Sandra Geldart **VP #7**; David Mowatt **VP #8**; Gorden McDonald **VP #9**; Doug Insley **VP #11**; Dale Juvelin **VP #13**, Charles Pratt **VP 14**;
3. **Adoption of Agenda**  
m / s / c to adopt the agenda
4. **Adoption of August 13, 2020 Minutes** as posted on UFCW 247 website  
m / s / c to adopt the minutes
5. **President's Report**
  - We are continuing to adapt to the pandemic world. The issue of mandatory masks is now front & center in the province. Dr. Henry announced today that masks are now mandatory in all indoor public places, retail spaces, grocery stores and in restaurants when not eating or drinking. Dr. Henry has suspended all indoor gatherings, including places of worship until Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>.
  - Local 247 supports the wearing of masks everywhere. However, we have been somewhat more cautious over the concerns we have regarding the enforcement of a mandatory mask policy and what risks that may pose to our members. We will be contacting and discussing this with all of your employers to ensure that the job of enforcing the mandatory masks policy does not fall to our members.
  - In addition to the ongoing problem with some customers choosing not to wear a mask inside retail stores, we are announcing the issue of customer crowding becoming a major concern again. This issue was raised during our 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Board meeting on Tuesday, and this is what we are hearing regarding Sobey's stores and Loblaws in particular. There is no customer control or customer counting being conducted at the store entrances. There is no crowd direction in the busy departments, such as the meat departments and produce departments. There are not enough cashiers scheduled to handle the checkout process in many of the stores, so the customers are backing up down the aisles, which further restricts customers from actually shopping those aisles.
  - In many stores there are no controls in place at the cashier lanes so customers are also crowding the lanes and are too close to each other. We are also receiving widespread reports regarding customers attitudes to being told to stand back or allowing enough space. And then, in many cases the customer responses to these requests are not civil to say the least. In addition, in Loblaws stores there are ongoing problems with the employers FLIPP program not working correctly when it comes to notification of COVID cases in stores. Local 247 has raised these issues with Sobeys and Loblaws. As the case counts go up it only makes sense to put back the customer controls that were in place in the spring and summer. As always it is our members who are caught up in this and have to deal with the crowds and unruly customers.
  - We need our members to be able to work in a safer environment as we head into winter and the busy holiday season. Cutting staff and leaving customers to enter the stores unchecked is certainly not the answer.

- With respect to day-to-day operation in the union office, I had already limited the office days for our Reps to no more than 2 days/week. We were limiting the number of staff in the building most of the time to no more than 6. As I have reported before, we have a mandatory mask policy in place. Effective November 9, Servicing Reps are working from home. Our Support Staff are in the office on rotating days each week, and alternatively working from home remotely on the other days. Reps are servicing the stores, and most have been doing that since May.
- We have concluded and ratified contracts with No Frills, Centennial Foods and VersaCold. We have 4 more No Frills and one Extra Food Store left to bargain. Cathy & Bruce have been very busy with Sobey's. The letters to the successful applicants for the Sobey's buyouts were sent out November 5<sup>th</sup>. We also had a successful campaign for the organizing department, which Dan will report on later.
- the UFCW National Council Executive Board meeting took place by Zoom on Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>. Conferences, Conventions and any regular in-person meetings continue to be held by Zoom or other virtual formats. For UFCW, there is no in-person events expected before the summer of 2021.
- As we approach the holiday season, Local 247 will be making various donations to support food banks across the province and other organizations such as women's shelters, senior support, and those that provide food & housing to the homeless and other disadvantaged groups.

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

## 6. **Secretary-Treasurer's Report**

- Any employee who wants to be exempt from the mask policy with their employer would have to establish that they have a disability that affects their ability to wear a mask. The employer would then be required to accommodate them to the point of undue hardship.
- Letters were recently mailed out to the successful Sobey's buyout applicants. We were able to secure an additional 10 MDS clerks buyouts, and also two Asian Kitchen specific opportunities. We also got the company to offer the restricted 36-hour-work week options to the Asian Kitchen members to help offset the drop-in hours and the closure of their departments with self-serve offerings.
- The release dates for meatcutters have been staggered into 3 separate groups due to difficulty replacing the department members. In a strange twist the Company is appealing the FOS decision. As you recall as part of his decision, Arbitrator John Hall said that "The assurances provided by its counsel during the hearing regarding the third party kiosk LOU have been pivotal to my determination. Among other points, counsel advised that the Employer is hoping to introduce "new and different opportunities" for attracting customers Further, the kiosks will not replace the work of the bargaining unit because those opportunities "are not covered by the skill set of [Local] 247 employees".  
The Company seems to think that Mr. Hall should not have considered oral arguments made at hearing and only rely on written submissions. In our submission on the appeal we take the position that a party making good faith submissions, oral or written, should not be entitled to draw back from them on appeal. Had the Employer not made the Assurances, the Arbitrator may well have rejected the Employer's FOS proposal, "as written". Submissions were made at the end of October and we await the decision of the Board.
- We have also recently grieved the movement of some traditional deli work to other departments. Production of various party trays have now been allocated to the produce or bakery department depending on their contents. Veggie and Fruit platters are coming from produce and filled bread bowls from the bakery. The matter was recently forwarded to our lawyers.

- We have also been asked why the payroll system no longer shows members their ATO balance if they are in an Appendix B store. A similar issue transpired with 1518 after the Ready award and we have asked and will be receiving a full listing of all members ATO balances so we can confirm the number if need be.
- Also for the Safeway January 1, 2021 increases, employees making over \$20 will see their increases on the Jan 21 deposit. For those employees making less than \$20, it will take longer to calculate their increases and required level of hours credit to move them up one level, so their increases will show on the Feb 4th deposit with a retro payments to Jan 1. The increases are as follows: All active Grid B employees at twenty dollars (\$20.00) or greater at time of payment shall receive an off-scale increases of \$0.40 per hour. All active Grid B employees earning less than twenty dollars (\$20.00) shall be placed at the next highest wage rate on the wage scale, and active Grid A employees at top rate of pay shall receive \$0.35 per hour.
- With Loblaw we had a matter arise in a store where the front-end supervisor was deducting single minutes from members hours of work if they weren't returning from their lunch on time. We raised the issue with Labour Relations and they agreed this shouldn't be happening and it was corrected. What this led to though was a discussion on front end members working extra time, usually on a till. Some of the most common examples would be finishing an order you've already started or the person replacing you being delayed resulting in you staying extra time. When we looked into the case law on this issue and even looked at what other locals and employers were doing on it there is an accepted concept with arbitrators of "give and take" which deals with a couple of minutes here and there either way. Our concern is the continual occurrence of more than a couple of minutes adds up. If this is the case for you, you need to bring it to the attention of your supervisor as the loblaw system is set to pay you your exact shift length unless the company changes it. So, in order for them to change it they will want to know why the delay happened, to verify it. Any issues on this should be raised with your Union Representative.
- From the previous meeting, we did enquire with Loblaw on an issue a member asked about, the frequency of how often the scheduling application was asking them to change their password. We were told that the Loblaw head office mandates that employees update the password quite often for security and the local Loblaw people have no control. On any other app issues they did canvas the stores in the store huddle groups and ask people to bring forward problems and we have been told they are being dealt with. Going forward if there are app issues, take a screen shot of the problem and we can forward it to labour relations. They are actively tracking problems and making efforts to correct.
- We had a successful application to represent workers at the Pinetree Village Chapters. The Square One Chapter's location in Mississauga, Ontario was involved in a high profile organizing drive with UFCW Local 1006A, and as a result of that, we received a call from a couple of Coquitlam's Chapter's employees. Almost all the communication was done by Instagram as the members took ownership of the campaign and went from start to application in under 2 weeks. The vote was done by a third party app as employees were emailed the link from the Labour Board and signed in to cast their ballot through the app. We won the vote overwhelmingly and have started the process to get a collective agreement. Local 1006A was also successful with their application, and we hope to see more locations become UFCW members.
- New UFCW Local 247 logo on masks and on our website. The website is getting a refresh to make it more mobile-friendly. One of the things that our website developers suggested was a logo change to make it easier to read when used on documents. Ximena has been working on the site update and we hope to roll it out next year.
- Thank you to all of our members who continue to work on the front lines in these strange and unique times and also our staff who have had to adapt to numerous changes in how we communicate and service the membership.

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

## 7. **Bargaining Report**

- We are quite busy catching up on bargaining that was delayed or postponed earlier in the summer. COVID has forced us to adapt to new methods of negotiations and ratification meetings. Much larger meeting spaces, Zoom meetings, single serve pre-wrapped food, townhall style explanation meetings with various forms of ratifications are the new norm. We were initially saving money by holding virtual meetings but have now seen increased costs due to larger spaces needing to be booked and additional mandatory cleaning costs passed onto us, the customer.
- No Frills in Salmon Arm recently ratified after a second vote. The Company added retroactive payback to June 1<sup>st</sup> for all employees, and the agreement was ratified by 74% on Oct. 24.
- Centennial Foods ratified by 78% on Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> with a 3-year collective agreement to get through COVID as they are heavily reliant on the restaurant supply business, and it's been a difficult year, and last quarter will see a lot of impact due to a lot of Christmas parties being cancelled.
- VersaCold Derwent will be having ratification meetings November 24<sup>th</sup> on a 5-year agreement with substantial wage increases in each year, plus all premiums increase.
- Negotiations dates are being finalized for No Frills Port Coquitlam, Hastings Street, Invermere and Fort St. John, and dates are also being agreed to for the YIG in Vanderhoof.
- We'll also be voting on a memorandum reached with BC Tree Fruit. Right before we were to commence negotiations, a group of growers threatened to table a motion at the AGM meeting, which would have seen the co-op split into two groups. This delayed things and caused us to shift our focus a bit once we met, so we were able to reach an agreement. A townhall meeting is being held this coming Monday to explain the memorandum and we'll be voting it on Nov. 24 & 25<sup>th</sup>.
- We're scheduled to continue negotiations with FG Deli on Nov. 26 & 27, and we'll be getting into the monetary discussions.
- On Aug. 27, a 15-person Union negotiating Committee made up of three staff and 12 bargaining unit members came to an agreement with Loblaw on modifications to the current collective bargaining agreement in the form of a letter of understanding. Discussions carried on over eight sessions and were initiated by member concerns and a recognition by the Employer the wage rates were no longer competitive. This was causing issues in the workplaces due to the Employer's inability to hire and retain staff. Changes were implemented beginning in early September and are an interim fix until full bargaining commence with the end of the current agreement in August 2021. Significant improvements to the scales, with increases reaching up to \$2.35 an hour and a thousand lump sum to cover those over \$22.50. Seniority rights have been enhanced. As a result, all full-time DC employees can use their seniority to bid on both shift and function. General warehouse classification employees, both full and part-time, can express a preference for the type of work they perform. A well-attended telephone townhall meeting was held on Sept. 8 to explain the process and significant changes and answer questions. We look forward to making further significant improvements, including hourly wage increase for overscale employees once we get into full bargaining in 2021.

## 8. **Education & Training Report**

- Bursaries are now available for members who have chosen to take short term courses with the intent of updating their skills in an area relevant to their work. Application forms can be requested by emailing [training@ufcw247.com](mailto:training@ufcw247.com). The application process is ongoing and limited to members only.
- WebCampus continues to offer a large selection of online courses that are available for all UFCW members and their families. All courses offer a certificate of completion and are absolutely free. A detailed list of all webCampus courses is available on our website, [ufcw247.com](http://ufcw247.com) under the education tab.

- We offered two introduction to Stewardship courses this fall that were held at the Training Centre in very small groups and following strict COVID-19 safety protocols. The energy brought by each one was such that we found the class discussions were not affected by the small size of the groups. We had two more sessions booked for the month, but they've been put on hold due to the current Fraser Health restrictions. Virtual offerings for our Stewards will now be booked to avoid further delay in education.
- General Membership courses like basic accounting & food safe were offered virtually this season and will continue to be offered in the New Year.

9. **New Business**

- No new business.

3 questions taken by members on the call.

10. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:42 pm.

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