

Telephone Town Hall – May 13, 2021 @ 7 p.m.

1. **Meeting called to order** at 7:02 pm by Dan Goodman.
2. **Roll Call of officers:**
Dan Goodman, **President**; Charles Pratt, **Secretary-Treasurer**; Brian Taylor, **Recorder**; Margaret Robins **VP #1**; Alicia Whitehead **VP #2**; Susan Espin, **VP #3**; Sandra Geldart **VP #7**; David Mowatt **VP #8**; Gorden McDonald **VP #9**; David Haere **VP #10**; Dale Juvelin **VP #13**, Cathy Shannon **VP 14**;
3. **Adoption of Agenda**
m / s / c to adopt the agenda
4. **Adoption of February 11, 2021 Minutes** as posted on UFCW 247 website
m / s / c to adopt the minutes
5. **President's Report**
 - UFCW Local 247 Executive Board was held on March 31 where President Suzanne Hodge advised she would be stepping down as President effective that day. Under the UFCW Constitution a vacancy in the office of the Local Union President shall be filled no earlier than 30 days nor later than 90 days after the vacancy occurs. Subsequently, the Board on May 6th elected myself (Dan Goodman) to serve as President and Charles Pratt to serve as Secretary-Treasurer. We thank the Board for their support.
 - Suzanne held almost every position you could with either Local 1518, Local 777 and then Local 247 over the last 30 years. She stepped into the role as President under some very trying circumstances when former President Gib Whitlock passed away and led the Local through some very trying times. We wish her all the best in her retirement and thank her for her service.
 - We would also like to congratulate Nolan Eddy our Training Director on his retirement after almost 29 years with Locals 2000 and 247. Nolan was instrumental in guiding the Training Centre through various changes in government funding over the last decade. And he, along with Denise Iorio who retired a few years ago and sadly passed away in December, were the heart and soul of our Training Centre.
 - We are announcing that going forward, members will apply for the Iorio Scholarship or the Eddy Education Grant. We think it's nice to still link them together this way.
 - On the COVID front, we've been aggressively advocating for grocery & essential workers access to vaccinations as well as working with the Employers to focus on members safety. Our office is still running on course with the support staff there daily and the Reps coming in as needed. WE have ordered another batch of masks and expect them to arrive shortly. We continue to run a number of COVID related issues pass Tony and our other counsel whenever the employers make updates or changes to their safety policies and guidelines so we can deal with the impact or fall out quickly and ensure Employers are acting in a proper manner.
 - To give you an idea of how quickly things happen on the COVID front, last Thursday we received an email from Sobeys on Vancouver Coastal Health inviting grocery store staff who are working in Vancouver, Richmond, and on the North Shore to first-dose COVID-19 vaccination clinics last week. The email had an attachment with the locations and that was it. I saw the letter, was quite surprised that we hadn't heard anything on this and then thought...it says grocery workers...does this apply to Loblaw as well?? The next hour was something out of keystone cops as I called Sobeys to see how this even came to be and if they knew who the letter was sent

to. They believed Vancouver Coastal Health had reached out to them but wasn't really sure and had no idea what other retailers may have been given the same opportunity. I spoke to Cathy and Charles to see if they had heard anything...nope. We tried to find any kind of reference online...there was nothing. We called Loblaw to see if they were a part of this and they had absolutely no idea what I was talking about. Subsequently they called me back an hour later saying, yes it applied to Loblaw members in those areas as well, but that Labour Relations had been left out of the communications loop. This makes it extremely challenging to get accurate information out to the members when everyone is contradicting each other.

- A few staffing changes... with Charles assuming the Secretary-Treasurer position, I've promoted Cathy Shannon to Assistant to the President role. Cathy has been our point person on Sobeys' matters for the last while and will continue to do that along with expanding her horizons into other areas. We have previously talked about how COVID had impacted our ability to offer in person training and we aren't sure if or when those opportunities will return. Therefore we have been looking at expanding Ximena's role and I'm happy to announce that she is taking on the new position of Training & Engagement Coordinator. She will continue to oversee the Steward & Member training, while also assistant with the website, newsletter, social media present and special projects, such as survey development.
- COVID has changed the way we communicate with members and we need to stay current. She's been putting more information out via Instagram & Facebook as well as looking at other options for us to connect with members. She's currently developing a members' survey we hope to release this summer to get our members opinions on a wide range of topics such as different modes of servicing, how they get their Union information, topics they would like to see from the Training Centre, etc.
- I'll start with a few updates concerning Sobeys. On April 29, 2021, the Labour Board dismissed Sobeys' appeal of the FOS award and confirmed the decision of arbitrator John Hall. We've talked about this before but just to remind you, in issuing his decision, Arbitrator Hall found that Sobeys offer on whether it could introduce third party kiosks in Local 247 jurisdiction was permissible, but only if it did not impact jobs or work of Local 247 members. This was a huge issue for us and the Company quickly appealed the award felling Mr. Hall had incorrectly relied on "assurances provided by the Employer's counsel during the hearing" when the Employer Counsel stated that any introduction of a kiosk will not replace the work of the bargaining unit. Our Chief Counsel, Tony Glavin, who argued our case was confident we would be successful in the appeal process and although the Company could ask for reconsideration, he thinks it unlikely.
- Last Friday we held our first Joint Labour Management or JLM meeting with the Sobeys. They reached out to us earlier this year stating that their plan was to reintroduce this type of meeting with all the Unions they dealt with and asked if we were interested. It was conducted via Zoom and our four Safeway E-Board members participated along with our staff reps that deal with the Company. The Company shared a business update that included information on market share, capital investments, store remodels, Voila by Safeway (In-Store Fulfillment curbside pick up initiative) meat, seafood, deli/HMR operations and future plans as well as the Company's ongoing response to Covid-19. The Company shared an HR update that included information on People Portal/Employee Central, Diversity, Inclusion and Equity initiatives as well as the Employee Experience Survey. Finally the Company provided details on its mental wellbeing initiatives including its new pilot of the "Togetherall" platform. The idea going forward is to continue have these meetings at least annually to foster collaboration between the groups.
- You may have seen the notices regarding the deal we had reached to return stores to Appendix A in three waves. The first group of stores was returned last week and Wave 2, which is effective July 4, will see five more stores moves from Appendix B to Appendix A. Store 4946 (Terrace), 4936 (Shaughnessy), Store 4913 (Kensington), Store 4911 (Burnaby Heights), Store 4909 (Caufield). The last ten store will move September 5th. Members in these stores had or will have

their ATO reinstated, the return of the Grid A part time rates of pay and a return to full production clerk benefit contributions.

- We also announced that we are partnering with Sobeys on a Meat Cutter Training Program. As a result of 10 senior meat cutters receiving the severance/buyout via the FOS Award, there is a shortage of trained cutters. We have had numerous discussions with the Company over the years on developing a program to address the specific skill set required through in store training. Union Representative Bruce Jackson will be meeting with the Company in the next few weeks to get things rolling and we hope to involve some current meat cutters as well. The hope is to do an initial training of five members by this September.
- Early next month we will be serving notice to bargain on the Company for the Safeway Extra stores. The agreements all expire around the end of the year so we need to start preparations.

Cathy reports on a pay scale issue with Sobeys'. It came about when one of our members reached out to the Union to inquire about her wages and scale increase. This issue came up after she asked the Company about her hours increase and they told her she needed to work over 11,000 hours before she received her next increase on the wage scale. After January 1st this year, when employees earning less than \$20 per hour were reset on the wage scale at step 23, they were then assigned the corresponding hours they worked. We immediately started to investigate the issue and found none of our members since January 1st have received a wage increase according to the hours they've worked since then. We contacted the Labour Relations Department right away and they are working on that payroll issue for our members now.

- We continued our negotiations with FG Deli, two days ago, with the assistance of a mediator. I'm happy to report that we reached a tentative agreement that we will be taking back to the members that will be unanimously recommended by our committee. The mediator, Mark Atkinson, was extremely helpful in getting us to the finish line.
- The CLC Convention will be held virtually from June 16 to 18 & replaces the cancelled convention from last year. It was one of a number of Conventions last year that was postponed and had to be rescheduled. There will be elections and as I previously mentioned, Beatrice Bruske, Local 832's Secretary-Treasurer will be running for President, as part of the team UNITE group.

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

6. **Audited Financial Statement**

- The 2020 Audited financial statements was read.

m / s / c to adopt the 2020 Audited financial statements as read.

7. **Secretary-Treasurer's Report**

- Current Superstore & Distribution Centres expires on August 1 2021, and notice was given to the Employer advising them of our intent to commence bargaining on April 16 2021. We have secured initial bargaining dates of July 26 to 30th for the retail side; and are working on dates for the Distribution side. Dan & Charles will be chairing the Retail negotiations and Dean Patriquin, Director of Bargaining will be the spokesperson for the DC side.
- In preparation for bargaining, we have posted an online proposed survey for members to complete. Our website homepage contains a link for the Retail and DC. There'll also be a link on our Social media. Additionally, we'll be emailing our Real Canadian Superstore and Distribution Centres members advising them of the upcoming bargaining and providing a link to the surveys. It's important for us to have an up-to-date email address for all members that's one of the primary ways we can inform members in real time. When visiting our website, a popup requesting this information will be found.

- We anticipate being able to bargain in person, as long as COVID regulations & guidelines allow it.
- Loblaw recently made announcements on a number of COVID related programs specific to financial incentives for members. They are providing 3 hours paid sick leave for the purpose of taking COVID vaccine if the appointment falls during scheduled shifts. This is consistent with the recent changes to the Employment Standards Act in BC. Loblaw will also be providing a one-time lump sum bonus of \$175 for full-time employees & pro-rated for part-time employees based on the average hours worked.
- There will be multiple 20% staff discount days scheduled in the coming months. Loblaw has also extended the Payroll Protection Plan to allow for multiple access to compensation where medically required. The current plan only covered a single incident. An example of this may be if you are required to self-isolate due to a possible exposure and at a later point contract COVID unrelated to the first incident.
- We feel underwhelmed by Loblaw's level of generosity. Canada wide sales in Loblaw grocery stores are up. Same store sales in 2020 were up an average of 8.6% according to their 2020 financial report, with revenues up 9.7%. Loblaw did face some increased costs during this period due to increased expenditures on COVID related safety initiatives & security, and the increased cost in upswing and customers utilizing the PCX services. Both Corporate stock dividends and executive bonuses have increased during the pandemic.
- Loblaw has been under increasing pressure to step up their game & return to paying a Pandemic Premium from Unions, workers, customers, social media & some news broadcasters. As a Local, we continue to push the Employer to reinstate the Pandemic Premium and that pressure will continue at the bargaining table.

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

8. **Bargaining Report**

- We have begun bargaining with Indigo/Chapters in February. After many sessions, we are still working our way through non-monetary language. This is a first agreement, so every article is right from the start. Seniority, one of the most important issues in a Unionized workplace, is something new to this employer, and they will have to get used to having seniority as a guideline to follow for scheduling. We have several dates in the following weeks scheduled.
- Notices to bargain were sent out to YIG Eldo's in Fernie and YIG Cain's in Kamloops. We are waiting for the Company to agree on dates for both locations.

9. **Education & Training Report**

- Our Training Centre is currently offering a Food Handler Certification course, completely online & free to all our members. Registered participants have 30 days to complete the course, which requires 6 to 8 hours of your time.
- WebCampus offers a wide variety of online courses available to all members and their families where learning can take place any day of the week and from any device connected to the internet. Some of the most popular courses this season continue to be mental health related. Included in this mental health series is a 15-minute check-in module that members can access anytime they may be feeling anxious, sad, worried or irritable.
- Members from the Okanagan & Kootenay regions recently participated in a 1-day introduction to stewardship course. We have also booked a virtual Mental Health First Aid course for the end of May. This course will help Stewards provide initial support to someone who may be experiencing a mental health crisis. It teaches mental health first aid skills but does not train them to be therapists, counselors, or mental health professionals. With this training, a steward in the workplace may recognize the signs of a mental crisis and follow appropriate steps to help reduce possible harm. Just like physical first aid is administered to an injured person before

getting medical treatment, Mental Health First Aid is given until appropriate treatment is found or until the crisis is resolved.

10. **New Business**

- No new business.

5 questions taken by members on the call.

12. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:39 pm.

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