

Telephone Town Hall – May 26, 2022 @ 7 p.m.

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1. **Meeting called to order** at 7:03 pm by Dan Goodman.
2. **Roll Call of officers:**  
Dan Goodman, **President**; Charles Pratt, **Secretary-Treasurer**; Margaret Robins, **VP #1**; Alicia Whitehead, **VP #2**; Susan Espin, **VP #3**; John Lewinski, **VP #6**; Sandra Geldart, **VP #7**; David Mowatt, **VP #8**; David Haere, **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 17, 2022 Minutes** as posted on UFCW 247 website  
m / s / c to adopt the minutes
5. **President's Report**
  - On April 7, after 16 days of bargaining, the Loblaw Distribution Centres reached a settlement. The next day, on April 8<sup>th</sup>, after 25 days of meetings, the Retail Committee reached a deal. We held 5 townhall style explanation meetings, one specifically for Shop Stewards and 4 more over the next 2 days at all hours to give the entire membership an opportunity to hear the explanation. The Warehouses (Distribution Centres) also held multiple meetings. We then held 20 different voting polls, a couple of which were Warehouse specific. The polls were open from 8 am to 8 pm, again to provide maximum chance to come out and vote. We held 3 large polls in the Lower Mainland and gave Chilliwack and North Vancouver their own polls for the first time.
  - Votes were counted on April 28<sup>th</sup> and the settlement was rejected by 78%. We subsequently took strike votes and received a 97% vote for strike action, if necessary. We have contacted Loblaw and made them aware of the number and invited them to meet. And earlier this week, we confirmed that we will be meeting with the company next Monday and Tuesday. We will need to establish what the starting point is, as with the rejection of the memorandum settlement, we could be back to square one. It's no secret that members want to see more money in any offer and getting more will be our main focus.
  - our key issue, initially was the elimination of the 75/25 ratio of trainees to specialists. Although we achieved that and established a new scale that would've provided movement and increases to people in the trainee GM and pharmacy card classifications, it did impact increases for specialists, which is where we heard the highest levels of dissatisfaction. I never thought I would see the end of the 75/25 or see GM and food members on one scale. So hopefully, those are items we can build off when we return to the table next week.
  - Over the past few weeks, a number of members have reached out and emailed us with their opinions on what we should do, what we shouldn't have done, telling us that we should walk out now or asking that we avoid a strike altogether. A wide range of comments. These are emotional times for many of the members, but we all need to remember that strike votes are a normal part of the bargaining process just as before the idea is to come to an agreement that the members will ratify.
  - If we get to the table next week and the company isn't getting our message, or we just aren't making progress, we may need to serve strike notice. By law, should things break down, we need to give the company 72 hours perishability notice before going out. The employer may apply for

an extension to the notice period, and they would have to convince the labor board, that 72 hours is not enough time for them to take concrete action to prevent the spoilage of perishable goods. The labor board has confirmed this type of extension is an exception to the rule, so it is only granted if necessary. It is not automatic, but with the nature of the operation, it would be likely. If the board does grant an extension, there is no specific amount of time that it would be. It would really depend on the facts and what the employer can convince the board is necessary in terms of how much time it would reasonably need to take action to prevent the spoilage of the perishable items. The labor board would likely consider factors like how much food is clearly going to perish quickly, what the employer's options are in terms of steps it can take to avoid spoilage, and how long those steps would reasonably take. Also, whether the employer can cancel expected shipments of perishable food that are on their way.

- We have also had some questions from members as to how the law regarding replacement workers or scabs works. The BC labor code does not allow an employer to use replacement workers during a strike to perform the work of either an employee in the bargaining unit that is on strike, or the work ordinarily done by a person, such as an excluded manager, who's doing the work of a person who's on strike. The code specifies that the type of replacement workers that are not allowed include persons who ordinarily work in another one of the employer's place of operations. Thus, the employer cannot lawfully use management from outside the province, nor can they use employees from different non-union shops to perform work of striking employees. An example of this would be them trying to use T&T employees or offering bonuses to workers in another province to come work here. This important legislation will most likely prevent them from keeping the stores operational if our members strike.
- The local has been in touch with our national office and the National Defence Fund, and we have been preparing for a strike should it be necessary. We have had staff in the stores, information on the website, talking about strike preparation. We have initiated Picket Captain training which is ongoing, and our national office has promised us bodies to help man and run picket lines, should we need it. We've also met with our bank to establish the best way to process 10,000 cheques a week if need be. We will be ready if it comes to that. You will be hearing all sorts of rumors in your stores, some of it generated by the company and some put out by outside groups. We urge you to not believe any of it. The company wants you scared. And none of the people who will be talking, including your supervisors or store managers, have been involved in these negotiations. This happens all the time. It's a tactic they use to create dissension, so don't believe or rely on anything they say.
- One thing I want to be clear on is that there is no guarantee there will be another vote before a possible strike. As I said earlier, if the company comes in and tables something we think is worse, or not even worth bringing back to the members, we could give notice at that time. We would certainly make the membership aware things are going in that direction. At this time, we are only meeting with the retail group. The company representatives for the distribution center have said that they're not prepared to meet, and we may get more clarity on that when we sit face to face.

Cathy Shannon – Update on Sobeys:

- Bargaining with Safeway in 2023 is something we will be focusing on soon. We will start to prepare gathering from our membership our proposals as a first step. We may try to have a small proposal conference if things remain the same as they are now, so we can receive a wide range of opinions and feedback for the union proposals. The earliest notice we can serve to Safeway to commence bargaining for 2023 is October of this year. Even though we serve notice to bargain, it does not mean the employer has to agree.
- Our goal is to try and start the process early, as we still have a few stores under the John Hall Award as appendix B stores. And those remaining stores, although there are only a few of them left, they remain under the terms and conditions of the appendix B portion of the award with

reduced grid a part-time hourly rates of pay, no ATO accruals, as well as reduced contributions made by the employer to the grid B benefit plan.

- the merging of the Safeway Extra stores into the Safeway collective agreement, the changes in the memorandum of agreement between the parties have mostly been completed with only a few minor glitches still left.
- All the non-union members in the Safeway Extra stores that were out of the bargaining unit before have come back into the union, except for two managers that remain outside the bargaining unit. Those non-union managers will remain out until March of 2023, which coincides with the expiry of the Safeway collective agreement. The Safeway contract has been updated with all the changes.
- Additionally, at Safeway, there was an agreement between the union and the employer to train 10 meat cutters. The first group of five candidates from the training program transitioned into the stores quickly, they have either moved into the home store positions through the job posting process, or into management positions because of that area of need the employer has, and onto the float staff where they quickly received their first three weeks of scheduling. The second group of five meat cutter trainee candidates were selected. And this group included two candidates from outside the lower mainland, as we agreed. They will complete their 23 weeks of training in September. The cutter trainees we met have provided us with positive feedback on the training they have had so far. The union will continue to push the employer for more opportunities for meat cutter training, and we hope Safeway, because of its success so far, continues with their new training program going forward.
- We encourage anyone interested in the meat cutter program, or wanting to become a meat cutter, to contact their union representative or their meat manager to let them know they are interested. The union also reminds anyone interested in the meat cutter trade that we still have scholarships and training through the Thompson Rivers University cutter training program in Kamloops and contact Union Rep, Bruce Jackson if interested.
- COVID cases and sickness at the Safeway stores is no longer being reported to the union by the company, as things have transitioned to what we guess is a new normal. In servicing the stores, we have heard from a few members out there about short staffing issues and closing departments down early. Although some of these issues were happening during the heights of COVID, and the member on duty clause without prejudice was not being enforced, because of the pandemic and the tri-party agreement we had, it should be now that we are back to a new normal. These early closures are a violation of the member on duty clause, so please contact your union representative to provide them with the details if this is happening in your store.
- Mental health is important for everyone. Members need to remember to take care of their health. Please check the union website, or your employer's website, for the employee assistant program information and for the links to other programs that are available to you.

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

## 6. **Audited Financial Statement**

- The 2021 Audited financial statements was read.

m / s / c to adopt the 2021 Audited financial statements as read.

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

- Real Canadian Superstore and Loblaws DC members should have received their new benefits card in the mail over the past several weeks. This direct pay benefits card was introduced by the board of trustees, as a result of numerous requests during our bargaining proposal survey and meetings with members in store. It is now easier to use your benefit plan as drug, dental, and extended

health benefits are now directly paid to the service provider, and do not require members to pay up front and wait for reimbursements from the plan. Please be aware that the benefits provided by the plan have not changed, just the way that they're paid for. Your service provider must register with PBAS in order to be paid. If they have not yet registered, then you must continue to pay manually and submit receipts for reimbursement.

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

Other Bargaining update:

No frills bargaining is on hold until we resolve the Superstore situation. We're also waiting to see what comes out with the province wide Ontario No Frills bargaining that is ongoing. IGA in West Vancouver is still waiting for a ruling on the final offer vote to UFCW local 1518. Five Corners negotiations has begun this week and is progressing. Aramark bargaining is scheduled for June 7th-9th.

## 8. **Engagement & Education Report**

- Since the last meeting, we have offered three bullying and harassment courses along with three mental health first aid courses for our shop stewards and activists. Due to the current bargaining situation with Loblaw, the additional steward education sessions that we had booked for our members in the lower mainland and Kelowna, along with a mental health session that has been booked for the stores on the island, have been put on hold for now. All education offers will need to be adjusted as the bargaining situation evolves. In the meantime, as Dan already mentioned, we are now offering Picket Captain education. The first session took place this morning, and the second one is scheduled for next week. More will come as needed.
- We want to remind all our union members that free online education opportunities through our local, and through UFCW Canada, are available on our website, UFCW247.com under the education tab. And in regards to engagement, we continue to use the Hustle texting platform to notify new members of their possible eligibility for health benefits. We also utilize this service to remind Loblaw members that the strike votes were happening earlier this month. These communication tools rely on us having up to date information, contact information, so we remind you to please contact us to inform us of any changes. And if possible, to also share your email address with us.

## 9. **New Business**

- No new business.

## **Q&A PERIOD -**

4 questions in the queue answered. Additional callers requested to be called directly off-air.

## 10. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm.

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