

UFCW Local 832
December 13, 2016

Jeff Traeger:

Good evening everyone. My name is Jeff Traeger, and I am the president of your union, UFCW Local 832. Want to welcome you all to the 2016 winter telephone town hall general membership meeting for members of UFCW Local 832, which is now called to order.

Your leadership of your union is literally all over the province tonight. Secretary-Treasurer Beatrice Bruske is currently working out of our Brandon office. I'm in the Winnipeg office, and I'm my executive assistant, Marie Buchan is in Thompson preparing and touring our healthcare units, getting ready for the upcoming round of negotiations.

With me in the studio tonight, along with our communication team of Blake Crothers and Chris Noto, is your director of servicing Sandy Forcier, and a special guest, Ashley Morello from our executive board. Ashley's going to take the few minutes tonight to talk to all of us about her experiences with Local 832 as an activist in her workplace and her involvement with our youth initiatives and on our executive board.

Our last meeting was September 13, and we've been very busy over the last several months, and we will get you caught up on all the various events and initiatives shortly. For all of the members on the line, I would ask that you please remember that the purpose of this meeting is to discuss issues or ask questions about matters that affect all Local 832 members. If you have a specific question about a grievance or an issue that affects your workplace alone, I would ask that you contact your full-time union representative, whose name and contact information is available on the UFCW bulletin board in your workplace, or online at UFCW832.com.

Tonight is our fourth quarterly town hall GMM of 2016. I want to thank all of you who've participated in these meetings for making them such a success. If you know of any members who haven't participated in one of these meetings, please ask them to try it out. Try calling in for one meeting so that they can stay more connected to their union.

Format continues to be very popular with our activists, and we're now using the town hall to reach out to different groups of members when we need to communicate with them. We've connected with shop stewards at large units during negotiations, and recently had two town halls to connect with our members working in the security industry as they are literally spread out all over the province, and it's difficult to connect with them in traditional ways.

In 2017, however, we're only going to have two general membership telephone town halls instead of the four that we normally have because we'll be running elections that will have to be ... Our members will have to be physically in attendance at meetings that we'll conduct around the province, but we've asked many of you to give us feedback on how we can make these meetings more interesting.

I got to say. The overwhelming consensus seems to be that the reading of the minutes and the reports by the treasurer and the president are boring. That is right. I said boring. The problem is that we are required to vote on those minutes and report by an old-fashioned constitution, so in 2017, we're going to try something new to deal with that.

The two meetings that we will be conducting by telephone town hall, we will be posting the minutes of the prior meeting, the Secretary-Treasurer's report, and the president's report, on our website at UFCW832.com. We will then ask our members to vote on those reports throughout the telephone town hall, without reading them, so that we can meet the requirements of the constitution and have significantly more time to bring guests into the studio, and to answer more of your questions.

Tonight, I would ask that you get on the line by pressing the star key followed by the number three and let me know what you think of that idea, and maybe even let me know who you'd like to have on as a guest when we do these meetings next year.

For tonight however, we're going to have to do it the old-fashioned way one more time, which includes minutes of the last meeting, getting a report from the treasurer, and getting a report from me outlining the important and issues events currently happening at the Local.

Since these take some time, we'll be taking a break between each of those reports to open the phone lines up so that you can ask any questions you may have. In a moment, we're going to hear from Ashley, and then after that, we'll do an abbreviated version of the minutes of our September meeting, and ask you to vote to accept those minutes.

While we wait for the results of that vote, you will have an opportunity to ask a question by pressing the star key followed by the number three.

We'll do the same thing with the other two reports so that we're able to get to your questions earlier and throughout the meeting instead of waiting for the end. We do require a motion and a vote to approve the other two reports as well, so when time comes to vote on any of the three motions, we'll ask you to vote yes by pressing the number one on your keypad and to vote no by pressing number two on your keypad.

Once again, to get in the line up to ask a question, simply press the star key followed by the number three key and you'll be placed in the queue.

We'll be opening the phone up for questions in just a few minutes; feel free to get in the lineup now. Our town hall tonight must be completed by 8:00 p.m., so we may not be able to answer all of your questions should there be too many. If

we don't get to your question tonight, we'll have your full-time union representative contact you over the next day or so to follow up with you.

Before we begin the formal business of the meeting, I'd like to turn the mic over to Ashley Morello to talk with you for a few minutes about her experience with UFCW.

Ashley.

Ashley Morello:

Thank you Mr. Jeff. My name is Ashley Morello. I work at Old Dutch Foods, where I started there in 2007. It was my third job. My first two consisted of three hours at Middlechurch Homes. Didn't last very long, and my second one was Tinkertown when I was 16 years old, and most of them are non-union, so when I rolled up into Old Dutch, and I had found out it was union, it had no relevance to me.

I had absolutely no idea what union was. My parents weren't strong union activists or activists at all for that matter. It wasn't until I ran into a harassment issue at work that I fully found out what being a union member was. My union steward at my work place harnessed that issue and helped me build upon that.

Then he decided it'd be a great idea for me to be a shop steward, so me kind of being a pushover, and saying yes to basically to that's thrown at me, I said yes. Not knowing what it meant, but I said yes, so that kind of tumbled me into being mentored by Marie Buchan, who was my union rep at the time at Old Dutch Foods, and she said, "Well, you know what, there's this Youth Internship Program. I think you'd be great. Uh, get some knowledge, inform yourself of what a union is."

Once again, I said yes. I've never flown before, but I said yes. The Youth Internship Program was absolutely fantastic. I came back with the utmost knowledge. I was really gung ho. I wanted to take everything on. I was asked to be an organizer at Local 832 where I was able to talk to non-union workers about their issues and help them, empower them to build a union in their own workplaces.

Then I was also asked to be a part of the executive board, where I have the ability to listen to all of the locals' issues, all of the locals' progressions, ideas, make proposals, and so on and so forth. The Local also has given the opportunity to attend many fantastic activities and events like the Canadian Labour Congress Young Workers' Summit, which happened earlier this year in October, where we discussed precarious work and what young workers and who young workers are today.

Who are we today? Our generation is more diverse, adaptable, and pluralist than any generation before us. We are a generation defined by the internet, by

social media, and by ever changing modes of communication, and the ever constant flow of information, but that is not all that we are.

We're a generation that is witnessing huge changes to the world of work, the escalating effects of climate change, and an unprecedented of income inequality, a massive consolidation of income inequality and corporate power. We are witnessing the middle class dream falling further and further out of reach year. Today, there are an estimated 6.8 million young people in Canada, age 15 to 30, who have grown up in a climate very different from that of our parents and our grandparents.

Young workers today have borne the brunt of corporate drive for a more flexible workforce, and the uberization of the workforce. Now, if you don't know what uberization is, it's basically to modify a market or economic model to the cheapest way possible.

We've been disproportionately impacted by anti-union attacks and the downward pressure on wages and working conditions. Our generation has been very vulnerable to these pressures as we struggle to get an education, find good jobs, and establish our families.

As the Canadian Labour of Congress states, "Young workers are increasingly being asked to dive into a workplace without a parachute." The lack of opportunities to get ahead is threatening. A growing population and a lifelong social and economic inequality with young Canadians being especially impacted.

We are far likely to live in poverty than older Canadians and are carrying record levels of debt, which has surged drastically in the past decade. Debt carried by young Canadians is about double what it was 15 years earlier, and if you see tuition rates, you'll definitely see why.

Although mainstream media has painted millennials as an entitled generation that is too apathetic to vote or too lazy to leave our parents' basements, our experience tell a different story about who we are. Young workers today are inspired to create change. Young workers are optimistic about working together to achieve an economy that works for all.

For young workers, the benefits of unionization are clear. Alongside increased equity and fairness in the workplace, young workers who belong to a union make higher wages and are more likely to have access to benefits. However, the rate of union coverage for young workers is less than half that of core age workers.

This divide is largely driven by right-wing attack on union rights and does not mean that the desire to join a union isn't there. I've had the personal opportunity to help organize workplaces with people that are younger than myself, that are the same age as myself.

[inaudible 00:11:20] that the want to change is resonant. Young people are acutely aware of issues in their workplaces and are interested in joining unions. In fact, while the unionization for core age workers has decreased over the past two decades, the unionization rate for young workers have actually risen slightly.

Although union-busting employers and politicians have both had an eroding strength of unions and created some negative misconceptions of the labor movement, union core principles of empowering workers, social justice, fairness, and ability to work together, resonate heartily with young Canadians.

This presence of massive opportunity for both unions and young workers to work together to strengthen the labor movement, to address the realities of our world of work. In their unions, young workers are increasingly active in taking lead roles and cap gains, especially that target some of the most precarious workplaces like fast food workers for \$15 in fairness.

Labor laws, organizing tactics, and union structures have not always kept up with rapidly changing workplaces and non-standard work, technological change, AKA automation, and globalization have placed limits on traditional organizing tactics, so what should we do? What should young workers do, governments do, and how should unions grow and respond?

Young workers have the need to work collaboratively to strengthen, modernize, and expand our movement. This includes growing relationships with social and political partners where young workers are already active. The existing network of young workers' committees alongside allies and popular social movement serves as a vehicle used to develop leadership skills, advocate for real policy, and civic solutions to the problems our generation faces in our workplace.

Growing the labor movement means building young workers' power to create change and organize new workplaces in new ways, and that's why, I myself, decide to say yes to everything. Get active, see if it fits me, if it doesn't, I move on and try to place my gift, my passion, in other ways. Thank you Jeff.

Jeff Traeger: Wow, thank you very much, Ashley. That's pretty amazing stuff, and obviously I think it's very clear that you're passionate about your beliefs, passionate about the labor movement, and absolutely phenomenal and we're very lucky to have you on our executive board.

Ashley Morello: Thank you.

Jeff Traeger: All right, so we're going to continue with the meeting now. The first order of business at a general membership meeting is to do a roll call of officers present since I can see all the callers identified on the screen.

We'll note that the members of the executive board that are on the line and include it in the minutes for this meeting. We also need to appoint the recorder for the meeting, but I can see that our executive board recorder's on the line, so Debbie Jones will take minutes of the meeting.

Let's get started by having Sandy read the minutes of the last meeting that was held Tuesday, September 13th, 2016. Remember to get in the queue to ask a question now by pressing the star key followed by the number three.

Sandy.

Sandy: Okay, the Town Hall held on September the 13th at 2016 at 7:00 p.m. was called to order by President Traeger at 7:00 p.m. Our roll call of officers present was taken. Secretary-Treasurer B. Bruske reported on the new youth initiative for open gym nights. The financial report was reviewed by Secretary-Treasurer B. Bruske. The president's report was presented. There was an update on the Diageo strike, and the arbitration to settle the collective agreement.

The Extra Foods Store on Regent Ave closed on September the 2nd. Jeff also reported on the new provincial government and the challenges faced with this change. They're stopping updates presented as well, and the new Training Centre director is Erin Selby.

The executive board meeting on May 26th and May 27th was conducted in Dauphin, Manitoba. We reported on pride events held in Brandon, Steinbach, Thompson, and Winnipeg. The Leukemia Gala was held in Toronto. Local 832 provided our largest donation ever of \$63,000.

Graduation ceremonies at the Adult Learning Centres in Winnipeg and Brandon were reported and took place in June. The NDF conference took place in July in Edmonton, and there was an update on the Youth Internship Program. It was reported the Thompson office closed on July 28th.

Labor day events we attended in both Winnipeg and Brandon were reported on. Marie Buchan, the executive assistant to the president, provided information on the new women's community survey. B. Bruske gave an update on the Light the Night walk that took place on October 1st. Appreciation dinners held in Brandon and northern Manitoba were reported on.

The policy conference reported to be taking place on November 9th at the Winnipeg Training Centre, and it was opened up for questions and the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Jeff Traeger: ... Very much Sandy, so now I'll ask for a motion to approve the minutes of the September 13th, 2016 meeting as read.

Speaker 4: Motion to approve minutes.

Speaker 5: Seconded.

Jeff Traeger: It has been moved and seconded, so please press the number one on your keypad to vote yes and then number two on your keypad to vote no. If you have a question about the minutes of the previous meeting or any other question at all, please press star three and we'll gladly take your question now.

At this point, we are going to open up the floor to take a few questions while we're waiting for other results of that vote. We're going to start by going to The Pas. We've got Debbie [Leaper 00:17:14] from The Pas IGA on the line. Debbie, go 'head.

Debbie Leaper: It's Debbie calling from The Pas IGA, which has recently closed in November after many, many years. This business has closed the doors. I worked there for 23 years. I'm 60 years old, and I now want to access my pension. My union pension. I've been told that I will get 41% of what I would have gotten had I have applied for my pension before the doors closed.

I really don't know what that has to do with anything. My employer, which is the OCN [band 00:17:51], they owned IGA. They paid 100% into the pension plan for all the employees there. The employees didn't actually pay anything. It was 100% the band paid because they owned this business. Now the doors have closed. I'm 60, 23 years of service, and I want to access my pension, and I'm told because the doors have closed, I will only get 41%.

Had I have applied for my pension in September, the doors closed in November, well then I would get 100%. You know, I would have got my full monthly pension, but now, only 41% of my monthly pension. Now there are a number of long-term employees at IGA that are in the same position I am. Some don't want to take a monthly pension. They want to move their pension into something else, and they can do that because they're younger than I am. Still, they're also told 41% is all they have access to. The rest of it is with the union. That's all that's available.

Jeff Traeger: Actually, I got to stop you right there, Debbie, because the rest of it is not with the union. Your pension is the Canadian Commercial Workers' Industry Pension Plan at The Pas IGA, and that is not administered by your union. That's administered by a board of trustees that include members of Sobeys, members of Metro, and members of Loblaws, as well as three union trustees, and to say that it's the union's pension is inaccurate. It's actually a registered pension plan and I spoke to our negotiator for that unit, which is Marie Buchan.

Actually previously negotiated a renewal that agreement. In my president's report, which is coming up next, I was going to be talking about The Pas IGA store closure as well as the closure at the Burrows because Sobeys also closed the Burrows store here in Winnipeg right about the same time as The Pas IGA store was closed.

What I was going to say is that we were informed in October that they were going to be closing and that there would be virtually no notice period given to our members. The company instead elected to pay out the notice period and close their doors immediately. Both the union rep J.P. Petit and then my EAP Marie Buchan worked very hard with, along with Erin Selby from our Training Centre, to provide career transition and regular communication to our members in The Pas as well.

On the pension side of it, we have heard that our members have been calling into the union to ask about the status of their pension, and from speaking to Marie this afternoon, we're still waiting for confirmation from the pension office to provide us with the information of exactly what amount the pension will be. I wanted tonight to assure all the former Pas IGA members that as soon as we have any information regarding your pension, we will communicate that out to you immediately.

What I suggest that you do, Debbie, is I suggest that you contact your union representative within a matter of a day or two and let them know exactly who you spoke to at the pension office, and we will follow up with the CCWIPP pension plan to find out exactly what is going on as far as the percentage that you're going to be receiving is.

Right now, at this point, we don't have any confirmation, and quite often, the pension plan won't communicate with us directly because we're not plan members. You are a plan member, so I would ask you that you give us the information about who you spoke to and if there's any documentation you have, you forward that to the union, and we'll certainly be happy to follow up with the pension office. I'm sure all the other callers on the line, and myself, couldn't agree with you more that, in the event of a closure, you should not that kind of a reduction in your plan.

We're going to move on to the next caller. The next caller is from Winnipeg from Maple Leaf Consumer Foods in Lagimodière, and that is [Sandra Dolman 00:22:13].

Sandra, go 'head. How are you?

Sandra Dolman: Hi, oh, I'm fine. I was just wondering how can Maple Leaf move stat holidays?

Jeff Traeger: Move stat holidays okay well-

Sandra Dolman: I've booked my holidays, between Christmas and New Year's, and we were supposed to get Christmas Day because they moved from Saturday, Sunday. Why did they move our Christmas, which Christmas Day is on a Sunday this year, to December 23rd? Without a vote.

Jeff Traeger: Okay. I've actually got your former union representative [inaudible 00:22:57] director Sandy Forcier here, so I'm going to turn it over to Sandy to answer that question.

Sandy: Hi, good evening Sandra. To answer your question, we do have language in the Maple Leaf collective agreement that when the general holidays fall on a Saturday, Sunday, which is not a normal workday schedule, there is the option to move it to the Friday or the Monday before or after the holiday, so that would be the answer to that question there.

Jeff Traeger: Just as an aside, I can tell you that we had to do something similar in our office because of the way that the holidays fell this year. Our offices in Winnipeg and Brandon are going to be closed on December 26th, of course, for Boxing Day, and December 27th to recognize Christmas Day that falls on a Saturday, and also, we're going to be closed on January 2nd to recognize New Year's Day that falls on a Sunday, as well.

All right, so we're going to take one more caller before we take a break, and that first caller is Farhad Erad from Impact in Winnipeg. Go 'head Farhad.

Farhad: Yes, Hi. How are you?

Jeff Traeger: I'm not bad, how are you doing?

Farhad: I'm good. My name is Farhad Erad. [inaudible 00:24:23] for six months. I was wondering if the union have a [inaudible 00:24:35] to medical prescription, dental, vision, and stuff like that? If they do, how can I access those benefits?

Jeff Traeger: Okay. Well, what I can tell you is that would all be covered under the provisions of your contract with Impact Security and UFCW, so what I'm going to recommend that you do is I'm going to recommend that your contact union representative tomorrow. His name is Curt Martel, and Curt can tell you exactly what benefits are eligible under the Impact collective agreement and how best you can access them.

We're going to move on now. I see on the screen that the first motion of the meeting to accept the minutes of the prior meeting was carried by a majority of those who voted, and now I'm going to take us all the way out to Brandon, Manitoba and ask B. Bruske to give us the financial report for the Local for the period ending October the 31st, 2016. That's the first 10 months of the year. Go 'head B.

Beatrice Bruske: Thanks Jeff. Good evening everyone from Brandon. As most of you who've listened to this general membership meeting town hall have heard before, our annual budget is divided into 22 budget categories, which deals with everything from rent and utility costs for our offices to staffing costs and member servicing, arbitration, and negotiation costs.

We are doing quite well overall financially and are significantly spending under budget in all but the following eight categories: arbitration, which covers everything from arbitration hearings and legal fees, communications, which covers website promotions and advertising, education of members, which covers our members' lost time, cost when they're attending training sessions, education of staff, which is training costs for our staff, income tax, which is our member income tax preparation that we provide every spring to all our members across Manitoba, our office and IT supplies, our rent and utilities, and our servicing categories are over budget currently.

However, other than those eight categories, out of 22, the others are either on budget or under budget to date. Our total income over our total expenses to date is more than \$790,000 to the good, and our expenses are under budget to date of \$176,000 in total. Although we are over budget in eight out of the 22 areas, we are well under budget under our anticipated expenditures and totals so far for 2016.

We have over \$400,000 in the bank as well as \$1 million in our strike fund. In addition to \$1.2 million is GSE investments, and we're in good financial shape. Our executive board, with input from our provincial advisory board, passed a budget for 2017 at the November 10th executive board meeting. Our board took a new step this year in terms of 2017 budget by allocating \$200,000 into a separate fund to deal with any anticipated challenges that we see coming up in the 2017 calendar year.

As I'm sure Jeff will be telling us shortly, we have a number of challenges that we want to make sure we can manage over the next year, and we want to ensure that our finances are at the ready when we need them in order to spend where we need to spend them to make sure our members' interests are well represented.

There is no general dues increase in 2017. Some units will be seeing a slight increase of \$0.50 per week, based on where they fall on the current dues schedule. That's all I have to report.

Jeff Traeger: Excellent. Thank you very much B, so now I'll ask for a motion to approve the secretary-treasurer's report for the 10 months ending October 31st, 2016.

Speaker 10: I motion to approve.

Dale: Seconded.

Jeff Traeger: It has been moved and seconded, so please, again press the number one on your keypad to vote yes and the number two on your keypad to vote no. If you have a question about the secretary-treasurer's report, or a question about anything else at all, please press star three, and we will gladly take your question.

While we're waiting for the results of that vote, I'm going to open it up again. We only have question on the line right now that I'm going to take in a second, and then we're going to hear from Sandy on some servicing issues or report basically on what's taking place in his department over the last year. We're going to go to Dale from Brewers Distributors Limited.

Go 'head Dale.

Dale: Yeah, Jeff. I was wondering, with Heather Grant-Jury, how much money did she take out of the education fund?

Jeff Traeger: Okay, so what I can tell you is this. This is number one item on my president's report. The questions are actually taking my president's report up, which works just fine. I can only tell you that she took more than \$5,000. We were notified this week by Winnipeg Police that Heather had been charged with fraud over \$5,000. I reported on this back two meetings ago. We became aware that there were irregularities regarding expense claims being submitted in December of 2015.

The action that we took immediately was to suspend Heather. Remove her from her position, pending an extensive investigation and an audit. She was subsequently terminated following the initial investigation. We hired an outside firm called PricewaterhouseCoopers to do an audit, and they not only audited the expenses for Heather, they audited everybody at the local union and at the Training Centre, starting with myself and moving down to B. Brusque, and through the entire organization to make sure that there was no other irregular activity or fraudulent behavior taking place.

They completed their work in the spring and that information was turned over to the Winnipeg Police to complete their own investigation. We are seeking full restitution of all the money that was inappropriately expensed, and I got to tell you Dale, we are looking forward to putting this unfortunate incident behind us, and moving on at our training centers, both in Winnipeg and in Brandon to continue to provide valuable training opportunities to our members, which we do very well.

As I said in a newspaper article that was published last February, I would hate to see the great work that our training centers have done over the years be collateral damage to the actions of one individual. I can't say more than that right now, and the reason I can't say more than that, we've been in regular communication with the police throughout this whole incident, this matter's before courts.

It would be completely inappropriate for me, and I've actually been told not to make comments, and I understand why you'd want that question answered if I was a member, or more ... Not more importantly, but even if I was an employer

that was contributing to that fund, I would want to know the answer to your question as well.

Don't forget that not one penny of your union dues go into the education and training trust fund. Those are contributions based mostly on an hourly basis, there are some month, some contributions, that go into that fund from employers, so this effectively is money that came to us by employers, so there's a responsibility for us to talk to them about what happened as well. What I've promised folks who've asked, members first, contributing employers second, and media last, is that when I am able to tell the whole story about exactly what happened, exactly what the loss was, and exactly what the recover was, I will certainly, certainly do so.

As I reported last meeting, we hired Erin Selby to be our new director of education, and I want to focus on the future and so does B and so do our staff, and so does our executive board, and so do our members, and so does Erin, and she's done a fabulous job of revamping our courses, and re-energizing our training center operations, and while this matter goes forward, and until Heather is actually convicted, I'm limited as to what I can say.

I knew that this matter was in the news yesterday because she had been arrested and that's why I was prepared to address it with you here today.

I hope that answers your question. I know what you wanted was a number, and I promise you at some point in the future, you will get one from me.

I'm going to turn it over to Sandy Forcier for a couple of minutes before we move on to the rest of the president's report.

Sandy:

I just wanted to give a quick review of 2016 and a few highlights from a servicing department perspective. We started the year with a merger with Local 1869, and the members at St. Boniface Hospital. This allowed the Local to make some territory adjustments in Winnipeg that has helped balanced the servicing territories a little bit better.

Also with this merger, it also made healthcare one of the three largest sectors in the Local, with the large retail impacting health sectors; 2016 also had some hiccups with a few medical leaves in the servicing department, but with this said, we were fortunate enough to provide relief opportunities to a few of our members. Ashley Morello, who we have heard from so eloquently earlier in the meeting, Jason Appasamy, John Anderson, as well as Debbie Jones, Alice Jeffrey, Joanne Peters, and Nellie Minville has helped relieve our service reps over the past year for us.

I just wanted to say thank you to those folks for their dedication and service to our great union.

This is also been a bit of a champion year for mental health in the workplace. We have seen workplace legislation improve in this area. We have also seen more incidents of mental health in our workplaces, and our union is responding as we will be providing training for our staff in this area in 2017. The year also provided the Local the opportunity to hire a dedicated relief union representative who is currently Geoff Bergen, and he also manages a small territory with his relief duties.

In 2017, we hope to fill a similar role in the Westman region in the Brandon office, so that's just a few of the highlights from 2016, aside from the day-to-day issues, the collective bargaining, and the labor disputes that happen.

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank the service reps for providing another year of great work representing our membership, whether it's in their workplaces or rallies and conventions. The staff of the Local always seem to find a way to pull through events and support each other to get their work done with the best interests of the membership in mind.

To the staff of the servicing department and all Local 832 staff and membership, I wish you all a happy holiday season and all the best the new year has to offer.

Jeff Traeger:

Thank you very much for that Sandy, appreciate it. I do see that the motion to approve B's report was carried by the majority of those who voted, so I'm going to move on to the remainder of the president's report.

The first issue I was going to talk about was Heather, which is now complete, and then we had two store closures. I already reported on The Pas IGA store closure at the Otineka Mall. Also in October, we were notified the Sobeys store on Burrows Ave was being closed, marking the 12th store closure by Sobeys and Loblaws since 2014. I guess this gets to a little bit of what B had in her report because obviously, we have seen a rationalization of stores by, primarily, Sobeys, Loblaws. The most recent store closure was the Extra Foods on Regent, which they decided not to convert to a No-Frills, but it puts us in a position where we are frankly not sure about what the future holds when it comes to the retail grocery industry.

Loblaws market share's fairly strong, but Sobeys continues to have issues with the integration with Safeway, and it's a terrible concern to us, and to the approximately 2,000 members that we have that work under the Safeway banner in Manitoba.

The closure date of the Sobeys Burrows store was originally set to be officially December 19th, closed a few weeks earlier than that, and some of our members are working to dismantle the store before turning it back to the leasing company. I want to say a big thank you to the union representative for that store, Sharon Grehan, who worked very hard along with the negotiator Sonia Taylor, and our Training Centre Director Erin Selby, to ensure that all the

affected members have had regular communication from the union, and the ability to attend information sessions on employment insurance, and the career transition services that we're offering.

That was the two store closures, then we saw some store openings. Not quite as good of a story as that sounds because it was Avon Foods, which came to Manitoba, the long waited arrival, on November the 19th. They opened three stores in Winnipeg: one in St. James, one in Bridgwater [inaudible 00:38:46], and another at the old Zeller store in the Northgate Mall on McPhillips. They're represented primarily by UFCW in British Columbia, and primarily by CLAC, which is the Christian Labour Association of Canada in Alberta.

The company has been in discussions with both here in Manitoba with us and with CLAC. Talks between Local 832 in the company continued yesterday and are ongoing, and I should have more to report at our next general membership meeting in March.

Back on October the 18th, staying with retail for a minute, we had a retail shop steward conference at the Winnipeg Training Centre to begin preparations for the next round of major bargaining in the retail sector. We brought in stewards from around the province, from Loblaws, from Sobeys, and Red River Co-op, who are in attendance to discuss the changing face of the retail landscape in Manitoba and to give us their ideas on how best to get our members to participate in the bargaining process when it comes up.

All three of those contracts are scheduled to expire in 2018. We've got Red River Co-Op, and the Safeway contract expiring in March, and the Loblaws contract, which includes No-Frills, Extra Foods, and the superstores expiring in September. We want to start the process of preparing now, as it's going to be a very difficult round of negotiations, given all the moving parts in the industry such as the inversions of the Extra Foods, and the struggles that Sobeys has had integrating the Safeway stores into their [inaudible 00:40:28], since they purchased them back in 2013.

We did have a couple of fun events this fall. We held our Appreciation Night in Brandon on October 29th. It was a Halloween theme and they had me dressed up as Mr. Monopoly, so that was interesting, and we were in Thompson on November 5th, and both were very well attended and successful events.

A big thank you goes out to Brenda Brown in Brandon, and J.P. Petit from our Northern Territory for all their hard work in putting those events together. We had our annual policy conference, which had been skipped the year before because of the snowstorm. That took place on November 9th at our Winnipeg Training Centre. It was attended by almost a 100 members of what we call our advisory board, and that's made up of the Local staff, our executive board, and a group of members who attend from the various communities around Manitoba where we represent workers from many different industries as well.

We try to make it a well-rounded group of Manitobans from all corners, and that work in various industries. At that meeting each year, our treasurer gets input on the group on the proposed budget for the following year. This year it was decided that we would add a campaign budget to better advertise our successes and to deal with the changes that we see coming to legislation that affects our members, and we've already started to see some of that.

I'll talk about that in a minute.

We decided that it was a good idea to put some money aside to potentially do some radio advertising and some campaigns against some of the negative legislation that we see already, and we expect to see more of in the next couple of years as we get to know our provincial government a little better.

Since member engagement was a theme of our conference this year, we had Michael Champagne, who's a very energetic young man, do a keynote address. He really did energize the conference, and then we challenged our board to meet in smaller groups and give us some feedback on how we can encourage our members to be more involved and to improve our profile, both within our membership and within the community in general.

I talked to both provincial government a minute ago. It's been a month now since they were elected and they've already had a negative impact on workers here in Manitoba; 16 years consecutive minimum wage increases ended in October of this year. As we found out the minimum wage was going to be frozen, so those workers who are already below the low income cut off and below the poverty line now find themselves getting even further behind the cost of living.

On top of that premiere's been in the news lately telling everybody how he's going to save money by freezing wages and opening public sector agreements that were already signed, and from where we come from, we believe that once you sign a contract, you're beholden to it. We certainly feel that that's not even legal to be suggesting that.

He's also eliminated the right for workers to automatically have union representation when two-thirds or more of those in the workplace [inaudible 00:43:43]. Now if we sign a 100% of the members in the workplace, this government's going to spend labor board resources conducting a vote when it's clear that everybody wants to be represented by a union.

He's even open the discussion on some of the best legislation that we've seen recently and that's on paid leave for victims of domestic violence, and he's opened that discussion to make it more difficult to attain.

For our retail workers out there, he's also looking at expanding Sunday shopping hours under the Retail Store Closure Act, and the worst part of that would be if

the provision that that was no longer voluntary work, then I think we would see a lot of your retail workers being forced to long hours on Sundays, which is not good for families. That was the subject of my article in the last magazine, so we're keeping a close eye on these developments, and we will be prominent at every table where there's a discussion to be held so that the views of UFCW members are brought forward.

We will certainly be very prominent at every rally that's put on to put a stop to these type of regressive, legislative developments.

On a happier note, the Light the Night walk happened again this year. The 832 team walked on October 1st at the Forks. We raised over \$45,000 for Leukemia research and plans for next year are underway. Locally, here, the Winnipeg Labour Council in November longstanding Winnipeg Council President Dave Sauer indicated he would not be running again this year to explore other employment opportunities.

On November 15th, a member from the Canadian Union of Postal Workers named Basha Soco, who's a former Local 832 member, was elected as the new president for a term expiring December 31st, 2019; 832's delegation will be out at Dave's last meeting, which is December 20th, next Tuesday, to wish him the best and thank him for his years of dedicated service, as well as to welcome Basha to her new role representing Winnipeg workers.

I will end my report with a staffing update to let you know that we have two new people working at the Local on a term basis. You heard me mention at the beginning that our communications team of Blake Crothers and Chris Noto were in the studio with me. This fall, Blake moved from being our communications director to working full-time in our negotiations department, and we hired Chris Noto on a four-month term to replace Blake.

Chris formerly worked for the Manitoba NDP, so our hope that UFCW will be a good fit for Chris, and that he'll be a good for us, and that we can make the arrangement permanent in 2017.

This fall we also hired Michelle McHale, to a two-month term position to do some work in our servicing department. Many of you may be familiar with Michelle from her work making the Steinbach Pride Parade a reality, and more recently, when her bid to become the next leader of the Manitoba NDP was announced. That is the president's report, and with that, I'll ask for a motion to approve the president's report.

Speaker 12: Motion to approve.

Speaker 13: Seconded.

Jeff Traeger: It has been moved and seconded, so please press the number one on your keypad to vote yes and the number two on your keypad to vote no. If you have a question about president's report or anything else at all, please press star three, and we will gladly take your question.

While we're waiting for the results of that vote, we're going to open the lines, again, and again we have a single question on the line, then I'll have a couple of announcements that I'll make after that.

We're going to go to Fred from Brewers Distributors in Winnipeg. Go 'head.

Fred: Yeah, hi. We got a contract coming this spring, and I'm just wondering why we don't contact the other UFCWs in Ontario and Saskatchewan that have just recently signed contracts to see how the company negotiated and to give us a better bargaining position as more information makes you a stronger bargainer, right?

I can't figure out why we don't have contact with the unions there on what goes on with their companies as well as ours here.

Jeff Traeger: Yeah, so the simple answer to your question, Fred, is that we do.

Fred: [crosstalk 00:48:23] get it.

Jeff Traeger: Have you been around BDL for a while?

Fred: Oh yeah.

Jeff Traeger: Right, so you know that I bargained a couple of those agreements with Brewers Distributors Limited before you moved into the new building out in Fort Rouge there. In preparation for bargaining, what we do is we contact, not just other UFCW Locals that represent BDL, like the one in Saskatoon, but we also ... It's been a few years now, but the one that operates out of Vancouver that might be a teamsters or steel worker, I can't remember exactly which one it was, or maybe even Unifor, but I got those collective agreements, and I know that your negotiator will be doing the same thing.

If you're interested in having a copy or seeing what the provisions in those other agreements might be, then I suggest that you contact your negotiator, not sure who that person is, but it would have been communicated out to you in preparation for a proposal meeting.

Contact the union office, find out who the negotiator for BDL is, and certainly they'll be happy to share with you what the provisions of those other agreements are in preparation for bargaining.

There was one other issue that I neglected to mention in my president's report that I just want to go over, and that is that St. Boniface General Hospital did an RFP, which stands for Request for Proposals for the company that ran the food services in the atrium, which was the Compass Morrison Group. They received several proposals and it turned out that Compass Morisson was not the successful bidder, and as a result, a new company, which is called Champs Brands, will be taking over in the second or third week of January.

Unfortunately, at this point, I can't report that they're prepared to accept the collective agreement that we have with Compass, and there's no obligation of St. Boniface Hospital to do so. We've been going through career transition that I talked about with the store closures with our members at Compass Morrison, and obviously, we intend to do everything we can to see to it that those folks get an opportunity to be re-employed or to potentially get re-employed with the new owners.

As you can guess, without a collective agreement, we have no power to say anything about that. I also just wanted to ... Couple of other things that I wanted to mention, and Sandy mentioned it in his report. We are looking at bringing a fourth rep into the Brandon office similar to what we do in Winnipeg where Geoff Bergen is our dedicated relief rep, and Geoff wanted me to mention that he was also a YIP graduate, cause I missed him last meeting.

He is one of the other folks that graduated from the Youth Internship Program, but we will be adding that same position to our Brandon office early in 2017. New rep will provide assistance and relief for our current staff reps in Brandon as well as having a small territory of their own.

I just wanted to give a plug for another conference that we're planning. I told you that we had a retail conference ... We're planning a security conference that's going to be bringing together a large group of guards for a conference to be held on February the 22nd. Again, we'll be holding that at our Training Centre, and the purpose of that conference is really to talk about the industry and to strategize how we can reach out to our many security guards more effectively.

You want more information on that event, please call Curt Martel at the Winnipeg office at 204-786-5055. Oh, I just got handed a note that Blake Crothers is going to be bargaining BDL, so to the Fred out there from BDL who was calling, he is guaranteeing you that he's going to look into some contracts. The person to contact at UFCW and you're looking for who you're negotiator is Blake Crothers.

Also, just a reminder, early reminder, we have our activist conference coming up at the Fairmont again in 2017, from April 17th to 20th. For details on that event, contact your union rep or the Training Centre at 204-775-8329.

I see on the screen that the motion to approve the president's report has been carried by the majority of those who voted. I also see on the screen that we do not have any further questions. Just want to thank all of you for joining us on our December telephone town hall general membership meeting. We will be conducting the next meeting on Tuesday, February the 7th, 2017, by telephone town hall as well beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Thank you again for participating in your union, and I want to wish all of you a very happy holiday season and a peaceful and prosperous 2017.