

UFCW Local 832 Membership Meeting
February 12, 2018

Jeff Traeger:

Good evening everyone. My name is Jeff Traeger and I'm the President of your union, UFCW Local 832. I want to welcome you all to the February 2018 Telephone Town Hall General Membership Meeting for members of the UFCW Local 832, which is now called to order.

With me in the studio tonight, along with our Communications Coordinator, Chris Noto, is your Secretary Treasurer Beatrice Bruske, my Executive Advisor Marie Buchan, and two union representatives from our retail sector. Roberta Hoogervorst, who is our Retail Coordinator and our primary Loblaw rep for Winnipeg and the surrounding area. As well as Sharon Grehan, who is our primary Safeway rep, and also looks after our members at Red River Coop.

For tonight's town hall meeting, we will not be reading any reports, which will give us more time for presentations from our three guests and more time for you to ask any questions you may have.

There are three reports that our bi-laws require us to approve at this meeting, and they are the minutes of the previous meeting, which was held back on November 12th, 2017. The Secretary Treasury's report on the current finances of the local. And my report, the President's report. All three of these documents have been posted on our website for the last week at ufcw832.com, for you to review. And they will stay posted there in our archives so you can see all of the documents from any of our town hall meetings whenever you like.

Now we're not going to read those documents tonight, but we will conduct three votes throughout the meeting to pass the approval of them. This will allow us to dedicate more of the hour to hear from our guests and to take your questions.

For all the members on the line that would like to ask a question, please press the star key, followed by the number three and you will be placed in a queue to ask your question. 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 work place 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 first quarterly Town Hall General Membership Meeting of 2018. I want to thank all of you who have participated in these meetings for making them such a success.

Our agenda tonight begins with voting to approve the minutes of the last meeting. While we were completing the results of that vote, I will be interviewing Sharon Grehan, our primary Safeway rep, about the process of bargaining at Sobeys and also at Red River Co-Op. Negotiations there are quite concerning and will affect 2,200 of our members, so Sharon's here to bring us up to speed on those talks.

So I will begin by making a motion to approve the minutes of our last meeting, which took place on November the 12th.

Speaker 2: Moved

Jeff Traeger: It has been moved and seconded, so please vote "Yes" by pressing the number one on your keypad, or "No" by pressing the number two on your keypad. Once again, to get in the lineup to ask a question, simply press the star key followed by the number three key and you will be placed in line.

Since we will be opening up the phone for questions soon, please get in the queue now if you have a question. One more time, by pressing the star key followed by the number three.

So, we have been bargaining, if that's what you want to call it, with the Sobeys West Inc. for our members who worked at the 23 Safeway stores in Manitoba. And I've got union representative Sharon Grehan with me now, to answer some questions on what bargaining this contract has been like.

So welcome Sharon.

Sharon Grehan: Good evening.

Jeff Traeger: Can you tell me how bargaining is going so far?

Sharon Grehan: Sure, well, we had a few dates booked for December, 2017. Those dates were canceled by Sobeys, and so we met on our next scheduled date of January 15th of this year. The company came to a table that day and provided the union and the bargaining committee with their set of proposals.

Jeff Traeger: And what were they proposing?

Sharon Grehan: Well, the company proposals consisted of many, many major concessions, including reducing vacation time, vacation pay, reducing or eliminating premiums, reducing the full-time ratio, allowing vendors to stock shelves, and taking hours from the bargaining unit, and there were also changes to benefits that would result in a member's [inaudible 00:04:38] reductions and what they're covered for, but having to pay out of pocket for those reduced benefits.

Jeff Traeger: Well, that sounds like a very brutal set of proposals.

Sharon Grehan: Sure.

Jeff Traeger: That was like the company is trying to take away whatever they can wherever they can. Was there any progress made at all?

Sharon Grehan: After the company gave us their concessionary proposals, we gave them our union proposals. And these proposals were put together from what we heard from our Safeway members across the province, from those that attended member forums, those that put their suggestions in the suggestion boxes, and those that spoke to us during the tours around the stores that, Jeff and B took with myself and Jason.

After we provided our list of proposals, the company left to work on we assumed a response document, and the union received a phone call later that day to say that we are too far apart and they, the company, would not be back.

That was really concerning to us, and our next date was set for January 29th. We had no idea until a few days before whether or not the company would actually come back. We finally got confirmation that they would return to the table, but unfortunately the company's lead negotiator suffered a death in his family, and as a result bargaining was canceled.

Finally, on February 6th, we were back at the table. It quickly became evident that the company had no plans on changing their position at all. And their demands for major concessions remained. It was at that point that the bargaining committee made the decision to break off talks, as we are only bargaining with our self at that point.

Jeff Traeger: Yeah, it doesn't sound like the bargaining committee had much of a choice since the company was entrenched in their position to get concessions. So I'm sure the members at Safeway are wondering, at this point, "What's next? Where do we go from here?"

Sharon Grehan: Well, the bargaining committee got together. We set a schedule for meetings to take place across the province, and we'll bring the company's proposals to our membership. At those meetings, we'll be asking for strike mandates, so that we can send a strong message to the company that our members just will not be accepting these concessions.

We'll be emailing and mailing our Safeway members with dates and times of the meetings, and you'll also find the meeting's schedule on our website. It is very important that our Safeway members attend these meetings.

Jeff Traeger: Yes, it's critically important at a time like this, but it's also important that we know we're not alone in this fight with Sobeys. When Sobeys purchased Safeway, they purchased almost 275 stores in four provinces, so we know that

there's also bargaining going on in some of the other western provinces. How are those other locals progressing in their fight with Sobeys?

Sharon Grehan: Well, local 401 in Alberta has not been to the bargaining table, even though their contract expired over a year ago. Local 1518 in BC is in a similar boat to us. The company has tabled major concessions there, but has also told them that they intend to close ten stores in that province. And many of those ten stores reopened as a discount store, they're calling FreshCo. Depends on how many concessions the members are willing to take.

Jeff Traeger: Right, well they had mentioned back on December the 13th in their announcement that they were going to convert about a quarter of the Safeway stores in western Canada, to FreshCo. And As a matter of fact, part of their proposals to us was to convert Manitoba stores to FreshCo.

So, if that were to happen Sharon, what does that mean for the people in the stores? Their working conditions, and what does FreshCo contract look like?

Sharon Grehan: Well, the company did indicate that they want to open a discount model of stores here, yes. The current contract for Safeway employees would not apply to a FreshCo store. We have not negotiated anything for FreshCo, but the contract for typical FreshCo store sees workers earning a different rate of pay depending on whether your full-time or part-time. Part-time employees can earn a maximum of \$12.15 an hour with no benefits. Full-time employees, if there are any, can pay 50% of premiums to get the company benefits.

Companies can schedule you as they wish. Your seniority does not count. Part-time employees cannot work more than 24 hours a week, and everyone gets a maximum of three weeks' vacation, regardless of how long you've been there. There are definitely no sick days and no sick pay.

Jeff Traeger: Well, that sucks. So, what is ... With all this going on in the Safeway stores, I know you spend a lot of your day going through the stores. What is the mood of our members right now? Working at Safeway?

Sharon Grehan: Well, the mood in the stores vary, from anger at what the company is trying to take away. Stress and fear. People are very, very scared of losing their jobs, and right now we're at a stage where we don't know what the company will do. Or what will happen next. So it's very hard on everyone. There's definitely a lot of stress.

Jeff Traeger: Yes, I'm sure there is. There's probably a lot of people thinking about what it means ... To be out on strikes, so maybe ... Bea, you can give us an idea of what members can expect if we end up actually having to walk the picket line and how their financial lives will be affected.

Beatrice Bruske: So, yes, the union does pay picket pay for those individuals who walk the picket line. Exactly what the needs will be will be dependent on whether or not all of the stores remain open during a labor dispute. Whether it's a strike or a lock out.

In the past when there have been retail strikes, not all stores have necessarily remained open. So that's a bit of a challenge for people to have to essentially picket at another store. And again, it depends on the hours that the store would be kept open. Generally the expectation is that people would picket 24 hours per week, and picket pay is generally \$200 per week. And that's non-taxable.

Jeff Traeger: Wow, okay. Well, I guarantee you that this is not what we expected when we went into bargaining, and certainly not what our Safeway members expected. And I know it's critically important that we get a strong strike mandate to bring back to our bargaining committee, so that we can show the company that our members aren't willing to accept this.

Also, since we've been bargaining we've also had talks going on with Red River Coop whose contract expires also on March the 17th. Sharon, have they experienced the same type of issues at that bargaining table?

Sharon Grehan: At Red River Coop, there's been lots of progress at the bargaining table. Talks have slowed as the party has reached monetary issues. And we'll be holding informational meetings on February 20th and 21st for all members at Red River Coop. Very important that they attend one of the six meetings that we're holding to get an update on where we are with bargaining with this company.

Jeff Traeger: Will we be asking our members to take a vote on anything at that meeting?

Sharon Grehan: For Red River it's a little different than Sobeys right now. We will not be asking the members to cast votes at the Red River Coop meetings, but it's still very, very important that you attend. There's going to be a lot of information that we will be giving out.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, and Bea, do you have any further update that you want to give on what's going on at the Red River table since you are the lead negotiator for that contract?

Beatrice Bruske: Sure, yes. We've had seven days of negotiations so far with Red River Coop. As Sharon indicated, we've made great progress on the non-monetary issues, however, last week we did start discussing monetary items and the employer did give us notice on the very first day of bargaining that they are experiencing some financial challenges and they have also tabled a significant number of concessions.

Now, most times when you get to bargaining employers table concessions and move off them as you progress through that particular process. However, in this

particular case they had offered, and we took them up on that offer, to show us their financial statements and gave us a presentation last week on exactly what their financials look like.

And therefore, Sharon's comment about making sure that the members at Red River Coop come to one of the six meetings that are scheduled for them next week, is absolutely correct. We are looking to provide members the information in terms of what we've been given, in terms of where we've landed at the bargaining table on the non-monetary. But more importantly, the items that are outstanding on the monetary issues, and we were looking for some direction from our members on what they would like us to, how they would like us to proceed at this particular point in time.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, excellent. Well, thank you for that Bea. And thank you very much Sharon for taking time out of your busy schedule to be here. I know that you must be one of the busiest reps at the local right now with the strike vote going on right now in your major unit. And tough bargaining, as we've just outlined, going on in your other one.

And for all of you that are wanting to stay tuned to what's going on in these very difficult rounds of retail bargaining, you can keep up to date by visiting our website at ufcw832.com or by following us on Facebook.

So, I see by looking at the screen that the vote to approve the previous minutes has passed. So now would be a good time for us to open the phone lines to take a couple of questions.

We've got Simona on the line. Simona, go ahead.

Simona: Hi, I'm working at 4859. My question is in regards to the pension. If FreshCo was to take over Safeway, how would the pension fund be affected? Are they going to keep the same pension fund or will they start fresh with a new pension fund?

Jeff Traeger: Sure, okay. I can answer that question for you. Your pension under the current Safeway stores is the Canadian Commercial Workers Industry Pension Plan. And under the proposed FreshCo agreement, the pension is what's called a defined contribution or money purchase plan where you pay a certain percentage of your wage into the pension plan and the company matches it. The bad news is that's for full-time employees only. Under the FreshCo agreement, there is no pension options for part-time employees.

So, in a conversion, hopefully you would have the ability to bump, but you certainly would not be able to maintain your own pension.

Beatrice Bruske: And likewise, all of those details would have to still be negotiated with the employer. At this moment in time the employer has simply proposed a FreshCo

collective agreement, and absolutely everything pertaining to that still remains outstanding.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, good. We'll go to Kimberly now. Kimberly, go ahead.

Kimberly: Yes, I work at coop store 33. And I was just wondering, I heard word that our salaries are going to be cut. Is that true or is that only for Safeway/Sobeys?

Sharon Grehan: So, at this moment in time coop has not tabled a salary reduction. They have tabled a significant amount of concessions and they have had some discussion about overscale employees potentially being affected.

It is very important that you come out to the meeting next week so I can provide you guys with more specific details that are pertaining to you. But at this moment in time they have not yet tabled the specific wage rollback, but they have not ruled that out either.

Jeff Traeger: Yeah, and just to be clear, Sobeys hasn't exactly tabled a formal proposal on wages. Although they have insinuated at the bargaining table that they are looking to be more comparable to Wal-Mart when it comes to wages. So that certainly tells you what direction they're thinking of going. But they have not yet tabled a wage rollback.

So now we're going to go to Isaac. Isaac, go ahead.

Isaac: Hi Jeff, how are you?

Jeff Traeger: Not bad Isaac, thank you for sending me all those proposals [crosstalk 00:16:38] Appreciate it.

Isaac: You're welcome. I figured that the company would actually go for it. Apparently, I can see that you probably have a lot of problems with all the proposals that the company had got.

My question to you is how is everyone going to take a \$17.35 wage? I mean, everyone has to live on a certain wage, and how are we going to ... What is the percentage of someone getting full-time if it's only 20% ratio? How does that work?

Jeff Traeger: Well, I can tell you Isaac that the company's actually proposing a significantly lower ratio than 20%. And the \$17.35 in your agreement, most of our members are having troubles making ends meet with what they're earning now. Especially the part-time people that are struggling to get hours while Sobeys is looking to cut them to improve their bottom line.

But one of the things that we're certainly spending a lot of time trying to do is to show the company that their talking about real people with real lives and

certainly, we're not playing a game here. And it seems as though the only thing that they're interested in is the bottom line.

As B said about River Coop, same is true for Sobeys. Critically important that you come out to one of the meetings. We've got meetings that are going to be advertised in the store, in your email, in your mailbox, online, at our website and on Facebook. Meetings starting, the first one in Brandon on February the 26th, and wrapping up with a whole set of meetings in Winnipeg on March the 4th. Critically important that you come out, you hear what proposals are on the table for both the union and the company. You hear what they're trying to take away from you, and you give your bargaining committee the strike mandate it needs to get bargaining back on track.

So, before moving on to our next guest, I will make a motion to approve the secretary treasury's report for the 11 month period ending November 30th, 2017.

Speaker 2: Second it.

Jeff Traeger: So it has been moved and seconded, so if you could, please press the number one on your keypad to vote yes and the number two on your keypad to vote no. The treasury's report is and has been posted on our website for a week, so it's there if you want to have a look at it. And if you have any questions about that report or anything else at all, please press the star key followed by the number three key, and we will gladly take your question.

So now, I have the pleasure of interviewing Roberta Hoogervorst, who is our retail coordinator and our primary Loblaw rep here in Winnipeg and the surrounding area.

So Roberta, as a retail coordinator, can you give us an update on what's going on besides difficult bargaining all over the province?

Roberta H.: Okay, thank you Jeff. Well currently we're wrapping up our two campaigns, Working for Free and Don't Be a Hero. For the Working Free time campaign, we sent out surveys to all members who work at Loblaw and Safeway stores. This was an effort to gauge how many workers are coming in early, staying late, and not taking breaks. We also asked if their supervisors were aware of this, and if so, were they being paid for this extra work?

Jeff Traeger: Well, and that just sounds like something nobody would do, working for free. So, what did the results of the survey show?

Roberta H.: Well, Jeff, surprisingly there are some workers at Loblaw stores and Safeway stores who are in fact working for free.

Jeff Traeger: Why would they be doing that? And what kind of an impact does that have on the rest of our members working at those stores?

Roberta H.: Well, these members may not be aware, but working free time takes hours out of their department, and most importantly, doesn't give the store the correct information on how many hours are actually needed to run a department.

Jeff Traeger: Is there any other notable results coming out of that survey?

Roberta H.: Absolutely, and the super stores online shopping department Click and Collect, the numbers reported were very high for workers not receiving their breaks.

Jeff Traeger: Does that mean that people just were choosing not to work their breaks, or was it the company telling them that they couldn't have a break?

Roberta H.: Well, much to our shock and frustration, these members were being denied breaks. Upon investigation, some of the workers at the Click and Collect departments were mostly young workers and new Canadians, were not receiving their breaks, even after repeatedly asking for breaks. They were often told things like, "You can't go yet, no one's had a break yet." Or, "Come on, don't let your team down. Be a team player." Or, "Your team's behind, you can't go yet." So they were flat out denied.

But ultimately, their breaks would be delayed and delayed until finally, it would be the end of their shift and they hadn't received a break. We were just appalled to hear this, and the union has filed multiple grievances.

Jeff Traeger: Wow, that's terrible. And it's no wonder that we've had to file grievances on that. It's terrible that we spend so much time at the bargaining table, bargaining breaks for folks, and that the company then turns around and won't even let them take them.

So what's going on with this other campaign called the Don't Be a Hero?

Roberta H.: Well, the Don't Be a Hero campaign is a result of increased shoplifting in retail and how it affects our members. We created a campaign to educate the membership on the do's and don't's when faced with a shoplifting situation.

Jeff Traeger: What should our members do, let's say I'm a member working in a Safeway store or a Loblaws store, and I see somebody whose obviously shoplifting. What should I be doing?

Roberta H.: Well, first of all, they should report to management on what's happening, or a loss prevention officer. Then, they should step back and let them handle the situation. They should not interfere at all.

Jeff Traeger: And maybe that's the better question, what shouldn't I do? What are the don'ts when you actually see a customer shoplifting?

Roberta H.: Well, it's quite a long list. Firstly, they should not check the receipts of a suspected shoplifter. And they should never chase or follow a suspect. They should absolutely never physically detain a suspect, and they should not use force or any type of physical restraint or a weapon. No physical searches of the suspect or belongings should take place, and they should never photograph, video, or reproduce images of a suspect. And lastly, they should never share or discuss personal information regarding suspects with anyone other than loss prevention or law enforcement.

Jeff Traeger: So, what happens to one of our members if they, let's say they do follow somebody out of the store, or they think someone is shoplifting so they ask to see their receipt. What happens to our member in that case?

Roberta H.: Well, failure to follow company policy may result in discipline, up to and including termination. So our goal is to educate the workers and help keep them safe.

Jeff Traeger: Thank you. Sounds like very worthwhile campaigns we've got going on both fronts. And you know, we were talking about bargaining with Safeway and Red River Coop, but just as soon as we finish that we're going to be heading right into bargaining with the Loblaw as well. So, how are we preparing for that?

Roberta H.: Well, we're going to do things a little bit differently this time. Over the years, we've seen attendance at proposal meetings decline. So we realized we needed to find a better way to reach out to the membership and hear their voice. Last year we held retail member forum meetings and had fantastic turn outs, which provided great feedback on what the membership wants.

Jeff Traeger: So, what was that feedback? What did you learn from those meetings?

Roberta H.: Well, through the retail forum meetings, we discovered that our members want to use technology to be involved. So be it Facebook or Twitter, email, phone blast, or telephone town halls.

So this year we trialed these avenues with the Safeway members, and I'm happy to say it's been a huge success. The process worked very well, and we are looking forward to using the same tools for Loblaw bargaining prep.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, so when are we going to start rolling that out, so our Loblaw members will know what to expect?

Roberta H.: Well, on March 8th, we're having a telephone town hall for the Loblaw membership, where we'll discuss the upcoming bargaining dates and details. The bargaining committee applications process. We'll provide info on proposal

boxes and deadlines. Provide details on the in-store committees. And give upcoming dates for member forums.

Jeff Traeger: And when do you think we'll get to the bargaining table? When are we expecting that to happen?

Roberta H.: Well, we've got dates booked from the end of May right through until the end of September. So we're asking that the membership stay informed through our website, Facebook, Twitter, email, and also check out our posters and updates in the stores.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, well, are Loblaw members keeping an eye on the bargaining that's going on with Sobeys? I mean, they must be aware that there's some tough bargaining going on right ahead of theirs.

Roberta H.: Yes, absolutely. Our Loblaw members are very interested in the retail landscape as a whole. Especially with what's going on with Safeway and how this could impact them. Typically, Loblaw bargains first and then Safeway follows, but this time Safeway's at the table first, and it's shaping up to be a very volatile and unpredictable time in retail.

Jeff Traeger: Well, it's the first time that we're going to the table with Loblaw since they've brought in their no-frills banner as well. So, I'm imagining that there's ... No-frills members are looking for some significant improvements to their contract. What are some of the pressing issues at the no-frills stores?

Roberta H.: I would say, hands down, the biggest issue at no-frills stores are that they have no benefits and the wages are extremely low. So, our no-frills members are actually looking forward to coming to the table and making some positive changes.

Jeff Traeger: Good, good. Well, I guess a lot of Loblaw members are aware that the company's had their name in the media quite a bit lately, too. Especially on the price fixing scandal. Is there any reaction from Loblaw members to their company's role in that?

Roberta H.: Well, most of our members were very shocked and surprised by the price fixing scandal, but otherwise in that we haven't really heard a lot about it. I think they're just interested in getting the work done and moving forward.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, well thank you so much Roberta. Thank you for coming into the studio and meeting with us tonight. And I know that as tough as Sobeys bargaining is right now, I suspect that Loblaw will not be that much easier when the time comes. And that contract expires on September the 27th.

I see on the screen that the vote to approve the secretary treasury's report has been passed. So, it is time to take questions. We only have one question in the

queue right now. So, if you are interested in asking a question about bargaining in retail, about these report, my report, or anything else at all, please press the star key followed by the number three. We'll get you in line and gladly take your questions.

So, right now we have Carol on the line. So, go ahead Carol.

Carol: Hi, yes, I'm calling from Swan River, Manitoba. I also work at A&W. I also work at [crosstalk 00:27:59]

Jeff Traeger: Do you guys have water? Carol, do you guys have water there?

Carol: Yes, actually we got our water back last week on Monday. Yeah, because we were pretty shafted with no water there. Everybody's so used to having water as such an easy access, right?

Jeff Traeger: We all take it for granted, right? We all take it for granted and when you turn the tap, the water's going to run. But I can't imagine what you guys went through with all that ...

Carol: It wasn't too bad, I mean there was ... I think it was coop or some great big business in the city or some, they were sending water by cases for people per ... First night was one case, the second night was two cases per household until the water situation was fixed.

Jeff Traeger: So we don't [crosstalk 00:28:46] because it's non-union, right? We shop at the extra foods, right?

Carol: Right, right. Yes.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, go ahead Carol. What's your [crosstalk 00:28:56]

Carol: I was just asking if ... I've been there since about June or July last year. How long must I wait for my 10% discount for Loblaws? I work at Loblaws as well. I work part-time at Loblaws. Is there any ...

Jeff Traeger: Roberta's still sitting here right in the studio. She's our primary Loblaw rep, so I'm going to let her answer your question. Go ahead Roberta.

Roberta H.: Hi Carol.

Carol: Hi.

Roberta H.: So that's a company initiative, so you need to contact your store manager and they may give you the call the information center number to call, and that's where your card comes from.

Jeff Traeger: Ah, okay. Very good. Now we're going to go to, I think it's Fred [inaudible 00:29:39]? Fred, we're going to go to Fred next please.

Fred: Hello?

Jeff Traeger: Hey, how you doing Fred?

Fred: Not too bad. How are you?

Jeff Traeger: Doing well, thank you. Little bit of a cold, as you can probably tell, from all the [crosstalk 00:29:51]

Fred: Yup

Jeff Traeger: But, we're getting through it.

Fred: Oh, good. I was wondering about the video surveillance in the workplace. Are employers allowed to have any and anywhere as much as ... Like, obviously not wash rooms and change rooms, but anywhere else in the buildings. Are they allowed carte blanche on this? And, is there any laws or FIFA or HIPPA or anything like that that, you know, limits them? Or do they have to have policies or is it just under the, "Hey, we own it, we can do whatever we want."

Jeff Traeger: So, yes, unfortunately it's the last answer to your question. They own the property and the location. And you are right, there is some requirements for them to at least notify patrons and/or employees that the premises are under video surveillance. They don't have to tell you where, but they do have to let you know that there is video surveillance. But really, other than that, they do have cart blanche. As you pointed out, washrooms and change rooms are a no-no, but pretty much anywhere else they want to go, they can.

And that's one of the realities that we've been facing and trying to deal with the fact that more and more employers are putting cameras in the workplace.

So, we're going to move on to Don now. Don, go ahead.

Don: Hey Jeff, it's Don.

Jeff Traeger: How you doing Don?

Don: Not bad. I asked a question, I was, called this meeting but you were already talking I think for maybe 10 or 15 minutes when I got a call on this. You might want to check on that automated system and find out what's going on.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, we will. We deal with a company that provides the service. I'm not going to give them a plug on the air, but we will certainly let them know that your call

was delayed for some reason. We've got your phone number so we'll track it to see what happened there. And let you know.

Don: Okay, thanks Jeff.

Jeff Traeger: Alright, very good. Now we're going to move on to Warren. Warren, go ahead.

Do we have Warren on the line?

No, okay then we'll move on to the next caller, which is Sandra. Sandra, go ahead.

Do we have Sandra on the line?

How about, Chris, we go with anybody. We'll try R.J.

R.J.: Hello?

Jeff Traeger: Oh, is that R.J.?

R.J.: Yeah, it's R.J.

Jeff Traeger: Excellent, okay, go ahead. What's your question?

R.J.: I'm working in Hylife in Neepawa, Manitoba. I just want to ask regarding our job posting, because I for a [inaudible 00:32:56] but it's [inaudible 00:33:05] just five weeks but I train on more than five weeks. I train eight weeks, then they said that I'm not qualified for the job. So I'm back to the original I work. Why is that? They took me too long, for eight weeks before they get ... They decided I'm not qualified.

Jeff Traeger: So listen, R.J. That's a workplace specific question. And so, what we're going to do is I've got Marie, my executive advisor here is taking a note. We're going to get your union representative, Wendy Lundi, to give you a call within the next day or so. And she'll be willing to answer your question about job posting.

So, we're going to move on now. Oh, there is one thing before we move on, for Don Burrows who was on the line a little bit earlier. One thing you can do Don is that full transcripts of our entire town hall are kept on the website. It's not going to be immediate, it goes up ... Chris, when does it go up? It goes up a few days after the meeting, so you'll be able to see whatever section you missed. That doesn't mean we're not going to follow up to find out why your call was so late. We will do so, but at least you have the ability to hear the parts of the conversation that you missed tonight.

So, we're going to move on to Darcie. Darcie, go ahead.

Darcie: How you doing? Listen, how many over scaled employees are there with Safeway, and are they for real that they want to reduce our over scale, the \$5 or whatever we make, and we're going to lose like four to 800 dollars a month. Are they retarded or whatever, or they just that badly morally corrupt?

Jeff Traeger: Okay, so let me deal with that one piece at a time. And what I will say to you is that they are very serious about rolling back wages to the point of over scaled. You asked me how many over scaled people there are? Most of them is the answer. Pretty much anybody that's full-time or that's been at the top of the wage scale as a senior part-timer for any length of time, is probably over scaled.

And part of the reason for that is wage increases in the past have been, when there was a 50 cent wage increase, only 25 cents of that was actually put on the scale in the collective agreement where, as 50 cents would go to the employee and then they would be over scaled. So, literally most of the top rated people are not at the \$17.35 that's currently the top rate for a sales service clerk in that contract.

So, they are serious about at least proposing these type of cuts Darcie, and that's why we need you and everybody else to get out to that meeting and give us a strike mandate so we can show the company that it is not just the few of us at the bargaining table. You're 12 bargaining committee, you're two reps being myself at the bargaining table, who are saying, "No" to the company. That it's all 2,200 people.

And most of the folks I know working at Safeway struggle to keep two ends together in the middle as it is now. And I can't imagine if they got the type of cuts they were asking for, what that would mean for most of our members.

We're going to move on to Leo now. Leo, go ahead.

Leo: Hello?

Jeff Traeger: Hello.

Leo: Hi, this is not Leo, sorry to say, but fortunately I have to give you the information to ... I asked a while back to remove my emergency call toward Leo. This is an emergency phone call that your always calling me to [crosstalk 00:37:00]

Jeff Traeger: Okay, what we'll do. We've got the phone number and we'll make sure that we put it on our do not call list. I've got Marie is writing it down right now and we will make sure, for whatever reason, we've called this number. We will not call you again.

Now we're going to move on to Maria. Go ahead Maria.

Maria: Hi, yes. I had the same problem as earlier, where I got ... When I got my call you guys were already on.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, so we'll look into your phone number as well to see why it was late. [crosstalk 00:37:28] Do you have another question?

Maria: And also. Yeah, do these people realize how long and how hard we have to work to get that pay raise? And now they want to take it away? This is retarded, like he said. I mean, I didn't go to work and sit on my ass and do nothing. I worked hard to get that raise.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, so Maria, we're going to have to ... Sorry Maria, we're going to have to cut you off there. We got to keep the language relatively clean. And I understand how upset you are. Yes, I do understand how long and how hard you had to work to get to the wage that you are making at Safeway now.

And I also understand that it probably took 50 years of collective bargaining to get that contract to look as good as it does right now, and your employer is absolutely trying to gut it all in one swoop.

So, we're going to move on to Heather now. Heather, go ahead.

Heather: Hi Jeff, how are you?

Jeff Traeger: Not bad, how are you?

Heather: I'm pretty good. Just a couple of questions from the staff out here in Brandon. One of them was, do our benefits still stay in effect if we strike?

Jeff Traeger: Unfortunately no. There would be ... I think there is a grace period. Bea's checking the benefit booklet right now, but what happens? Your benefits are paid for, as you know, hourly contributions into plan one and plan two, and hourly contributions into the dental plan. So, that's going to be one of the things that would likely be at risk. But, you know what? If there's anything different, Bea, have you found anything yet?

She's shaking her head. You can't hear that, but she's actually shaking her head.

Beatrice Bruske: No, we will have all of that information for all of the people when you come out to the strike vote meeting. That will be part of the presentation that you'll be getting from us.

Heather: I figured that. I told them that too. Also, I was late for the call as well.

Jeff Traeger: Oh, okay. Well, this seems to be a trend. So we will definitely let the company know that ... You know, there is a number that you have to that they can call in ahead of time, right?

Beatrice Bruske: Right.

Jeff Traeger: Is that posted on the website Chris? It is. So, yeah, if you ever have that problem again, and I'm hoping we can fix it so you don't have that problem again. But if you ever do have that problem again, you can simply go ahead and call, dial in yourself at the number on the website.

We're going to go to Vicki now. Vicki, go ahead.

Vicki: Hi. It's Vicki from Extra Foods in Winnipeg. First, I again was 20 after seven when they clicked me in. And, secondly, I have three questions or two questions. My first question is do you really believe that when the strike would happen and what's holding us back is no frills, and do you believe that the super store ... Because they are 85% at least, of the vote, would even bother to vote?

Jeff Traeger: One second Vicki. So, we haven't even started bargaining with Loblaw yet. We've been bargaining with Sobeys, but I guess your question is do you think that the superstore people will stand with the no frills members in trying to get them a better contract? Is that the question?

Vicki: Well, pretty much. And the four Extra Foods, or three Extra Foods that are left in Manitoba.

Jeff Traeger: Yeah, there's actually. I think there's four left in Manitoba. We've got one in Swan River, one in Neepawa, one in Selkirk, and one left on [crosstalk 00:41:05]

Vicki: And I understand that the people have been told already that they're being flipped, but they just don't know when.

Jeff Traeger: Yeah, exactly ...

Vicki: Right?

Jeff Traeger: Well, the company. Yup, the company's told us that it's their plan to convert all the remaining Extra Foods in Manitoba to no frills stores. And they actually told us that they wanted to have it done by the end of this year. Don't think that will happen. I think it will be more like the end of 2019 before they get to it. But they have said that they're in the process of winding down the Extra Foods banner.

Well, it's my hope, because one of the reasons, when we bargain no frills into the agreement that we put it into our province wide agreement, it's my hope that all Loblaw workers ... Whether they work at Extra Foods, whether they work at no frills or whether they work at super store, we'll stand together to make sure that everybody gets a fair agreement, no matter what banner you're working under. And that certainly is going to be our goal to make that happen,

and to let folks know that in the past we've only ever been able to improve working conditions by standing together as a group.

We're going to move on to Margaret now. Margaret, go ahead.

Margaret: Hello, hi.

Jeff Traeger: Hello there, how are you?

Margaret: Hi, I usually go by Maggie, so I'm like, "Is this me?"

Jeff Traeger: Oh, okay. Well it didn't say Maggie on my screen. It said Margaret on my screen ...[crosstalk 00:42:24]

Margaret: Yes, with the phone number, I'm sure. My question is pertaining to the health and welfare plan that FreshCo is presenting. The 50/50 cost share that ... Is that just for the dental or medical too?

Jeff Traeger: Their medical is wound up in the dental. It's all under one plan. It's a flex benefit plan, which means that you can kind of flex the plan to your needs. The problem is that the more you add the more expensive it is.

We have some experience with this plan because of our members out on Inkster, working at Sobey's warehouse, are covered by this plan. And we know that, depending on how you flex your plan, your monthly premium costs to you, your 50% could be as much as \$250 a month that you would be paying for your benefits. And that would include your dental and your health and welfare.

One thing that I really need to say Maggie is that, that cost is very high, but it gets you benefits that are even less than what you currently get with the UFCW dental plan and with your Safeway UFCW plan.

Margaret: But if you, say if you have an unfortunate illness and you do ... For instance, I have prescriptions well over \$2,000 a month, would that put me well over the approximate 228 per month?

Jeff Traeger: Oh yeah, it would cost you, to get that kind of coverage it would cost you a lot of money. Absolutely. Bea, did you want to weigh in on this?

Beatrice Bruske: Not on this particular point, but we have found the information about the benefit plan and the dental plan during a strike or labor dispute. So for those folks that are covered, and this would include Red River Coop people as well as Safeway people, during a strike or a lockout the health and welfare plan is ... People are not eligible for their health and welfare plan during the period of time for the strike and lockout. However, the dental plan continues for 60 days after the beginning of the strike or lockout.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, that's very good. Thank you for tracking that down Bea. We're going to move on to Martin now. Martin, go ahead.

Louise: Actually, it would be Martin's wife, Louise who is also a Safeway employee.

Jeff Traeger: Okay.

Louise: We both work for Safeway. Number one is we both had a kind of late connection time. We weren't called until about a quarter after, 20 after seven today. We'd actually forgotten about the phone call until the phone rang.

And, I have another question for you. You were saying when we did get connected, you were talking something about coop and then being ... They had opened up their books to you to see what state that company is in. Is Sobeys willing to open up their books to you?

Jeff Traeger: No. No, we specifically asked them on February the 6th to ... Because, whenever we're faced with concessionary bargaining, where an employer comes to the table and says, "We need to roll back vacations or premiums or wages or benefits to save money to make us profitable at all," we always say the same thing, which is, "Well, prove it." Because how would it be if I were to stand in front of a group of Safeway people and say, "We have to take a wage cut because the company says so." I don't think you'd be very impressed with that and I don't think that would be very appropriate for the union to do that.

So, we asked them on February the 6th to open their books. We also asked them to cost out every one of their concessionary proposals to tell us what money that was going to save them. And they refused to answer either question.

Louise: Yeah, they can't answer it because they are making money.

Jeff Traeger: Sure they are, it's just not enough, right? It's always about making enough.

So, we're going to move on now to Shirley. We still have quite a few people in line for the calls, so go ahead Shirley.

Shirley: Hi, I'm just letting you know that I was one of those people that were picked up at about 20 after seven.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, I think we've got a problem here and we were late [crosstalk 00:46:33]

Shirley: Usually, it's right on and I forgot totally about it until the phone rang.

Jeff Traeger: Yeah, okay, well I do apologize to everybody on the line. We're just going to assume that everybody was called late. So, we don't necessarily need to be

notified further. But, as I said, if this happens in the future again, you can always go to the website, find that phone number and dial in yourself.

Did you have another question Shirley?

Shirley: No, everything's good then.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, thank you very much.

Shirley: I just wanted to make sure that [crosstalk 00:47:03]

Jeff Traeger: Okay, we're going to move on to Gale. Gale, go ahead.

Harris: Actually, it's not Gale, it's Harris. We both work at Safeway also.

Jeff Traeger: Boy, this is becoming quite a regular routine here. Okay, you said Harris?

Harris: Harris Tavous.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, very good. So, what's your question?

Harris: We're hearing rumors that Saskatchewan has settled. Can you elaborate anything on that, if it's true or not?

Jeff Traeger: Sure, I can tell you what I know. How's that? Because the Saskatchewan group is not represented by UFCW, it's represented by the Retail Wholesale Store Department Employees Union, RWDSU, and they have been without a contract since June of 2014. So, that's going and coming on four years, three and a half years, without a contract, without a wage increase, without a benefit improvement, without anything.

So, the two parties, Sobeys and that group, asked for an arbitrator from B.C., a fellow by the name of Vince Ready, to do mediation with the two of them, and come up with a recommendation for what the contract would look like. And, I can tell you that that recommendation came down last week. It's not a public document, it's not binding on either party. The company has agreed to take it to their board of directors for a vote. And the union is obliged as part of the process to take it to their members for a vote.

I do not know what the details are in it. I assume by looking at what I've seen online that it contains wage increases, but they hadn't had wage increases for three years, so that wouldn't be surprising. Their wages would have fallen behind industry standard in Saskatchewan over that time.

And it also includes the ability for the company to open third party kiosks within the Safeway stores in Saskatchewan, which is very concerning to us. They want to do the same thing here. But it's concerning to us because it takes work

directly away from our members. And anybody working at Safeway knows the struggle for part-timers to get the hours they need to survive right now.

And that situation is just going to make it worse. I'm trying very hard with my counterparts in Saskatchewan to get a copy of the document, and I will promise you this. That once I do get a copy of the document, we will release the details on our website once we know exactly what's in it.

So, before moving on to our final guest, I know there is still a few people waiting in line, but we're getting close to the hour, and we have to adjourn by eight o'clock.

I will now make a motion to approve the president's report.

Sharon Grehan: Still moved.

Jeff Traeger: It has been moved and seconded, so please press the number one on your keypad to vote yes, number two on your keypad to vote no. If you have a question about that report or any other report at all, please press the star key followed by the number three and we'll gladly take your question.

I'm now going to turn it over to my executive advisor and our lead negotiator in the health care sector. That's Marie Buchanan, whose going to give us an update on what's going on in health care and with health care negotiations. Marie.

Marie Buchan: Good evening everyone, so there is a lot going on in health care, unfortunately, and it's not positive. However, with negotiations, another unfortunate is that we're not really moving anywhere with negotiations. The WRHA Laundry, Saint Boniface Hospital, Saint Boniface Hospital DSM, and the NRHA all expired March 31st, 2017. And we still haven't had a single day of bargaining yet.

Whenever we have made requests to bargain, we've always been told that we're waiting mandate from the government. Grace Hospital is also set to expire March 31st, 2018, and again have had no response from the employer with the exception of just awaiting a mandate from government.

It is important for everyone to remember that the current CBA stays in effect until we have a new collective agreement, so I know a lot of questions that we get is, "What's happening to our collective agreement?" That still stays in effect.

If we do get called to the bargaining table soon, we probably will be scheduling new proposal meetings because the proposal meetings that we have had in the past prior to the expiring date for some of those collective agreement, a lot of those have been stale dated with all of the changes that have happened within health care.

So, we are still continuing to make sure that everyone's kept up to date. So we've had shop steward meetings that are being scheduled. We had the Grace Hospital Stewards here on Friday. We're meeting with Saint Boniface Hospital Stewards and the WRHA Laundry Stewards this week. And, at the beginning of March, we'll be flying up to Thompson to meet with the NRHA Shop Stewards.

It's really critical for all of our members, that they make sure that they keep us up to date with their correct addresses and their correct email addresses. Because we've been doing a lot of information and letters sent to people via emails.

Sometimes people say, "Well, I gave my address or my email to my employer." But it's really important that you make sure you provide us with that information. So, getting contact, if it's health care, you can get in contact with myself, or you can also contact your full-time servicing rep which is available on our website. You can see who that is.

I will be sending out negotiation updates after our steward meetings, just giving you all updates of what we've discussed.

One more important piece I want to let everyone know with all the changes that's been going on in health care and the workloads, we want to make sure that everyone is filling out heavy workload forms. They are now available online. So you can go to our website and you can fill those out. We have ones for the Grace Hospital and ones for Saint Boniface Hospital. It's really important that those are filled out, even when you're at ... When there's no absences or that you're not working short, it's really important that you make sure you fill those out and we keep getting that information, so we can try and fix that for everyone.

Jeff Traeger: Excellent, well, alright. Well thank you so much for that Marie. And I do see that the vote to approve the president's report has been passed, so we're going to open up the floor.

I think we've got time for maybe two or three more questions. I know that there's about five people in the queue, but we do have to adjourn at eight o'clock. So, we're going to go to Tammy. Tammy, go ahead.

Tammy: I guess is with our pension. I've been with Safeway close to 29 years and if the store in Brandon ... Do they know, which stores are converting to FreshCos?

Jeff Traeger: No, they don't. They haven't told us that at all. They haven't even told us how many. Unlike in B.C. [crosstalk 00:53:49]

Tammy: If the one in Brandon did, what would happen to our pension?

Jeff Traeger: Well, what would happen to your pension is you would be considered to be withdrawn from the pension plan or you would have to start collecting your pension at a reduced rate. Because if they converted it to a FreshCo, you would have, in your seniority the only other store to bump into would be Neepawa and you would not have the ability to maintain and equip under that contract with FreshCo.

Tammy: So you kind of lose your pension then, right?

Jeff Traeger: Well, no you wouldn't lose your pension. You wouldn't lose your pension. You become deferred. Which means you would no longer be making contributions into the plan, and you would be deferred and vested. So you could freeze your pension where it was until such time as you retired, and then take it. But it wouldn't accrue any further. You wouldn't gain any more than that.

And that is one of the dangers that we have with this whole conversion to FreshCo piece because it would affect benefits, it would affect pension. It's obviously, as share and reported, it's going to affect wages, scheduling and working conditions.

So, it is really something that we have to make sure, like we did with no frills, that if they are going to be converting stores, that people have the right to bump into a different store to keep their Safeway contract. But in your case in Brandon, or for those of you working in the Thompson store, that's going to be difficult because there's just no where to bump into.

We're going to move on to Katherine now. Katherine, go ahead.

Speaker 24: Just thinking, they can suck my ass.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, well that was really inappropriate. Thanks for that. We're going to move on to Wendy. Wendy, go ahead.

Wendy, are you there?

I guess not, and we have run out of time. So I see that we have run out of time to answer any further questions. And just a reminder, if you were still waiting for your question to be asked, we will have your full-time union representative contact you soon within the next day or two to answer whatever question you have.

So, I want to thank all of you for joining us on our February, 2018 Town Hall General Membership meeting. We will be conducting our next GMM on Tuesday, May the 8th, 2018, by telephone town hall as well, beginning at seven pm.

So, thank you again for participating in your union, and we are now adjourned.

