

UFCW Local 832 Access Live Event  
November 13, 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 November 13, 2018, telephone town hall general membership meeting for members of Local 832 that is now called to order. With me in the studio tonight, along with our Communications Coordinator Chris Noto, is your Secretary/Treasurer Bea Brusk. Our Senior Union Representative and full time negotiator is Sonia Taylor, and the President of the Manitoba Federation of Labor, Kevin Rebeck.

Jeff Traeger: For tonight's town hall meeting we will not be reading any reports which gives us more time for presentations from our guests, and also more time for you to ask any questions you may have. There are three reports that our bylaws require us to approve at this meeting and they are the minutes of our last meeting that was held on September the 11th, Secretary/Treasurer's report on the current finances of the Local and my report. All three of the documents have been posted on our website at [ufcw832.com](http://ufcw832.com) for you to review and they will stay posted there in our archives so you can see all the documents from our town hall meetings at any time.

Jeff Traeger: 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 you. For all the members on the line that would like to ask a question, simply press the star key followed by the number three, and you will be placed in a queue to answer your question.

Jeff Traeger: I would ask that you please remember that the purpose of this meeting is to discuss issues or ask questions about matters that effect 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 who's name and contact information is available on the UFCW bulletin board in your workplace or online at [ufcw832.com](http://ufcw832.com). Tonight is our last Quarterly Town Hall GMM of 2018 and I want to thank all of you who have participated in these meetings for making them such a success.

Jeff Traeger: Our agenda tonight begins with voting to approve the minutes of the last meeting, and while we are completing the results of that vote, we'll talk to Sonia Taylor who is the Senior Representative here at the Local and our full time negotiator. Sonia's joining us tonight to talk about co-op stores and some of the difficult bargaining tables that she's been at over the last few months as well as the Labor dispute in Saskatoon with UFCW Local 1400 and the Saskatoon co-op. Following that we'll hear from the President of the Manitoba Federation of Labor, Kevin Rebeck, who was elected for his third time, right? Third time of office this Spring? Well if I'm wrong on that one he's going to correct me when he gets on the mic. He's here to give us an update on some of the plans for laborer's celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike, and also to talk to us about labors fight against the Public Services Sustainability Act and what's going on with the Health Care Bargaining Unit Restructuring Act.

Jeff Traeger: So I will begin by making a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting that took place on September 11th, 2018.

Bea Brusk: So 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 and you'll be placed in the queue. Since we will be opening the phone up for questions soon, please get in the queue now if you have a question and again, star key followed by the number three.

Jeff Traeger: So, Sonia tell us a little bit about what's going on at Co-Ops. You're welcome.

Sonia Taylor: I think the whole Retail concept with the co-op and they seem to be wanting to switch over to become the corporations or the companies of blah blahs and that sort of thing. They're not the friendly, you are at home here, which they have in their stores and that things are different. Labor relations have been changed, everybody's got new ideas and it's more of making money, more so than the Board of Directors.

Jeff Traeger: How many co-op stores do we represent Sonia? About.

Sonia Taylor: Probably seven at this point. What is happening is a lot of amalgamations and a lot of mergers and the combination of both. There are a lot of co-ops that are merging with other co-ops which creates a problem for us in that we should be organizing or trying to get those stores so that they are a part of the co-ops that we already have outstanding.

Sonia Taylor: Now a lot of the co-ops if they're in good financial state, they don't want to merge with other co-ops because they really appreciate their own independence and that's fine, but a lot of co-ops at the same time are having financial difficulty and they do want to become bigger. Again, everything goes through Federated Co-Op from Saskatoon and they make the decision of to how things are run and it just seems to be more and more of a corporation than it was your friendly co-ops.

Jeff Traeger: So, Federated Co-Ops head office is in Saskatoon.

Sonia Taylor: Correct.

Jeff Traeger: And they have stores mostly in rural locations, in Manitoba anyways, mostly in rural locations.

Sonia Taylor: Yes.

Jeff Traeger: How is that different from Red River co-op?

Sonia Taylor: Well the Red River co-op came to be due to the Sobeys buying all the Safeway stores. And because of diversifying Red River co-op bought four of the Safeway stores.

Jeff Traeger: Yeah there was a ruling by the Competition Bureau that Sobeys had to sell. I think it was five stores.

Sonia Taylor: Yeah.

Jeff Traeger: There was the four that were purchased by Red River co-op and then another one that was purchased by Northern Stores, right?

Sonia Taylor: Right.

Jeff Traeger: So Red River co-op is really just in Winnipeg primarily?

Sonia Taylor: Yes it is. But having said that, now that have leased out of town stores, which is your Stonewall store, your Selkirk Marketplace, as well as Laret, which are marketplaces but are now all part of the Red River co-op system. So even they are expanding just like the other co-ops are.

Jeff Traeger: Are they coming to the table and looking for major concessions through bargaining by your experience?

Sonia Taylor: At this point not concessions, but what used to be the norm with co-op stores is whatever wage increases or whatever one store got you sort of knew that was the pattern for all the rest of the stores. And since labor relations has changed in the last little while, in the last year or so, they have said that things are changing with the co-op. What used to be as a pattern store and everybody kind of followed, that's not happening anymore. It's going to be individually and the money that you once saw is not going to be there. And they've told us that.

Sonia Taylor: Now I have managed to bargain the Leaf Rapids ones and Gillum and the Northern Community store so they are sort of unique in their own little way, but I was attempting to negotiate the Dauphin co-op when I got a call from their labor relations person that was supposed to be at the bargaining table from Federated saying that there was a potential strike for Saskatoon and that negotiations were canceled. So I never did get to meet with them regarding Dauphin co-op. And new dates have been set. As you know they are on strike right now.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, then you were actually out on that picket line for a couple of weeks. So when there's a strike, especially a large strike that has a lot of locations UFCW locals tend to band together and send some help, some experienced people

than know how to run a picket line out to help the local that's got the large strike going on. And we actually are doing that right now. We have three people who are in Saskatoon right now helping to run picket lines and we've been rotating three staff members per week.

Jeff Traeger: Sonia, because her calendar with Dauphin co-op bargaining volunteered to do two straight weeks. So what's it like out on the picket lines at Saskatoon?

Sonia Taylor: Actually the picket lines are excellent. There's approximately 900 members that work at the Saskatoon co-op.

Jeff Traeger: How many stores do they have?

Sonia Taylor: They have 20 stores and those stores include grocery, gas stations, the agri-center, home-centers, and the liquor stores. And they also include Saskatoon as well as Martinsville, Worman, and Calansae. And those are the smaller communities part of the Saskatoon co-op.

Sonia Taylor: We have been walking since November 1st, or they have been walking since November 1st and the main issue is the two tier system that the co-op wants to implement. And again, it goes to our discussion we had where they're trying to be more a corporation, but introducing this where the co-op system in Manitoba did not have a two tier system.

Sonia Taylor: And what is going to be happening or what the proposal is from FCO is a two tier in that the top rate for the second tier clerks would mean \$3.47 less an hour because they would be a new tier.

Sonia Taylor: Now what is interesting about this strike is we've got 500 picketers. There's about 150 that are scabs and about 150 that have decided not to walk or to scab, so the support is definitely there. The community support is there. When they explain to them and we explain to them that we're not here walking for a wage increase for themselves. They're actually walking for new hires, for people who haven't even started working yet.

Jeff Traeger: That's pretty rare isn't it?

Sonia Taylor: That is rare and they deserve all the credit for doing that, where they're saying we're not going to have people that are going to be doing the exact same job we are and be paid less for it. So the support is definitely there. The community is behind them.

Jeff Traeger: You said there is 150 people that are crossing the line and another 150 people that are not picketing at all and then 600 that are actually on the line. To some people that might not sound like it's a lot of support, but it really is isn't it?

Sonia Taylor: Oh, it definitely is.

Jeff Traeger: If you go back to our strike with Loblaw in '87 we had a third of each. We had one-third that were walking the picket line, one-third that crossed the picket line, and one-third that did neither, didn't cross the picket line but also didn't walk with us. So to get 67% of the people walking the picket line is pretty strong.

Sonia Taylor: Oh it is. And they have posts at a lot of locations. The location I was at it has a liquor store as well as a gas bar. They closed the liquor store. One location they've closed the grocery store completely as well as the gas bar so there is nobody there. There is definitely losing business, which they are. It's going to continue on and hopefully they're going to win this one because it's important, and the concern is if Saskatchewan, if Saskatoon gets a two-tier system, I believe it's only going to trickle down into Manitoba and we're not going to stand for it as well too.

Sonia Taylor: Now they are not going to be back at the bargaining table until November 29th, so it's going to be a long strike at this point, unless something happens now and then, but their next negotiation is the 29th and let's see where that takes us.

Sonia Taylor: Now their argument is that Moose Jaw has a two tier system in which they did and what they did ... Moose Jaw walked out on strike as week too for 36 days and what they did is they got an agreement where the two tier system wages have closed, like the gap is smaller so eventually it will get rid of, but that was the only store that Local 1400 has regarding a two tier system and there are none in Manitoba at this point.

Jeff Traeger: You were saying there was various locations and different kinds of locations. It's the same here in Manitoba. When we talk to Dauphin co-op, we're not just talking about the brand new store, right? We're talking about I think it's five locations.

Sonia Taylor: Yes, with the agro, the hardware as well, lumber. St. Rose and there's two gas bars. Yeah, there's a bunch of locations as well.

Jeff Traeger: Some of the locations that are being picketed in Saskatoon are relatively small operations, right?

Sonia Taylor: If it's a small operation chances are it's closed because they did not keep them opened.

Jeff Traeger: That's got to be even tougher to be picketing a closed facility, right?

Sonia Taylor: Well it is, but the toughest is when you are picketing at a community like Martinsville and Warmon where it's the only store and gas bar in the

community. So where do people go to get their groceries when that's the only place they've got.

Sonia Taylor: But at the same time they still support it but say I have to because I do need the items.

Jeff Traeger: I understand it was a bit frosty on the picket lines last week too, wasn't it? I can see the smile on your face there.

Sonia Taylor: Frosty I could handle, but it was minus 38 with the wind chill. That was a little cold, I have to admit that.

Jeff Traeger: Okay. Well then, I want to do make a shout out because besides Sonia and several other staff members we have some of our activists that have agreed to be booked off work here in Winnipeg and head out to Saskatoon to help out on the strike. A big shout out to Dave Hamilanen from Sophie's Warehouse on Inkster. Charline Descharlet from Vista Park Lodge, both of whom are out there as we speak volunteering on the picket lines. And next week we have a couple of members from our Loblaw Bargaining Committee Allie McClain and Linda Miller who are going to be heading out to relieve the other two next week. And this is in conjunction with staff members who are also traveling out there.

Jeff Traeger: Is there anything else that we should know about the co-ops or about the strike?

Sonia Taylor: Well I think there's two things to know is that the co-op has filed unfair labor practices against the union. And they have filed two. One specifically they are saying that local 1400 is in an illegal strike position because there were things that were pending at the Labor Board in Saskatchewan and in order for them to go on strike you cannot have anything pending the co-op or the union at the Board.

Jeff Traeger: That's very different than Manitoba, right? Like the labor laws in Saskatchewan and when you're in a position to legally strike is not something that we'd be all the familiar with here.

Sonia Taylor: That's correct. And there was an issue that went before the Board and that had to do with union representation on one of the stores that was being diversified. And UFCW and another union were fighting for the store and a vote took place and the other union had gotten that store. So therefore it was believed and we still believe it that there's no more matters at the Saskatchewan Labor Board, so 48 hour notice was given to the cooperative that we would be having a strike.

Sonia Taylor: What has happened since then is that the cooperative says that we did not get it in writing from the Board on November 1st, therefore the strike is illegal and they filed charges at the Labor Board. So that is pending at this point.

Sonia Taylor: They've also filed charges for an unfair labor practice on November 8th when a former UFCW union rep by the name of Craig Sabold. He has started a petition that requests that all co-op members sign. He needs 300 signatures in that it would call a special meeting and to remove the current Board of Directors that is with the co-op right now.

Jeff Traeger: So for those that don't understand the co-op. Obviously it's called a co-op because it's a cooperative, right? And it has members who sign up and those members go to annual meetings and what he's trying to do is call a special meeting and try to get the Board of Directors voted out, right?

Sonia Taylor: That's correct. So they believe because he was a UFCW union rep three years ago and had quit on his own and there was no problem with that. The co-op believes that UFCW has instigated this. Told him to start this petition and therefore that's why we're bargaining in bad faith and that's before the Labor Board in Saskatchewan as well too.

Sonia Taylor: So, there are two things that are before the Board at this point and this is just as of last week, so we don't know where that's going to take them.

Jeff Traeger: So we've seen some of the impact of this kind of corporate culture change come to some of the bargaining in Manitoba. I think we've seen a little bit of it when we bargained with Red River co-op as well. So thank you for bringing all this to our attention and giving us a update on the strike situation. Certainly our hope for those members out in Saskatchewan that they will get a deal with their employer and get off that picket line soon. Hopefully before they have to go through the hearing at the Labor Board and go through all of that.

Jeff Traeger: In the meantime, we're going to continue to support our brothers and sisters out there in Saskatchewan and we're continue to send people out to help out with the strike and help local 1400 in any way that we can.

Jeff Traeger: so thank you very much Sonia. We appreciate it.

Jeff Traeger: I see that the vote to approve the minutes of the last meeting has been passed, so it's time to take a few questions. We've got three people in line for questions, so we'll start with Mohammed. Mohammed, go ahead.

Mohammad: Yeah, hello?

Jeff Traeger: Hello there. How are you?

Mohammad: Good evening everyone. I'm good and you? I am working for a Ghana and company security, but I am in the position that I'm having problem. I work with them as a mobile actual Visa. But the [inaudible 00:20:54] I'm actually using from Ghana they have this kind of alarm system India and like 10 minutes that

alarm would come on I have problems with my ear. Sometimes even when not in the vehicle is like because if I'm already come working 12 hour [inaudible 00:21:13]. And even when I'm not [inaudible 00:21:17] because I'm getting used to this alarming so I keep hearing like my ear is ringing just like when I'm inside a vehicle.

Mohammad: And I'm not too sure if I should talk to them about it. And I've talked to my doctor about it when I thought I having this problem long time ago and then me coming to work for travel a ship. This alarm keep coming on, keep coming on and one of the doctors had told me that there is [inaudible 00:21:42]. And I have a problem with my left ear by its ringing like very [inaudible 00:21:55] all the time, all the time. And my doctor told me that I have to do something about it because [inaudible 00:22:00] help me.

Jeff Traeger: Have you spoke to your union representative about this yet?

Mohammad: No, no, no.

Jeff Traeger: What I'm going to is ... I've got your full name and your number here on my screen, so I'm going to take that information down and I'm going to send it to your full-time union rep who is Kurt Martel and Kurt is going to give you a call back in the very near future. He'll call you back this week, hopefully tomorrow unless he's got something else scheduled, but we'll make sure he gets in touch with you right away.

Jeff Traeger: So, we're going to move on to Gabe now. Gabe, go ahead. Hello Gabe? Hello Gabe, are you there? No, we lost Gave. We'll go on to Mike then. Mike, go ahead.

Mike: Hello. I have concerns about our current contract. It seems that there may be a gray area in the trades. For dual ticketed trades people the wages are to be determined and there's no determination so therefore they're not paying for dual trades and that's been since the beginning of the contract. I'm hoping that that can be resolved in our next contract. That there's actually a wage amount that [crosstalk 00:23:36].

Jeff Traeger: I don't think there was, yeah. So Mike I bargained your contract. You're from [Lashmodia 00:23:42] plant, right?

Mike: That's correct, yes.

Jeff Traeger: Yeah. I bargained your contract last time and we have the maintenance wage survey, which does a survey of wages annually to set the rates for all the positions and I do not believe there was anybody with a dual ticket at your plant last time. Are you dual ticketed?

Mike: I've been working at that plant for almost 30 years now, and I've been dual ticketed for several years now.

Jeff Traeger: Well it certainly didn't make it to the information at the bargaining table and we did have one person from the bargaining table from the maintenance department. So I hear your concern. I know what needs to be done. We need to bargain a comparison for the dual ticket rate in the agreement and I'm going to make sure that that's the first proposal that we get to renew your new contract. Your contract doesn't expire for a couple of years yet, but certainly there's no harm in having some discussion with the company about potentially including dual tickets in the calculation given that they already have that in Brandon where they have their other plant where there are quite a number of people who have two tickets. So I will make sure that that gets put into the next agreement, okay?

Mike: Okay, and another concern about the same issue is that I'm understanding is that there's no dollar amount given to it, so they have no comparison. They have nothing to compare it to, so they have no value to it. So they have no dollar amount that they can give. There's no minimum. There's no comparison, so they have nothing to offer. Now if it's given as a comparison they have nothing to compare it to. That's my understanding, so therefore they will not pay it.

Jeff Traeger: Well there is a dual ticket rate at the Brandon plant and there's a dual ticket at a bunch of other facilities in Westman and I know this just because of reviewing the maintenance wage survey in Westman. There's an ethanol plant in Minnedosa. There's another packing house plant High Life in Neepawa. There's the McCain French Fry plant in Carbury. There's a Simplot plant right in Brandon. All of those do have specific rates in their contracts for dual ticket folks, so I'm sure that if we did some research in the Winnipeg area we'd certainly be able to find comparisons for that. But you've given me some homework to do obviously and I will make sure that's our first proposal for next time.

Jeff Traeger: We've got a couple more callers in the queue but we've got another guest to hear from. So, Kevin Rebeck ... Oh, before I do that. Sorry, I almost forgot.

Jeff Traeger: Before moving on to our next guest I need to make a motion to approve the secretary/treasurers report for the nine month period ending September 30th, 2018.

Bea Brusk: 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 the treasurer's report or anything else at all, please press the star key followed by the number three and we'll gladly take your question.

Jeff Traeger: Sorry about that Kevin. Now we can get to you. So Kevin Rebeck is here with us in the studio. Thank you very much for coming. And you're here to talk to us a little bit about a big celebration that's happening next year, so why don't you tell us a bit about that.

Kevin Rebeck: Absolutely. [inaudible 00:27:26]. Great. Thank you. I'm happy to be here and talk about next year's hundredth anniversary of the 1919 General Strike. Many people aren't aware of our history and we want to give a short history lesson for you on what the hell that strike was all about.

Kevin Rebeck: So back in 1918 it was post-war Canada. Soldiers were coming back from the war. They'd been off fighting for a better world and they were looking to resume their life and have the better life that they were standing up for. But what they came home to was anything but a better life. Cost of living for the last six years had risen 64%. Wages had simply not kept up. There were little in the way of employment standards and people were resentful of huge profits that were made during the war at the expense of workers and soldiers. Imagine a time when the rich were getting richer and the poor weren't getting ahead.

Kevin Rebeck: So this was also a time when you didn't join a union by signing cards. There was no labor relations act. If you wanted to belong to a union you had to strike for that. The metal workers and the building trades workers were trying to negotiate together. They were trying to be recognized so that they could have greater strength bargaining together as a council. And employers and government were refusing to recognize them. And after months of trying to get that recognition they voted to go on strike.

Kevin Rebeck: So on May 1st of 1919 they went out on strike and then they went to the Winnipeg Trades and Labor Council and they asked them, would you be willing to go out on strike in support of us? So imagine that. Being asked to go out on strike, not to improve your lot in life at your workplace, but to support other people because they weren't being respected at work, they weren't getting a living wage, and they were facing an employer and a government that refused to recognize them.

Kevin Rebeck: But there were 11,500 union members in the city of Winnipeg, and they had a vote and took some time to do the vote back then. So two weeks later they announced the results of their vote. 11,000 workers voted yes, we would go on strike in support with you.

Kevin Rebeck: And so on May 15th of 1919 the first to walk on the job all too often are our sisters. They were called the hello girls, that was their job title, but the telephone operators were the first to unplug their call and walk out. And were

they ever surprised by 11:00 that morning 30,000 to 50,000 workers had walked off the job. Keep in mind only 11,000 of them had unions to protect them. These were non-union workers who walked out in support.

Kevin Rebeck: The labor movement didn't know what was happening at the time. It was a show of support and solidarity the like that we haven't seen in a hundred years.

Kevin Rebeck: It was a national event as well. Even though it's the Winnipeg General Strike, there were sympathy strikes that broke out. In Brandon, in Calgary, in Edmonton. Saskatoon. Prince Albert. Vancouver. Regina. As many as 20 other towns went on strike as well in support. The fight for a living wage. The fight for respect was something that resonated with the public. It was of national and international importance and Winnipeg was the talk around the world.

Kevin Rebeck: The police even voted to go on strike and the strike committee said no, you can't on strike. We need you to serve and protect. Please go back to work. And they gave them signs that said as authorized by the strike authority. And they gave other critical services signs saying no, we want you to provide services. But many others they said simply do nothing. It was a peaceful strike. It was a strike about gaining recognition and respect.

Kevin Rebeck: The government didn't see it that way. They saw it as an affront to their power and they started to change the rules. They changed laws. They made it easier to deport people. Keep in mind this is a land of immigrants at the time. And they changed the criminal code for sedition. The Mayor of Winnipeg eventually said you know what, we can't trust these police. They won't sign an oath saying that they would never go on strike and he fired them. All of them.

Kevin Rebeck: But the business community stepped up and they deputized 1800 Special Constables, recruited and paid for by business, who were given an armband saying special police and a baton or a bat or a wagon spoke. And they were sent out to keep those union rabble-rousers in line. Not just union rabble-rousers keep in mind. Most of the strikers frankly weren't even union members.

Kevin Rebeck: One young guy who was up on a rooftop watching these gatherings and listening to speeches is a name that many of us know. We know as Tommy Douglas who was a boy in Winnipeg at the time. And he formed a lot of his impressions of what power was and what it needed to be, by listening to speeches given by strike leaders. Gatherings that came together.

Kevin Rebeck: Those gatherings became a threat to those in power as well. So they would sent the specials to breakup gatherings so people couldn't hear speeches. And then they decided well maybe if we just locked up the strike leaders this would all go away. So at midnight they went and rounded up 10 of the big strike leaders and locked them up and sent them to Stony Mountain.

Kevin Rebeck: Then they started banning gatherings and speeches. And the soldiers said we're not going to have that and they organized a parade. A silent parade. And they marched on City Hall on Saturday, June 21st. And on that Saturday June 21st, when they were marching on City Hall, a street car came around the corner, operated by scab labor. There'd been no street cars running for almost two months now. And that street car came around the corner and it got tipped over and emptied and slashed and spit on fire. That is the image we all associate with this strike.

Kevin Rebeck: It was a rowdy day, but it was the day that caused people to be upset. People were seeing that as an affront to their power. A threat to their employment. A threat to their families and their future.

Kevin Rebeck: And so that action was taken, but I think it was an intentional provocation, because it was the excuse needed for the Mounted Police to charge through the crowd firing shots, killing two, wounding 34, and arresting 96. Those are the stats we have. Imagine how many unreported people were injured as well, because people were afraid to be associated with the strike. People were fearful to be identified as having been there. So that day's known as Bloody Saturday.

Kevin Rebeck: And shortly thereafter the strike wound down and came to a close. And we didn't get that recognition during that strike that we had been out on the fight for. So some people say well so the strike lost. But what they don't recognize is what the strike won, and what it won was the mobilization of the public of workers to recognize that together they have political strength. And every election, at the Provincial, at the Federal, at the Municipal level, governments were thrown out and workers were put in.

Kevin Rebeck: Some of those strike leaders who were still in jail for their activities during the strike were elected into our legislature, as opposed to now where it seems like we elect criminals.

Jeff Traeger: The opinions expressed ...

Kevin Rebeck: They're mine. I own them. But we got the first ever minimum wage, the Federal minimum wage at .25 cents an hour came after that strike. And it really laid the bedrock for the Labor Relations Act we have and benefit from today. The Employment Standards, health and safety. And many of the things we take for granted. It had a huge resonance to our movement in Canada of what the Labor Movement stands for, fights for, believes in, and can make a difference doing. And it created the political movement and will to make real change happen for people.

Kevin Rebeck: So we think it's time to celebrate.

Jeff Traeger: Absolutely.

Kevin Rebeck: Absolutely. Big celebration plans. UFCW is a huge sponsor. We've got a parade, the UFCW parade on May 25th, that we're going to march through the Exchange District and end up at Memorial Park across from the legislature where there're be a large family concert with food trucks and activities for the kids.

Kevin Rebeck: Then we've got another all-day concert that's going to happen on June the 8th at the Cubes south of City Hall. And we have a social on May 11th, I think is the social and we have our Gala Dinner on May 15th, a hundred years to the day is our Gala Dinner.

Kevin Rebeck: In addition to those big four events we have conferences and conventions that are coming. UFCW's got some events that are happening during that time. We've got a street car monument tipped on its edge that will be a permanent art installation across from City Hall on Main Street in front of Pantages theater. We have a movie that's going to be released put on by Danny Sherr who wrote the play Strike, the Musical. There will be a movie called Stand that will be premiered or previewed during the festivities next year and in theaters by Fall of next year. And every grade 11 student thanks to Canada's Labor Movement will get copies of that video, which is awesome. So our story will be told.

Jeff Traeger: That absolutely is awesome. No, that's great stuff. It sounds like there's quite a lot planned from UFCW's perspective. Yes, Kevin's right, we are the presenting sponsor for the parade, but we're also doing our Activist Conference next year is May 6th-9th and on the first night of our Activist Conference we're going to have special treat that's going to involve some recognition of 1919, the hundredth anniversary as well.

Jeff Traeger: And there's a lot of other unions that are sponsoring and donating to the event, the surprise for me, and maybe you can just let us know. There's quite a few employers or non-traditional non-labor movement organizations that have stepped up and also donated to this cause, right?

Kevin Rebeck: Yeah, we've got a number of contributors from employers. We've positioned this and spoken with them and said look, we're celebrating a hundred year history that we haven't broken down our labor relations to the extent ever since. That we've built and learned from that. That we found ways to work together and that we all benefit when we those paths to work together. And that message resonates with employers who are coming onboard. We've still got a number of asks and some more to do. We've got almost and \$800,000.00 program of events and activities and literature and booklets that are being printed. But yes, there're several employers onboard so far and some meetings coming up to bring some more.

Jeff Traeger: These events like the picnic that you talked about and the concerts. Are those free events, right? People don't have to pay to go?

Kevin Rebeck: That's right. The Gala Dinner is a fundraising event and it's towards our sponsors and aimed towards them and the social is a social so there's very affordable tickets for that. But all the other events are being and supported by Manitoba's unions and other sponsors and are completely free to the public. We want people to come march in the UFCW Solidarity Parade and have a float and be with their union. We want people to come and enjoy the family picnic and we'll have bouncy castles for the kids and food trucks for the grownups and we want people to come enjoy a free concert at the Cube. We're partnered with Folkfest to bring tremendous acts forward and have a great afternoon and evening with people in fun and solidarity.

Jeff Traeger: The bouncy castles aren't necessarily just for kids, right?

Kevin Rebeck: We've had this discussion.

Jeff Traeger: All right, all right. Very good. So, while I've got you in the studio here, I do appreciate all that great information on 1919 and we're going to as those events draw closer, we're going to make sure that we get those put up on our website as well. But you've also been a pretty busy guy the last year or so since the government introduced what was Bill 28, which I guess is now the Public Service Sustainability Act and Bill 29, which is the Healthcare Bargaining and Restructuring Act. I know it's been in the media quite a bit that labor gathered together to create the Partnership to Defend Services, and we took this government to court, right?

Kevin Rebeck: Yeah. So the old Bill 28 was put forward by this government. That old anti-labor Bill 28, not to be confused with this year's new anti-labor Bill 28 which deals with project labor agreements so are contracts with unions.

Kevin Rebeck: The old Bill 28 which is the Public Service Sustainability Act was put forward by government so people are all aware. That's the bill that only freezes wages, but it'll get you the next time your bargaining open. So if you just signed a deal that isn't open for four years, well fours from now it'll kick in and get you and it will give you 00.751 as a maximum amount you can negotiate for total compensation, not just wages.

Kevin Rebeck: They also wrote it so that it impacts all of the public sector and they listed as much detail as they could on that and they left themselves the opening that if they wanted to scope others in that they could. That it could be a bit broader than that.

Kevin Rebeck: So I know there's a number of UFCW members who are public sector workers and I know the private sector workers are facing the impact of this bill as well. Because employers are there saying well, if that's good enough for your public sector workers then it's good enough for you as well.

Kevin Rebeck: So this bill has huge implications and impact. And the labor movement did bind together as Jeff says to create the Partnership to Defend Public Services. There wasn't a hesitation by a union impacted to step up and say we need to coordinate together. We need to work together and lock arms here. This impacts us all and we need to take this government to court, something that our premier seems very game to do. He threatens to go to court with the Manitoba Maytee Federation, with the Federal government. With the media who right true stories about him. With whomever, he seems to like the idea of court, but we did take him to court for an injunction. We thought well maybe we can get an injunction. It's a really high bar to get him injunction. And injunction basically says that the courts will stop government from governing on this issue until a more in-depth decision can be made. Only under extreme circumstances do they grant an injunction. And unfortunately we were not successful in getting that injunction.

Kevin Rebeck: But we thought it was important to raise this issue. Going to court could take up to four years and by asking for the injunction we did win from the judge recognition that this was a serious matter that needed to be tried. That he wasn't sure who was in the right or in the wrong here and he wanted us in court sooner than later. Now their definition of sooner and later differs from yours and mine, but it did mean that we got a court date for next year as opposed to four years from now. So that is sooner, in November of next year we will be in court with this government to settle once and for all whether they're breaking the law.

Kevin Rebeck: And the law that we're saying they're breaking is our Charter Right of Association. We have a right to belong to a union. And the difference between belonging to a gym or belonging to a union is a union negotiates for you. And by taking away any meaningful way to have negotiations, whether it's wages or not, if you take monetary off the table what are trading for a non-monetary item? We believe that violates our Charter Rights and in situations not too dissimilar from ours we've won that kind of definition before.

Kevin Rebeck: So we believe that this is a fight worth having. It's a fight on behalf of workers across Canada because it will set a precedent. So we're excited to be able to have our chance to defend our position. We believe workers do have the right to free and fair collective bargaining and the labor movement of Manitoba is not going to put up with the government pushing us around and stripping those rights away.

Jeff Traeger: Absolutely, couldn't agree more with that. It has not been proclaimed yet though, correct? They're kind of pulling the same moves as the government in Nova Scotia did, right?

Kevin Rebeck: Yeah. They're playing really cutesy with it. For folks who might not know what that means, I certainly didn't know at first what that meant. So they passed it

into law but they didn't proclaim it, which basically means it's not in effect yet. If you passed a law changing the speed limit but you didn't proclaim it than you'd better keep following the speed you used to follow.

Kevin Rebeck: But the trick with this is by being very public about introducing this law and saying what it is in great detail and passing into law is that all public sector employers are saying well we're not going to bargain anything more because when they proclaim it we'll have to claw that back, so that's the most we can bargain. Which really means they're getting their way without having to proclaim it into law and I think they thought like Nova Scotia we wouldn't challenge them until they proclaimed it, but we weren't going to wait for that. We want to defend worker's rights now so we've challenged it and we've got this moving forward.

Jeff Traeger: And so effectively employers are treating it as if it has been proclaimed and if it is fully law, right?

Kevin Rebeck: Yeah. If you go to any public sector bargaining table the employers will not deviate from that. They see it as their mandate and they back it up by saying well it's going to be law, so that's the most we can offer.

Jeff Traeger: So we move towards a November 2019 date to have our day in court with this government and determine whether or not this legislation meets the constitutional test, right?

Kevin Rebeck: You bet, so we'll probably be a week in court and then we're looking probably at a couple of months for a decision to come up.

Jeff Traeger: All right, well thank you for that. There's one other piece that has a large effect on UFCW members and that's the Healthcare Bargaining Unit Restructuring Act, which has been proclaimed and is now we're going through the process with the special commissioner to determine exactly what healthcare votes are going to look like, but maybe in a nutshell you could explain to our listeners what that bill looks like.

Kevin Rebeck: Sure. This bill's very purpose and design is to make unions fight one another. This is a bill that strips away union members democratic decision that they've already made of what union to belong to and pits union against union to say now we're saying that all the hospitals in Winnipeg belong to one body and even though people have chosen and we made them have to choose on an individual basis by facility what union to belong to, we're wiping those decisions out and we're going to make you have runoff votes.

Kevin Rebeck: Manitoba's unions came together very quickly and every union UFCW and everyone else said right away that not one of you wanted to grow at the expense of another union. And I couldn't be prouder of how our movement

tackled that. How we put forward solutions that we could achieve what government were looking to do. Their stated public statement was we wanted less bargaining units and less collective agreements and we showed them several ways we could achieve that goal without stripping away people's democratic decisions of what unions they wanted to belong to that they'd already made.

Kevin Rebeck: The government won't have any of that and they proclaimed this into force and they're lining up votes that will happen next year. I think all unions are pretty disheartened by that and understandably so. Again, not one union wants to grow at the expense of another but we're going to and all unions will campaign to protect their members and protect the contract that they've negotiated with them and give them that option to continue to belong to the union they want to. But this government's not going to make that easy and they're going to force some unions to lose members at the expense of others.

Jeff Traeger: And they're not ripping off this band aid, quickly are they?

Kevin Rebeck: No. I half wonder if it's by design and I half wonder it's by incompetence, but the process that they've been laying out on how to conduct these votes and what language they've put in the legislation have made it much more complex and much more drawn out then it would need to be and that means votes are likely to begin in the Spring of next year and they may go all the way into the Fall at the pace that they're moving at today.

Kevin Rebeck: It is a frustrating process. There have been many meetings with healthcare unions. I think tensions are high. People are stressed. And I can't imagine being a healthcare worker during all of this. It's not enough that the government is making all these changes to healthcare and closing emergency rooms and attacking our healthcare system. That causes enough uncertainty for people who are trying to go in and do a good job. To care for our loved ones. On top of this they're threatening to change what contract they're covered by. What union they belong to and that they trusted people who take care of their contract them with employers may be changed on them. That's unfair, it's unnecessary, and it's disrespectful.

Jeff Traeger: That's an excellent point because those are really the people who are suffering greatly through all of this and you know they are the front line. They're not front and center in the media campaign are they?

Kevin Rebeck: Not at all.

Jeff Traeger: All right. Well thank you Kevin. Appreciate it. Appreciate you coming here and spending your evening with us. I know you're busy at the health and safety conference, right? You've got the MFL health and safety conference on there.

Kevin Rebeck: Our health and safety activists have been tuning up their skills all day today and all day tomorrow and UFCW members there are represented well and both as members taking courses and some at delivering them, so thank you for your support of our conference. Thank you for your support at Manitoba Federation of Labor Table and the 1919 activities. I'm always proud and happy to come and chat with UFCW members and to work with all of you. Thank you.

Jeff Traeger: Perfect, and we're always happy to have you as well.

Jeff Traeger: So I see that the vote to approve the secretary/treasurers report has been passed, so it is time to ... Just before I take a couple of questions, I'm going to make a motion to approve the President's Report which is the final document that we have to approve at tonight's meeting.

Bea Brusk: 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 the President's Report or anything else at all please press the star key followed by the number three and we will gladly take your question.

Jeff Traeger: So we've got an unidentified caller. An inbound caller that we're going to start off with. Go ahead.

Daniel: Hello.

Jeff Traeger: Hello there.

Daniel: Yeah Jeff it's Daniel Saftruck here from Winnipeg.

Jeff Traeger: Hey Daniel, how the heck are you?

Daniel: I'm giving you an honest on the ice or on the field report from that MLF conference at the [crosstalk 00:51:13].

Jeff Traeger: Excellent. We have the president here. He's still in the room. If you've got a comment or a question. Good timing Daniel.

Daniel: I was very pleased with what has happened today. I had never been to Manitoba to a conference that includes all our unions in one room at one session with one common objective and it's very exhilarating.

Daniel: The session I was involved in is we had an MGEU speaker and he is excellent and it's all about workplace health and safety. How to structure our committees. How to make them more effective and everything else. And I got a real feeling of positivity from the whole thing that we are unified. There are 30 unions that

all have the same problems with reporting and doing the healthcare safety thing at our various local levels, and we know that it's a fight now. It was pointed out at our session that we have a government that's not tuned in to the problems that we have now. I was very disappointed to see some of the numbers that we have in Manitoba for fatalities. We don't have a great record ladies and gentlemen. And I wish our government would finally tune into that. This is not a time to cut back. Those issues you were talking about, workplace and health and safety may fall into that. And they want to cut back on the time and the effort that's being placed in structuring our committees and doing our reporting and everything else. It's not the time to do it. It's just not. We've gone a long way.

Jeff Traeger: Daniel, look at this governments record, their track record on health and safety legislation. All the time that the NDP was in power in this province these guys voted against virtually every single improvement that we wanted to make to health and safety legislation and it's not a surprise to me that they're not going to take it seriously and if they are going to change the legislation they're going to change it to make things easier on the employer and less safe, more dangerous, and less healthy for working people.

Jeff Traeger: And that's not just union people. That's everybody. Very, very concerned about this.

Daniel: People like Phil Cradchuck have their work carved out and meeting with the government and everything else at every single pass and saying hey, you can't do this. This is not the right thing to do.

Jeff Traeger: Absolutely. All right. Well thank you for calling Daniel. Much appreciate your perspective.

Jeff Traeger: we're going to move on to Akin now. Akin, go ahead.

Akin: [inaudible 00:54:01].

Jeff Traeger: If I can just interrupt you for one second. We're getting an echo on your call and can't really hear you in the studio. We did take down your name and number and we will make sure that we ... I see that you're a member from Garda. We'll make sure that we get your union rep to give you a call as soon as possible.

Jeff Traeger: Going to move on to Russell out in Brandon I believe. How are you Russell?

Russell: Good Jeff. How are you this evening?

Jeff Traeger: I'm doing well, thank you. I'm doing well.

Russell: Well good. This is another benefits question that I would like to see about possibly implementing or proposing or see if it's been addressed before.

Russell: I know that you and I have discussed the prescription drug card program in the past. I'm going to move on past that and see about now with the tumultuous goings on with Canada Post I was just wondering if there's any way that we can implement with our plan if we still mail in our claim forms can they pay us back through direct deposit rather than send us a check in the mail.

Jeff Traeger: That's interesting.

Russell: I think that would help speed up with the payment of claims for those of us who have to lay out a lot of money for our prescriptions every month like me in particular.

Jeff Traeger: So it's interesting. The plan administrator, we had the trust meetings for both the dental plan and for Loblaws benefit plan today and we have the Safeway meeting planned for I believe it's next week or the week after that. A little bit later actually. It's early December, first week of December. But one of the things that the plan administrator has been talking about was exactly that. Moving to a direct deposit system. So that is something that we're looking at and we're not sure that it's going to be cost prohibitive. When I talked to you last meeting about the drug card it was the original layout of the costs and the increase in claims and then the ongoing administration that was going to give the fund some problems, but this is something that certainly would potentially go a lot better and yes, you're right, with Canada Post strike direct deposit would not be affected by that. And also we would be paying our members back a lot more quickly.

Jeff Traeger: What was the second part of your question Russell?

Russell: That was it. You pretty much answered it all.

Jeff Traeger: Okay. All right. Very good. Glad I could help.

Jeff Traeger: We're going to move on to what I think is our last caller in the queue and it's just about 8:00 so probably good and that is Leslie. Leslie, go ahead.

Leslie: Hi. I work in the NRHA in Thompson and I work the front line. And my question today is number one, I know that the government had asked for eight positions that were supposed to be removed because we were top heavy. Now they made new positions and new titles for these people as opposed to letting go. So I wonder what the government is going to do about this and what the union's position is on this, as well as grievance policies because we have where grievances to be dealt with take a year, year and a half up here.

Leslie: I've spoken with other unions to discuss their grievance policies that take a lot shorter time. I'm wondering why they take such a long process with our union up north with UFCW?

Jeff Traeger: Well it's just not with UFCW up north and I here this from a lot of unions that there are a limited number of arbitrators in the province of Manitoba and those arbitrators are extremely busy. We are booking a case to go to arbitration here this week in Winnipeg and we're looking at dates in October and November of next year. And that's the same arbitrator that GP has to use and MGU has to use.

Leslie: Yes, I'm well aware. The other thing though I find is that our representatives up in the north they lack a bit of knowledge on our policy. We have to kind of educate them as we go along. They're unaware of policies, health and safety procedures as well as just regular labor standards. And I wonder what the education process for UFCW is for the representatives as ours lack education in that area. And I find it's a common issue with a lot of people in the north.

Jeff Traeger: All right, so I'm going to try to answer your question by basically letting you know that our reps have not just an education program when they first get hired here, but they have ongoing regular education that we provide them whenever there's changes to any relevant sections of legislation or whether that be legislation in the Labor Relations Act or Human Rights Code or anything like that.

Jeff Traeger: I think part of the problem might be is that you've recently had a union representative change and whenever we rotate union representatives through different areas there is a learning curve for them. They're human just like anybody else and there is a learning curve while they get used to some of the new employers, new members, new policies, new procedures, new collective agreements, whatever it might be. And I know Mike is working very hard to get up to speed. He is the new rep in the north that took over from JP. I believe it was in February this year, so he's been there only about 10 months and I just want to let you know that if you have ongoing concerns, we do have a director of servicing Sandy Forshea and you can always have a conversation with Sandy about any ongoing concerns that you may have.

Jeff Traeger: So that is all of the calls that we have. I see that the President's Report has been passed, so I want to thank all of you for joining us tonight. But I do want to say a quick special shout out to some folks out there. Last time we were on this call was September 11th. We were a couple of weeks short of deadline with Loblaw and just before 4:00 AM early on the morning of September the 28th we reached a tentative agreement with that employer for the more than 3600 UFCW members working at Superstore Extra Foods and No Frills in Manitoba. Sunday October the 14th we ratified that contract by around 90%. That contract has huge improvements to the health and welfare benefits for our members.

Jeff Traeger: Those benefits are going to be rolled out over the next two years and what I just wanted to say before we sign off tonight is I wanted to say a huge thank you to the hardworking members of the Loblaw bargaining committee and to the

Loblaw members of Manitoba that came to our strike vote meeting. Gave us a very strong strike mandate and the combination of that hardworking committee and the vote from those members was the difference in getting the deal that we were able to bring you at the bargaining table, so I just want to say a huge thank you to all of those folks. And I want to thank everyone for joining us tonight for our November telephone town hall. We will be conducting our next general membership meeting on Tuesday, February the 12th, 2019. That's 2019. Got it right actually. By telephone town hall as well beginning at 7:00 PM. So thank you for participating in your union. Have a great holiday season for those of you that I don't see between now and the end of the year. And we are now adjourned.