

UFCW832 Membership Meeting Access Live Event
May 08, 2018

Jeff Traeger:

Good evening everyone and a beautiful summer night out there and I'm glad you took the time to join us on the call. My name is Jeff Traeger and I'm the President of UFCW, Local 832, your union and I want to welcome you all to the May 2018 telephone town hall general membership meeting for members of 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, our Director of Negotiations, Martin Trudel and the President of the Winnipeg Labor Council, Basia Sokal. For tonight's town hall meeting. We will not be reading any of the reports which will give us more time for presentations from our guests and importantly, questions that you may have.

There are three reports that our bylaws require us to approve at this meeting and they are the minutes of the last meeting which was February the 12th, 2018. The Secretary/Treasurer's financial report and my report. All three of these documents have previously been posted on our website at ufcw832.com for you to review and they will stay posted there in our archives so that you can see all of the documents from all of our town hall meetings any time you want. We're not going to read those 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 our guests.

For all the members on the line that would like to ask a question you need to 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 the meeting is to discuss issues or ask questions that are relevant to all members of Local 832. If you have a specific question about a grievance or an issue that affects your workplace alone I would ask that you contact your full-time union representative whose name and contact information is available on the UFCW bulletin board in your workplace or on our website at ufcw832.com.

Tonight is our second quarterly town hall general membership meeting of 2018. I want to thank all of you who have participated in these meetings in the past for making them such a success. Our agenda tonight begins with voting to approve the minutes of the last meeting. While we are completing the results of that vote, we'll be hearing from Martin Trudel, our Director of Negotiations. He's going to talk about a few things as well as the current strike that we have going on Arysza on Inkster Boulevard. Negotiations there have come to an impasse and Martin's going to let us know how that came to be. I'll begin by making a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting which took place February 12th, 2018.

Beatrice Bruske:

So moved.

Jeff Traeger:

It has been moved and seconded and so please vote yes by pressing the number one on your keypad or vote no by pressing the number two on your key pad. I know it's repetitive, but once again just for folks who are new on the call to get in the lineup to ask a question simply press the star key followed by the number

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three and you'll be placed in line. Since we're going to be opening the phone up for questions right after we hear from Martin, if you do have a question go ahead and get in the que now, so Martin Trudel, Director of Negotiations tell us what's going on out there on Inkster Boulevard.

Martin Trudel: Well high everyone, as Jeff mentioned we currently have a strike with Aryzta. Aryzta is a production facility that makes baked goods such as muffins and Nanaimo bars and they are delivering to major retailers such as Walmart, Starbucks, Tim Hortons to name a few. Negotiations have been ongoing for about a year and a half. The contract expired in January of 2017. We had several major points of contention that we're dealing with during negotiations. Most specifically wages and scheduling. The reason being is that the facility is trying to move the 24 hours a day, seven days a week production and they want to obviously change the schedule to accommodate such production. We had some disagreements when it came to the hours of work and the scheduling and difference of opinions on that.

That was the forefront of our negotiations. It came down to a final offer being provided by the company on April 28th and 29th which the members voted on and the majority of membership in attendance voted to strike, so the strike began at 8:00 in the morning on April 30th and we've been on strike since. So far there hasn't been any issues on the strike line. All the members have been participating. Thanks to anyone who has shown support by coming to align and walk with our members and what not or bringing them coffees and snacks and what not. We appreciate all the support we can get. In the meantime we have been in constant communication with the company and we're working really hard to try to resolve the issues that led to the strike. We're hoping to have a new offer for the employees to vote on fairly soon, but it's still in the works so that's our hope for now.

Jeff Traeger: How are our members doing on the picket line Martin? I know I've been on strike personally myself and at first there's a lot of adrenaline and a lot of excitement about finally being on the line, but I know that wears thin after a while. It's been about ten days now or?

Martin Trudel: Yes, it's been ten days so far. The spirit seems high. I mean the members have strong resolve, obviously they truly believe in the issues that they have with the employer's last offer and they believe that they can get something better, so we're fully supporting them. Again like I said there hasn't been really any major issues on the picket line. Everything has been very well managed. A big thank you to everyone on staff here especially Phillip Kraychuk who is the union rep for the unit, who's pretty much put his entire life on hold since the strike started. It can be taxing for our staff, but we're doing absolutely everything we can to support the members the best that we can.

Beatrice Bruske: How many members are impacted by the strike?

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Martin Trudel: We're looking at, there's about 200 members which is good to have a large number of members like that, just because we need to have 24 hours a day, seven days a week coverage, so it was very helpful. Had it been a smaller unit obviously we would have some challenges when it came to the schedule, but having this many people has really helped out, so we're able to ensure that we have coverage 24/7.

Jeff Traeger: Is the employer operating during the strike, like do we have scabs crossing the line or?

Martin Trudel: As of right now they're in complete shutdown for production. Obviously there's been some mechanical issues inside the plant where some of the workers had to go in to correct things just to make sure that the plant can be fully operational again should there be an end to the labor dispute and which is a good thing. Because if we were to get a new offer and the members were to vote in favor of it. We'd want them to be able to get back in the workplace as soon as possible after the strike ended. Both parties are trying to cooperate with each other just to make sure that everything is running smoothly until we can end the labor dispute.

Jeff Traeger: Is Arysza a big company like a multinational?

Martin Trudel: Yes, multinational, multinational. They're a very strong presence in North America and Europe obviously, but they're totally well known.

Jeff Traeger: Okay and they have plants all over the place?

Martin Trudel: Yes.

Jeff Traeger: Yes. Okay, all right. I know that in your department it's been extremely busy lately especially in your particular territory. I understand that we have a couple of deals, one at Coke and one in McCain that we've just ratified as well?

Martin Trudel: Yes, with those two units we also had strike deadlines already set up throughout the month of April, so we can almost be a team for April the strike deadline month. The issue that we had with these two other employers obviously is that we want to get more from the company for our members. When we always talk about strength is in numbers, I can't repeat that enough. The results show that it does work when the members come to vote. We need your support so come to vote as many of you as possible, because it makes a huge difference. While I'm at it I'd just like to go online and personally thank all of the members of McCains Foods and all the members of Coca Cola. Both groups who had extremely, extremely high turnouts at the ratification votes and obviously at previous votes that gave us the ability to set up a strike deadline and we did the best we could at the bargaining table obviously, but we couldn't have done as good if it hadn't been for all the members showing up to give us their support.

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We all say there's strength in numbers and we're only as strong as the number of people that come to vote and it made a huge difference. Again a big thank you to the members at McCain and Coca Cola. It made a massive, massive difference and we were able to get deals that were a lot more palatable to our members.

Beatrice Bruske: When members are not able to attend a proposal meeting for instance in the event of an upcoming collective agreement round of bargaining that they may have in their unit, how can they submit proposals?

Martin Trudel: If there's any issues in terms of not being able to attend the meetings. We understand that. Everyone has lives. Everyone is very busy. If there are circumstances that will prevent you to attend meeting. You can always pass on any suggestions that you might have to your shop stewards. Alternatively you can do it through your union representative too, or you can just contact me personally or via e-mail me or any of the other negotiators that are assigned to your unit. We always put our contact information on the letters that we send to people ahead of time when there's proposal meetings. We encourage you to read your letters that come from the union obviously. Then make sure to pay attention to the contact information on that.

If you're unable to attend a meeting then by all means you can contact us by phone or e-mail or whatever is most convenient for you.

Beatrice Bruske: Obviously then it's very important for people to make sure that they keep us updated of their e-mail address and/or their physical address if they're moving, so that we can actually communicate in a timely manner right?

Martin Trudel: Absolutely. When your union representatives are contacting you just try to make sure that they have the right phone number, mailing address, e-mail address. It's extremely important that we get all the data. Because the more accurate our data are and we can then ensure that we can communicate it to you and make sure that you don't miss any information that's really important to your negotiations. Our website is ufcw832.com/email and then that's where you can ensure that the information is accurate.

Jeff Traeger: It was a very leading question there Bea, and so Martin is there anything else in your department? Any other bargaining that you'd like to report on or anything else going on with you or one of our other two negotiators that you'd like to report?

Martin Trudel: Aside from those ones we had some other fairly large employers such as Sysco that has recently ratified and like you said all the other ones are pretty much a part of regular bargaining, so all of them have gone fairly well. We're also going through a number of workplaces that are part of the nonprofit sectors, looking after individuals with various disabilities. We recently found out that most of these agencies are not part of Bill 28, which is something that we've been asking

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the government for about a year and a half to get confirmation and it took a fairly lengthy amount of time to actually finally get confirmation, so knowing that we will not be part of Bill 28 is very positive for us. Which means that we will be able to have more meaningful bargaining at the table when we're dealing with these agencies.

Jeff Traeger: Good, all right. Well thank you very much for that report Martin and thanks for coming in to do this tonight. I really appreciate it and know that you're a very busy guy with a busy schedule. I see that the vote to approve the previous minutes has passed, so it's time to take a couple of questions. We're going to start with Roberto. Go ahead Roberto.

Roberto: Oh terribly sorry. I was just asking about whether or not the whole union contract was actually approved on Sunday or whether or not this phone call itself was in regards to actually the new terms that arise because of the new contract?

Jeff Traeger: Which contract are you talking about Roberto?

Roberto: The one that we voted on Friday, as well as the one that was a re-vote on Sunday. If this is . . .

Jeff Traeger: Where do you work?

Roberto: Coca Cola Refreshments.

Jeff Traeger: I'll let Martin take that question.

Martin Trudel: Okay, good question Roberto. Actually the contract would be effective on Sunday. The reason why we had two different sessions was to make it as convenient as possible for our members to come in and attend and vote. We want to make sure that everyone has an opportunity to come vote. That's why we did multiple sessions so we had about half the membership showing up on the Friday and the other half on that Sunday, so the effective date of ratification would be on Sunday. That's when your new contract would be in effect as of.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, excellent. Now we're going to move onto Debra. Go ahead Debra.

Debra: Hello.

Jeff Traeger: Hello there, how are you?

Debra: I'm good.

Jeff Traeger: Great.

Debra: My question is how does this effect VCO?

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Jeff Traeger: How does this effect VCO? Well Martin is the negotiator for VCO as well, so I'll turn that over to Martin as well.

Debra: Thank you.

Martin Trudel: Well, I'm glad you're bringing it up, because we've had some issues with the governments when it comes to how they've been administering the funding that was promised to VCO. As you know the contract for VCO we just ratified it a couple weeks ago. Unfortunately, in this case we were unable to get a wage increase, because the government had actually refused to pay VCO funding that had been promised to them which put the agency into a deficit. As of right now the agency is looking at taking legal action against the government and we'll more than likely be jumping on the band wagon as well, because the government's action has impacted our ability to bargain, so now it's effecting our members as well. We're contemplating action against the government on that one.

Debra: Sounds good. Sounds good.

Jeff Traeger: Okay.

Debra: Thank you.

Jeff Traeger: All right. Thank you for calling in Debra, appreciate it. Now we were, this would be the point in which we'd make a motion to approve the treasurer's report, but I understand that Bea had a couple of updates. Her report as well as mine has been posted up on the website previously for you to review, so if you wanted to look at it, you can always go to our website and look at it there, but Bea you had a couple of additions?

Beatrice Bruske: Yes so since the audit report or the treasurer's report was posted on the website last week we actually had some additional information and we had some audits in meeting with the auditor that happened and so I wanted to have a quick opportunity to report on that. We had started by having an audit firm come in the week of March 26th to do a full audit of all of the local's finances. Your Executive Boards Audit Committee which is comprised of Dean Rodwell from the Brandon Maple Leaf Plant, Nellie Minville from the St. Boniface Hospital and Tom Bevert from SunGro Horticulture met last week on May the 3rd. They reviewed all of the local's financial statements, remittances, expenditures. Thank you very much for all of that hard work committee. We met that afternoon with the auditor to review the audited financial report that he had drafted and the Executive Board will be reviewing that audit statement on Thursday of this week when the Executive Board meets.

The auditor was very pleased with the way the finances are handled and tracked within the local. The bottom line is that for 2017 our spending was less than

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what we received in dues income by about \$217,000.00 so we're in very solid financial shape with a very healthy strike fund.

Jeff Traeger: Excellent, okay. Well with that addition then I will now make a motion to approve Secretary/Treasurer's report for the 12 month period ending December 31st, 2017.

Beatrice Bruske: So moved.

Jeff Traeger: It has been moved and seconded, so please press the number one on your key pad to vote yes and the number two on your key pad to vote no. Now if you have a question about the Secretary/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. We don't currently have anybody in the que for questions now, so it's a good opportunity for me to introduce a very special guest that we have in the studio with us tonight and that is the President of the Winnipeg Labor Council, Basia Sokal. We have a civic election coming up this fall and our city's Labor Council is very active in that and many other things. Basia is here to tell you all about the great work the council is doing and in some ways how that impacts local 832 members so take it away Basia.

Basia Sokal: Thank you so much Jeff and to the Executive for having me today. As Jeff mentioned if you're living in Winnipeg or in the surrounding area. You live and work in Winnipeg. You'll be participating in municipal elections. Even if you're not a resident of Winnipeg you're still able to participate. In October on the 24th the city will be going for the polls and the Labor Council is traditionally very active in municipal elections. We do a various amount of things for the elections and it's really hard to explain for folks that aren't generally involved, but what the Labor Council does it actually is the grassroots level, kind of like your Local 832, kind of government body for all labor unions. That really effects all of us. Every single one of us.

Whether you're a worker at the Federal, Provincial or Municipal level or whether or not you're currently working. Every single one of us is effected by what happens down at City Hall and so it's very important for folks, especially if you're a worker or a member of Local 832 to get involved to see how you can help so that we can make some changes in City Hall and have some progressive candidates, because the livelihood of all workers is effected by what happens down at City Hall. The Labor Council is very involved in actively seeking candidates and what we do every election time whether it's a bi-election or a civic municipal election that's scheduled, we search out candidates and we do what's called a report card. We meet with candidates, incumbent and not. Those that are looking to run again, so for those of you that aren't sure what incumbent means. That's just basically the councilor that is currently sitting and seeking re-election. That's an incumbent.

We work with those folks. We do have relationships with councilors that we build over time and that's how we base what those councilors are, whether

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they're progressive or not progressive and whether the Labor Council wants to work with them. How we decide who we work with is through our membership. Through the members at the Winnipeg Labor Council. Members just like Local 832 members. We have members that participate as delegates from all kinds of unions, civic, federal, provincial. That includes Local 832 as well and it's important that folks do get involved this time around. Especially because we've been really struggling here in Manitoba unfortunately. While we're not all provincial workers and you know it's a difficult atmosphere for provincial workers for sure. It's not looking good for us at the municipal level either.

Whether you're a city worker, you're a transit driver or you're worker at a local 832 shop and you take the bus and you flush our toilet and you turn on your taps at home. Every single thing you do is affected. It's important for folks to get involved, because it's the one level of government that you can actually make a lot of change in and that you can have a lot of input in. The Labor Council is a conduit for that change for folks to get involved. Whereas you know you might not necessarily sit on an Executive at your local or you're not able to participate. Most people are able to participate in the Winnipeg Labor Council, because if you're not a delegate, you're still always welcome as a guest. It's a great way to start learning about your city.

You might not be involved in your Local. You might not be involved in your Executive. You don't have time to be a steward, but you want to know what's going on in your city and why some of these changes are happening down the street at City Hall.

Jeff Traeger: Okay. How many UFCW, no not UFCW, how many workers are affiliated to the Winnipeg Labor Council?

Basia Sokal: We have 73 affiliated unions in Winnipeg and surrounding area, so unions like MG represent larger, broader areas. Not necessarily in Winnipeg but workplaces in Winnipeg. It's about 55,000 to 58,000 workers in Winnipeg, so it's pretty extensive.

Jeff Traeger: Yes, oh yes it is. You have a history with Local 832 don't you?

Basia Sokal: I do. I drive by the building sometimes.

Jeff Traeger: No, you have a bigger history than that.

Basia Sokal: For those of you that might know me might remember that I actually started at Super Store. That was my first unionized job.

Jeff Traeger: There you go.

Basia Sokal: I was a Local 832 member myself and I was a steward here so that's where I got started really.

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Jeff Traeger: Super Store must be a really good incubator for activists, because I think I know someone else who started there, that's our Secretary/Treasurer.

Beatrice Bruske: We're pretty feisty. I've heard that once or twice before.

Jeff Traeger: Now UFCW is not your union now, your union is CUPW, right?

Basia Sokal: That's right. When I left Local 832, I went on to do my studies and when I came back a few years later I decided to become a postal worker, so that is my new home and my union is CUPW, so that is where I'm on leave from as the President of the Labor Council.

Jeff Traeger: I should let folks know CUPW stands for Canadian Union of Postal Workers. I always use those acronyms as if everybody knows what they mean and they don't always. Then what's your position on home delivery and what do you think about what the previous government, federal government tried to do and what the current federal government is doing to fix it?

Basia Sokal: Well that's something that's very near and dear to my heart. It's something that I along with other members of CUPW fought really hard for. Ten years of the previous government was, it killed us. It really killed us. It killed a lot of our spirits. It really wore people down. When you go to work every day and you don't know if you're going to be moved. If you're going to have a job. If you're even going to receive your mail at your door at home, not just as a postal worker, but as a citizen of this country. It was really stressful for a lot of folks. A lot of us have disabled parents, grandparents, children and it's something that people in this country really value. I definitely value it as a postal worker for sure.

We fought really hard and I worked on the campaign for restore door to door delivery in conjunction with our initiative that folks may have heard, it's called delivering community power. Just before I finished my term at CUPW and started my term at Labor Council, I pushed my Winnipeg City Center MP Robert-Falcon Oullette to talk about postal banking, because that goes hand in hand with the door to door delivery and what we wanted to do is expand services, not cut them. A lot of us had our jobs cut. A lot of us had our jobs modified. You now had letter carriers that were going from walking 20-25 kilometers a day to now being in a vehicle for 8-12 hours a day. That's a huge adjustment for people when you're used to walking 20 kilometers and now you're driving 40 kilometers. Just the change of lifestyle. To me it's incredibly important.

I think it's people's livelihoods and postal workers deliver more than just mail and restoring door to door is restoring community for communities. I think that's something everybody can get behind. This new government while we are a little bit disappointed in, I would say a little bit is a bit of an understatement. We are disappointed in their lack of commitment. They did campaign on restoring door to door mail delivery and then they did proceed to take 18

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months to study and the door to door and the prospect of returning it. We all knew where that was headed. It was just talk and the deadline got pushed one, two, three, four, seven times and here we are with status quo. While there is a moratorium on putting up more of those as I call them self-serve mailboxes, because I refuse to use Canada Post terms for those mailboxes.

I call them self-serve boxes. They didn't commit to expanding door to door services, but we are currently in negotiations and we're hoping that that gives us some leverage and it gives us a great opportunity to talk about things with the employer that we want to see coming out of these negotiations and for the future of Canada Post. Had the government imposed a few things on us maybe we wouldn't be able to bring that to the table. It's great for negotiations I would say.

Beatrice Bruske: Basia, you're the President of the Winnipeg Labor Council, but there are also active Labor Councils in other areas of the Province, right? Especially Thompson and Brandon come to mind that are always looking for activists to come out to their events and attend and participate. Do you want to have any commentary to that, or?

Basia Sokal: Yes, sure. It's really important to get involved even if you don't live in Winnipeg. Find your local district Labor Council as Bea mentioned, so Brandon and Thompson and Dauphin, Selkirk. They've all got Labor Councils. We're governed by the CLC. The CLC is the Canadian Labor Congress and they're like the federal government for the labor bodies. That's what the Labor Councils are governed by. You can always get in touch with your CLC Rep and if you're in Manitoba here, your CLC Rep is Cindy Murdock and she would be able to direct you to where you need to get in touch and with whom depending on your region. It's really important to get involved regardless if you live in Winnipeg or not, because there's elections in every single town, city around the Province.

Jeff Traeger: Those are all the same time as the Winnipeg election, right?

Basia Sokal: Yes.

Jeff Traeger: Yes. Brandon will be doing their election.

Basia Sokal: Exactly, that's right.

Jeff Traeger: Thompson, Selkirk, all of them.

Basia Sokal: A very important thing to remember is that a number of our members are directly impacted by not only civic election and the budget for the civic government, but also by school trustee elections. We have a number of school bus drivers that we represent and of course in Verdun, Manitoba, the town of Verdun employs as well school division employees and of course their wages and benefits are set by those folks that we elect as trustees and as [inaudible]

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00:27:21] councilors, so it's very important to keep that in mind and to make sure that people engage in getting out to vote and finding out what the candidates stand for.

Jeff Traeger: Yes, absolutely. You said you're up for bargaining. When did your contract expire with the Postal Workers?

Basia Sokal: Canada Post, we have two bargaining units, so we have the urban carriers and the rural. I'm part of the urban carriers. The rural expired last December 31st, 2017 and the other one expired January 31st of this year.

Jeff Traeger: Normally does it take a while before you guys get an agreement?

Basia Sokal: Traditionally we are without a contract for a year is pretty much a minimum. It's kind of what we've become accustomed to, but we'll see how things go. We have a different government and it's going to be our first round of negotiations officially. The last round of negotiations was with a two year contract and the liberals were brand, brand new so they don't want to rock the boats. We timed it well just before the next federal election.

Jeff Traeger: Now you just had some elections yourself recently at the Labor Council right and some 832 people kind of got onto your Executive, right?

Basia Sokal: Yes.

Jeff Traeger: You want to maybe let us . . .

Basia Sokal: Yes fantastic.

Jeff Traeger: Let us know who those folks are, so we can do shout out to them.

Basia Sokal: Sure. I hope they're on the line today, so we've got Sister Deb Jones who was previously our statistician is now our First Vice President which I'm very, very excited. I've known Sister Jones from my days here at UFCW. Amazing activist Sister and it's just really exciting to have her as my First Vice President. We got Brother Tim Fleming who took her place and is now our statistician. We also have Brother Mike Kelly who is our Second VP, so he works at the Occupational Health Center.

Jeff Traeger: There was one other person elected that night too right?

Basia Sokal: Who am I missing?

Jeff Traeger: Not from UFCW but . . .

Basia Sokal: Oh yes we did also have a person from [inaudible 00:29:21], a Sister from [inaudible 00:29:22] elected, so that's right.

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Jeff Traeger: Okay, good. Is there anything that you'd like to say to the group or . . .

Basia Sokal: Sure I definitely encourage all of you folks to come out to meetings. Currently we're meeting at the Union Center on the third Tuesday of the month, so that would be next week on Tuesday. We start at 6:00 p.m. We do have food. I know that when I used to come right after work I was always hungry so we like to make sure that people are fed. The meetings officially start at 6:30 and if you want to get to know about what's going on down at city hall, who the candidates are and what our processes are and trustees. I'd really encourage you to come down and especially if a lot of people say they can't donate money to a candidate that comes to their door. Time is worth more than money to candidates sometimes. If you have time to give. If you have time to knock on doors or even drop fliers or even help with any of the campaigns, you don't need experience. We will give you that experience.

I would really encourage you folks to reach out. I'm sure you can get in contact with me through the Local or you can follow us on our Facebook page the Winnipeg Labor Council and I really encourage you all to come out and if you're not a delegate then inquire about becoming one and if not then please participate as a guest.

Jeff Traeger: Oh okay. Now you said that the meetings are currently held at the Union Center? You and I are working on a deal where we're going to move them to the UFCW Training Center potentially, right?

Basia Sokal: That's correct.

Jeff Traeger: That makes it even easier for Local 832 members to get out.

Basia Sokal: Right.

Jeff Traeger: They know exactly where that is and you said Tuesday, the first Tuesday of every month?

Basia Sokal: Third.

Jeff Traeger: Third, I'm sorry. Third Tuesday. Okay, all right. Now there's one other thing that I'd just like to talk about, because we're not going to be back on the air with these folks until September 11th which is after Labor Day.

Basia Sokal: Right.

Jeff Traeger: You've got a very special event that we participate with you in on Labor Day so maybe you can just put a plug for that.

Basia Sokal: Sure, so thanks to UFCW for always supporting our Labor Day at the Labor Council. On the Labor Day long weekend in September we have a huge picnic

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and a march and if you haven't participated in that or if you're not from Winnipeg, Brandon as well for Brandon members, there is a huge picnic here and we march down to Vimy Ridge Park and we have a huge celebration for workers, families. It's kid friendly. We've got bouncy castles. Those are my favorite personally. We've got picnics. The hot dogs. Usually Jeff is cooking them all up for us. It's a great family friendly event. We do put in the plugs for some of the campaigns that we're working on and this year is Pharmacare. There's been a lot of chatter about Pharmacare. I was in Ottawa earlier this year doing some lobbying and I was back again last month and we were talking more Pharmacare.

That's something that's going to be big on this year's march and picnic, but thanks again to UFCW for always supporting us and definitely hope to see all of the members out there.

Jeff Traeger:

Excellent. When she said Jeff was cooking the burgers she was talking about Geoff Bergen and Curt Martel who do the cooking for us and Sandy Forcier and a few other people that do the cooking. If I was cooking the hot dogs they'd be burnt and no one would want them, so all right. Thank you very much Basia, appreciate it. I also see that the vote to approve the Secretary/Treasurer's report has been passed. It is time to take a few questions. We only have one question in line, so I'm going to be doing a quick update to the President's report after we take this one question. If you do have a question for Basia, you have a question for Martin or Bea or myself then please press the star key followed by the number three key and get in line.

I don't know if it's just such a beautiful night people are wanting to get through the call and go outside and get some sunshine, but we're going to talk to Abee Adoon and I do apologize if that's not how you pronounce your name, but go ahead. Hello, are you there? It seems like we've lost the one question that we had. All right, so I will start by making a motion, oh we do have one more. We have one more question that just popped on. It's Russell, go ahead Russell.

Russell:

Hello Russell, hello Jeff and Bea, how are you guys doing tonight?

Jeff Traeger:

Doing all right, doing all right. How about you?

Russell:

Good, good, thank you. I'm going to ask . . .

Jeff Traeger:

Calling from beautiful Brandon, Manitoba are you?

Russell:

Correct. I'm working for Safeway Sobeys and I'm going to ask you Jeff and Bea the same questions I ask you every time I get on here about the prescription drug card program for Safeway Sobeys. Last time we talked on the phone you said you were sitting on the board of whatever for that whatever . . .

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Jeff Traeger: I did, I did Russell if I can interrupt you for one minute. Absolutely I do remember you calling last time. I'm going to let you know for reasons beyond anybody's control the Safeway Trust meeting that we were going to schedule for what was it, May 2nd had to be rescheduled and we are now meeting on June the 26th. Russell, I'll be honest with you, the reason why it was canceled was because I had a death in the family so I could not make the meeting and I was the Chair of the Board. Everybody was good enough to reschedule the meeting for June 26th and we are going to discuss that issue when we meet at the end of June. It was the first time that we could get everybody schedules together.

Russell: Okay, look forward to hearing the resolution to that.

Jeff Traeger: Yes, absolutely. If you'd like I can take your number down and if you'd like I will call you directly after that meeting or Bea will call you directly. One of us will give you a call after that meeting so you don't have to wait all the way until the next town hall meeting on September 11th to get the answer, okay?

Russell: Yes, that would be awesome, thank you.

Jeff Traeger: All right you have a good night Russell.

Russell: Thank you.

Jeff Traeger: Yes, thank you. Now we're going to try Abee Adoon again. I think we had a bad connection there. Go ahead.

Abee: Hi, good evening.

Jeff Traeger: Good evening how are you?

Abee: I'm good.

Jeff Traeger: What's your question?

Abee: My question is regarding the union in Thompson here?

Jeff Traeger: In where? The union in where?

Abee: Thompson.

Jeff Traeger: In Thompson, okay.

Abee: Yes.

Jeff Traeger: Where do you work in Thompson? You work at the hospital?

[Type here]

Abee: I work in Thompson. I work at the Shelter.

Jeff Traeger: At the Shelter, at the Homeless Shelter. You just got the donation that we had brought up there I think today from your union representative, Mike Howden, correct?

Abee: I'm not at work today.

Jeff Traeger: Oh, okay. What we had done is we had taken up a collection. Bea maybe you know more about it. Maybe you want to talk about it.

Beatrice Bruske: Yes, it was a staff collection of items needed by the Shelter and our rep was good enough to take it up on his trip up to the north and provide that donation to the folks utilizing that particular space.

Jeff Traeger: There you go.

Abee: Okay.

Jeff Traeger: Sorry Abee I thought I thought maybe that's what you were talking about, but what is your question.

Abee: My question is I find a hard time the last time I just moved down to Thompson to find a Union office right here in Thompson.

Jeff Traeger: That's because we don't have a union office in Thompson. We have a union representative who his phone number, cell number and e-mail address is posted in the workplace and you can reach him at any time and on regular occasions I believe it's every six weeks he does a complete tour of the north and because most of our members working in the north work in Thompson he spends a little bit more time there. As a matter of fact I believe he was there today as a I said he is in Thompson all the this week. His name is Mike Howden and you can get his contact information by either going to our website or by looking at the bulletin board in your workplace and Mike's cell phone number and e-mail address will be posted there. Go ahead.

Abee: Yes.

Beatrice Bruske: We will get Mike to give you a shout so that you can meet up with him directly if you like.

Abee: His phone number and his contact is there on the board?

Jeff Traeger: It's on the bulletin, yes.

Abee: It's on the board at work, but I find it difficult to make a contact with him, because . . .

[Type here]

Jeff Traeger: What we're going to do, what we're going to do Abee is we've got your number here, because it shows up on our screen in the studio here. We're going to take your number down and we're going to have Mike get in touch with you tomorrow, okay?

Abee: All right.

Jeff Traeger: All right, that's good. Thank you. A couple more callers joined on the line. We've got Darlene. Darlene how are you doing?

Darlene: Good evening everyone. How's everyone doing?

Jeff Traeger: We're doing okay. We're doing okay. Would have been doing a lot better had the Jets won last night.

Darlene: Oh hush. We've got one more to go to clean their clock.

Jeff Traeger: I know, I know.

Darlene: Okay.

Jeff Traeger: Okay.

Darlene: Just a question since we've ratified our contract with Sobeys. I don't know if there's been any changes to our benefits package, Plan One, Plan Two.

Jeff Traeger: No.

Darlene: The package we're referring to like even online it's dated 2011. Just wondering if there's any updates available?

Jeff Traeger: Yes, one of the things that we do to try to save money with the plan is we only put out the summary document when there are major changes to the plan and I don't know, I think we're just looking at the current summary document. Yes, it is 2011. That's what we have. That's the most recent one that's been done, because there haven't been significant changes. I can tell you that there were no changes coming out of bargaining and that's a good thing, because as you know from attending the ratification vote meeting or even the strike vote meeting potentially that the employer really wanted to get rid of the Jointly Trustee Health and Welfare Benefit Plan and move our members working at Safeway into the company plan which is significantly less coverage than what you currently get and would cost for family coverage about \$250.00 a month.

Right now you get better coverage than what the company was offering. You get it for free, because we were in concessionary bargaining with Sobeys due to the nature of how poorly their business is doing here. It's unlikely that we're going to be able to offer improvements. That's the bad news. The good news is

[Type here]

that you did not lose anything nor do you have to pay for anything. That is the same with your dental plan as well by the way Darlene. We actually did manage to get some money into the dental plan. One of the reasons we were able to do that is there was a trustee for the dental plan on the bargaining committee for the employer and they were able to confirm the things that we were saying about the desperate need for the dental plan to be properly funded, so that we can restore the levels of coverage as they were pre-2011.

Darlene: Okay was there anymore word on store closures?

Jeff Traeger: Nothing and we keep asking. Every time I have an opportunity and I was actually just about to give an update. I'll give part of the update now and that is that one of the things that's happened since bargaining is that the company has served us notice that they want to convert some stores in Manitoba to FreshGo. They haven't identified the location of the stores or the timing on when they do that. As you know under your agreement, the new agreement there is a provision that once they've served us notice it takes four months for us. We have four months to bargain a collective agreement. We met with the Bargaining Committee members which are, it's a smaller committee, because it's not formal bargaining. It's just building an appendix to the Collective Agreement which is an operation of the current contract. Our Bargaining Committee is myself and Bea and your Executive Board members, Wes Connell and Darlene Kernot. We actually met with them today and we will be sitting down with the employer on June the 1st.

Every time we do talk to the company we ask are you closing stores and they say yes, but we don't know how many and they don't know when. Are you converting stores? Yes, but we don't know how many and we don't know when. They are very focused right now on the larger markets which are Alberta where they have 85 stores and British Columbia where they have 65 stores and three court actions against them. That seems to be their entire focus. Bea, is there anything that you wanted to add to that, or?

Beatrice Bruske: No, I think you covered it.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, all right. We have one more called before we finish up that that is Daniel Soucheck. How are you doing Daniel?

Daniel: I'm very well. How are you guys doing? Hi Bea.

Beatrice Bruske: Hi Daniel.

Daniel: I'm fine. I have a question about this massive pause that the government placed on the entire, almost the entire security industry and I'm just wondering has there been any movement on that thing where six companies were all in agreement to an increase in hourly wage in October.

[Type here]

Jeff Traeger: Yes, yes. There actually has been.

Daniel: It's on hold. Go ahead.

Jeff Traeger: Yes, there actually has been some movement and it's been in exactly the opposite direction you would hope. I sit on a Board called the Labor Management Review Committee which includes labor people and management people and at the request of the Minister of Labor, oops, can't call him the Minister of Labor, because we don't have one. The Minister of Growth, Enterprise and Trade, Blaine Pedersen. We meet to review different sections of the Labor Relations Act of Employment Standards and other legislation that affects workers. The whole history of that Labor Management Review Committee is whenever any minister and I mean Tory or NDP, so this is not that they listen to one party and not the other. Whenever any one of them has sent an issue to be reviewed by that committee and received a consensus recommendation from that committee they have acted on that recommendation because they knew they had the approval of the labor community and the approval of the management community.

This is the first time in the history of Labor Management Review Committee that a recommendation that was consensus from both labor and management was rejected by this government and they decided not to apply the minimum wage. The Labor Management Review Committee had a meeting recently actually with the Minister and I can tell you that they are, not only are they not continuing with the legislation. They're actually freezing the security guard minimum wage until the general minimum wage catches up with it. I think our guards, Martin if you can currently, where did the minimum wage for security guards, it was one increase short, right?

Martin Trudel: One increase short. Sorry it was one increase short and that one was supposed to be .75 cents. That was to take place last October.

Jeff Traeger: Right, so where it's frozen now, minimum wage increases are based on a CPI formula, so they're going to be .10 or .15 cents or nothing if the government decides that the economy isn't good enough, because that's what their new legislation says. I would say the next raise for security guards would probably be about 2035, something like that. That's just a guess, but absolutely it is embarrassing. It is shocking. It is ridiculous. When we met with the committee by the way we brought representatives of the largest unionized security employee in Manitoba, that is Gardas Security. GardaWorld Security and they brought their management team to the committee table and the largest non-union which is Paladin to the table and both of the representatives of those companies were in agreement that the minimum wage should go ahead untouched.

That the legislation should be left alone and that the government should reverse their decision. We know that the government is not listening to unions or labor. That's not a big surprise. A little bit more surprised that their not listening to

[Type here]

management, because we kind of thought that was their wheel house right? That was there support group, but they're not listening to them. They're not listening to employers who have a union and they're not listening to employers who don't have a union and they have no real personal skin in the game, because they're not the ones paying this minimum wage, so it doesn't cost the Province anything. My question to government is who are you listening to? I think the answer is nobody and I think they're just making decisions based on ideology and that's that. They seem to want security guards to be poorly paid and Bea has got something to say about this too.

Beatrice Bruske: Actually not on this particular point, but since we have Daniel on the phone. Daniel is a long time activist, shop steward and health and safety person and I know he's taking part in a great Cycle Challenge right away. Daniel, do you want to put a plug in for the activity that you're going to be undertaking.

Daniel: Sure. The reason I selected this Bea was because I've always been Cycle Hope. That's a long trip and I just came out of three months of misery with a sciatic attack and I'm a lot better now. This thing that I'm doing is for cancer for kids. I was really surprised to hear that in Canada, the leading killer of children is cancer, particularly leukemia and it's sad to see that these poor little guys have to sit in a hospital, repeated test after test after test. They are warriors in their fight against cancer. What I'm involved with is the month of June I had promised to cycle 1000 kilometers from June the 1st to June the 30th and I've committed myself to \$500.00 to raise for cure for cancer for children and that's what it's all about. That's being done right across Canada. There's about 25,000 current people that will be involved in it, right from Newfoundland to Vancouver. There's no route. You just keep track of every single kilometer that you do during the month of June and that's how it works. We're looking for donations.

Beatrice Bruske: Daniel do you mind telling us your general age range, because I find it so impressive . . .

Jeff Traeger: Wait a second, wait a second. Daniel is a very young man.

Daniel: Hey Bea you tell us your age and I'll tell you mine.

Jeff Traeger: She will. She doesn't care.

Daniel: The 18th of July I'll be 78-years-old.

Beatrice Bruske: If you can do this 1000 kilometers, that's extremely impressive and we wish you all the best on this adventure tour and we'll certainly be seeing what we can do to assist in your endeavors.

Daniel: You guys are great.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, thanks. You're pretty good yourself.

[Type here]

Daniel: Thanks bye.

Jeff Traeger: All right. Bye, bye Daniel.

Daniel: Bye now.

Jeff Traeger: Bye. We have one more piece of business to take care of tonight, so I'm going to make a motion to approve the President's report is the final document we have at tonight's meeting.

Beatrice Bruske: Moved.

Jeff Traeger: All right, so it's been moved and seconded, so please press the number one on your key pad to vote yes, number two to vote no. If you have a question about the President's report, question for any of us here on the call tonight, please press the stay key followed by number three and we'll gladly take it. Just a couple of things that I wanted to highlight before I move on if there are going to be any more questions, because there's nobody in the line right now, but I just wanted to let you know I already gave the update on FreshGo bargaining and told you that's going to be starting on June the 1st. Those of you who work at Loblaw know that we have all kinds of things that we have been doing in advance of getting ready for bargaining. That contract that expires in September and we've got our forum for our no frills members tomorrow.

In health care we do have a new campaign starting over the next few weeks. You'll see a new tack and a new campaign to go with the We Are The Frontline campaign, so keep an eye on our dedicated web page for that. Some events coming up to talk to you about. Our Executive Board is meeting this week. A special welcome to Laura Cote a new board member from Lorette Marketplace, but we're going to be in Brandon on July 10th and 11th. If you happen to work or be in the Brandon area, stop by and see us on the evening of the 10th at the Union Office at 530 Richmond Avenue East. We're going to be having a meet and greet. We'll have a little bit of food and a lot of good conversation for you there. May 29th, Loblaw bargaining kicks off. On June the 3rd UFCW will have a big float and big contingent out in Winnipeg for the Pride Parade.

On June 7th we're going to be hosting our National Offices Indigenous Committee. There's going to be a meet and greet. All day workshops and then we're going to have, take the group out for dinner, so hopefully that's going to be a very good event and we're very happy that UFCW to be able to host it. Then on June 20th at our training center we have our high school graduation. That is pretty much it for the updates. I see we're going to take one more call before we finish for the evening. We have Raheem. Raheem go ahead. Hello there.

Raheem: Hello.

[Type here]

Jeff Traeger: How are you?

Raheem: I'm good.

Jeff Traeger: Good, good. What's your question?

Raheem: Yes, my question is that I accrue money if I decide not to go for vacation and I want to carry money from my vacation money, I think I should . . .

Jeff Traeger: Where do you work? Raheem where do you work?

Raheem: FASDA Life's Journey.

Jeff Traeger: FASDA Life's Journey and you want to access your vacation money right?

Raheem: Yes.

Jeff Traeger: Okay.

Raheem: Yes, I'd like to.

Jeff Traeger: Have you talked to your employer? Have you tried to ask for your vacation money?

Raheem: Yes, the last time I did I was told that I cannot, I had to go for vacation.

Jeff Traeger: Oh, okay. Who's your union rep? Is that Geoff Bergen, is he your union rep?

Raheem: Geoff, Geoff.

Jeff Traeger: Bergen.

Raheem: Yes.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, so what we're going to do is we're going to take down your number. We've got your number here. Take down your name and number and we're going to have Geoff give you a cal.

Raheem: Okay.

Jeff Traeger: Tomorrow. What's a good time for him to call you?

Raheem: Around 4:00 p.m.

Jeff Traeger: At 4:00 p.m. We'll get him to give you a call then okay.

Raheem: Okay.

[Type here]

Jeff Traeger:

All right thank you very much Raheem. I see that the vote to approve the President's Report has passed. We've had the last questions. We have no one left in the que. I want to thank all of you for joining us on our May 2018 Telephone Town Hall General Membership Meeting. We will be conducting our next on Tuesday, September the 11th, 2018 by Town Hall as well beginning at 7:00 p.m. Thank you for participating in your union. Have a great summer everyone and we are now adjourned.