

UFCW 832 Access Live  
May 14, 2019

Jeff Traeger:

Good evening, everyone. My name is Jeff Traeger, I'm the president of your union, UFCW Local 832. Want to welcome you all to the May 14th, 2019 telephone town hall General Members' Meeting for members of UFCW which is now called the Order. Before I get too far in the agenda tonight, I did want to recognize that here on May 14th, 2019 we are on the eve of the 100th anniversary of the Winnipeg General Strike that started May 15th, 1919. All kinds of celebrations going on and I wanted to make sure that I invite you all, if you're in the Winnipeg area, to our parade that's being held on May the 25th, where UFCW is the presenting sponsor of the 1919 parade which will start at 11:00 AM at Lily and Market in Winnipeg. Go down Main Street to Broadway, and up Broadway, and at Memorial Park where there will be a concert presented by CUPE. I hope we can see you all there.

With me in the studio tonight along with our Communications Coordinator, Chris Noto, is Bea Bruske, your Secretary Treasurer, and Curt Martel, the Health and Safety Coordinator for Local 832. We will also have two special guests joining us on the call a little bit later, and that's our Executive Board Member and the Chief Steward of the Maple Leaf plant in Brandon, Dean Rodwell, and our Union Representative from the plant, Brenda Brown. Now we will not be reading any of the reports tonight, which will give us more time for interviews with our guests and more time for you to ask any questions you may have. There are three reports that the by-laws require us to approve at this meeting and they are the minutes of the last meeting, which was back on February the 12th, the Secretary-Treasurer's reports on the current finances, and the President's report. All three of those documents were posted last Tuesday 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 of the documents from all of our telephone town hall meetings at any time.

We will be conducting three votes throughout tonight's meeting to pass the approvals of those reports, and as always if any of you would like to ask a question at any time, please press the star key followed by the number three, and you will be placed in a queue to ask your question. I would ask that you would please remember that the purpose of this meeting is to discuss issues or ask questions about matters that affect all Local 832 members. If you do have a specific question about a grievance or issue that affects your workplace alone, I would ask that you contact your full-time union representative whose name and contact information is available on the UFCW bulletin board in your workplace or online at [ufcw832.com](http://ufcw832.com). Though tonight is the second quarterly town hall meeting of 2019, and we do have a couple of interesting interviews planned for you.

Back on January 7th, Curt Martel became the Health and Safety Coordinator for the Local when Phil Kraychuk became a Full-Time Negotiator. Curt will be talking about his new role and updating us on some important initiatives in our Health and Safety department. After that, we have the second installment in a series we've been running on our town hall meetings this year where we'll be speaking to a UFCW from a community other than Winnipeg about their workplace.

Tonight, our special guest is Dean Rodwell, who works at the Maple Leaf in Brandon, Manitoba. Let's get things started by making a motion to approve the minutes from our last meeting from February the 12th, 2019.

Bea Bruske: Seconded.

Jeff Traeger: Has been moved and seconded, so please vote yes by pressing number one or no by pressing number two on your keypad. Once again, to get in the line up to ask a question, simply press the star key followed by the number three key and you will be placed in the queue. Since we will be opening up the phone lines for questions soon, please get in the queue now if you want to ask us something. So now I'm going to turn it over to Bea and Curt, Bea's going to interview Curt tonight, so take it away, Bea.

Bea Bruske: ...us and giving us some insight and some perspective on your new duties and responsibilities. Can you tell us a little bit about what you're going to be doing in this new position?

Curt Martel: Yeah, absolutely. Thank you to both Jeff and Bea for inviting me to participate tonight. I came into this role at the beginning of 2019, and the way I envisioned the job of the Health and Safety Coordinator, I'm here to serve as a resource for members and reps, health and safety committees. If there's an issue in your workplace that you're having trouble sorting out or addressing at the health and safety committee table, you need some more research done, or even if you're just looking for resources, I'm here to help assist you with that. My background is with Safe Workers of Tomorrow doing a lot of educational work for UFCW 832 members through our training centers both here in Winnipeg and in Brandon. I'm really excited to be getting back into a health and safety role full time.

Bea Bruske: Perfect. So Curt, we represent many different work places. We represent everyone from retail workers, packinghouse workers, hospital workers, group homes, security officers. What are some of the issues in those very different areas that you're going to be focusing on or that you've already heard from our members about who are working in those industries that are priorities for them?

Curt Martel: There are several issues that have already come across my desk that I've had the opportunity to work on. A couple of the major ones right now seem to be coming out of our retail sector. There seem to be an uptick, not only in incidents of shoplifting taking place, but a connection with violence in those incidents.

Recently, I was in contact with a member who had experienced a shoplifting incident where the perpetrator actually pulled out a firearm, which was to say the least, quite traumatizing. Incidents of discovering people in the back room of the Superstore and later finding a knife that they dropped and left behind. So, doing some work on that right now. Sandy Forcier, the new union representative for our Security Sector units, and I have been working on a

number of initiatives to improve health and safety for those members. They're very literally on the front lines of the methamphetamine crisis that's currently gripping the province. [inaudible 00:06:54] labor standards continue to be an issue in our packinghouse units and our warehousing units, and again in group home facilities it seems to be a link with violence and to a certain extent, attributable to the methamphetamine crisis.

Bea Bruske: When we talk about the issue of violence becoming more frequent for our security and retail members in particular, are there steps that members can take to protect themselves? And what steps has the union taken to try to address this issue?

Curt Martel: Absolutely. There are a couple of things that members can do both just day-to-day while they're at work as well as through their health and safety committee members. A big thing is just reexamining working alone policies so you're not creating a situation where a worker is by themselves. It increases the risks of something happening and it also leads to the issue of you know, "Who's going to be there to help me if something does go wrong or something bad does happen?" Right now, the Local is in the process of planning out some forums to connect members with different resources such as Winnipeg Police to discuss best practices for shoplifting and we are working closely with several health and safety committees in the retail sector primarily to examine working alone policies and things of that nature, violence prevention policies, in order to keep our members safer in the workplace.

Bea Bruske: So for security officers, it's an issue of making sure that the site standing orders reference proper protocol for working alone and those types of things and there's a proper chain of communication?

Curt Martel: Absolutely. It's not uncommon for the security sector, for the working alone plan, to call into our control center once an hour, every hour, which is fine if it's functioning, and what I've been hearing from several security officers is that a missed call often doesn't result in a call back, so that's something we're looking into as well.

Bea Bruske: WCB and questions regarding WCB fall under your purview in terms of your job duties. What are the most common questions that you get with regards to filing WCB claims and best practices that members should keep in mind when they have an injury at work?

Curt Martel: Far and away, the most common WCB question that I get is a relatively simple one, is that, "Am I going to be covered?" Usually that question comes up in a situation where something happened a week, or two weeks previous to the member actually realizing that, "Wait, there's something going on here." My best advice to all members, any worker, any injury, doesn't matter how big or how small it is, report all of them because you never know if that tweak to your back is going to result in lost time a week from now. In a previous role, I was

actually doing WCB advocacy for a non-profit organization and that was the biggest issue that I would come across, a denial of benefits based on a delay in reporting. The best thing you can do, let your supervisor know right away that, "Hey, I was hurt. This is what happened." and document that.

Bea Bruske: Is that also that the member should be contacting WCB for and filing a claim right away? Or making sure that their injury is noted in some way, shape, or form?

Curt Martel: Yes, particularly with a more serious injury, if you're going to the hospital to get medical attention, that physician is going to let the WCB know that they saw you, that this was related to the workplace. Definitely members should be calling the WCB as well. If it's a smaller incident or you're just concerned that something might happen, report it to your supervisor, document it, make sure you hang on to that paper trail. The WCB gives a carbon copy notice of injury forms that you can use or if your employer has something else, just make sure that you have a copy of that as well because you can't argue with the paper trail.

Bea Bruske: The other issue that comes up frequently is members who perceive that there's an unsafe issue in their workplace. In that situation, what is the best practice? What should they be doing?

Curt Martel: If there's an unsafe condition in the workplace, definitely bring that to the attention of the health and safety committee right away so that they can get it on the minutes, they can start working on addressing it. If it's a situation where your supervisor, your employer, is directing you to perform duties that you don't feel safe or you don't feel comfortable doing based on a safety concern, the legislation is quite clear.

As workers, we all have the right to refuse unsafe work. If you're in a situation like this where your supervisor has directed you to do something that you feel is unsafe, the first thing you should be doing, letting supervisor know that in no uncertain terms that you're not going to do that work based on a safety concern. And it's very, very important you do make it clear that this is a safety concern, because that's where your protection comes in. The employer cannot proceed with disciplinary action against you if your refusal is based on a legitimate health and safety concern. If you've exercised your right to refuse, you, your supervisor, your health and safety committee members, should be looking at that situation, looking at those circumstances, and making efforts to address them. Maybe something as simple as a lack of training, or a lack of equipment, and it can be addressed quickly, easily, and you can get back to work.

Bea Bruske: Perfect. What resources are out there for members who want to learn more about these issues?

Curt Martel: Well, we have the campus program available. There are a lot of really useful and beneficial courses available online for you. I've started hearing from members across the Local already about when's the fall training schedule going to be coming out. Lots of good resources available there directly from the staff at Safe Workers of Tomorrow as well as some of our other trainers, but the web campus is a really great resource for anyone looking for more information on health and safety or how to improve working conditions in their workplace.

Bea Bruske: Perfect, thank you very much for that Curt.

Jeff Traeger: Excellent, thank you Curt and thank you Bea, as well. Sounds like there's a heck of a lot going on in the health and safety department right now and sounds like there's much more to come. I see on the screen that the vote to approve the previous minutes has been passed, so it's time to take questions and we only have one person in the queue, so if you would like to ask anybody on our panel a question, please press the star key followed by the number three and you'll be put right in the line for that.

We're going to go to Russell, out in Brandon. Russell, how you doing?

Russell: I'm doing good, Jeff, how you doing, guy?

Jeff Traeger: I'm doing fairly well. Is it as nice out in Brandon as it is in Winnipeg? Beautiful sunny day here.

Russell: Yeah, it is, nice and warm here, thanks for asking. I'll get right to the point, I've asked this question before back, I think during a couple of town hall meetings ago during the Canada Post Strike. I asked a question regarding prescription drug card, but we've already been down that road, we knew that wasn't going to happen, primarily for the Safeway members, but I also addressed the issue of possibly getting direct deposits. And I've been in communication with you via email, but I also wanted to follow-up on the next town hall so that way the benefit of all the members can hear as to what's going on with that and see about possibly getting that going on.

Jeff Traeger: Sure no problem, Russell and actually we had our spring meeting for the Safeway benefit plan and on all of our benefit plans actually now, because we go through the cycle of them, that includes Maple Leaf, that includes Loblaw, and the dental plan. We have been really working hard to make sure we can make direct deposit a reality for people right away. In fact, out in Brandon, at the Brandon Maple Leaf plant, they're already filling out the forms for direct deposit. We're hoping, I think it was, near the end May, right, Bea? Something like that? Near the end of May or early June that plant's health and welfare benefit plan will be reimbursing members through direct deposits so that we don't have to go through the mail and our plan is to do the same thing at Safeway. It's just a matter of getting a costing and we're hoping to have that available for our members this fall.

Russell: Sounds great, thanks a lot.

Jeff Traeger: Okay Russell, no problem. Now Russell's the only one on the line, so before we go to our next guest, we're going to make a motion to approve the Secretary-Treasurer's report for the two-month period ending February 28th, 2019.

Bea Bruske: Seconded.

Jeff Traeger: It has been moved and seconded, so please press the number one on your keypad to vote yes, number two to vote no, and if you have any questions 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 questions.

We're going to move back out to Brandon again and on the line in Brandon, we have Union Representative Brenda Brown and Chief Steward and Executive Board Member from the Maple Leaf plant, Dean Rodwell. How are you guys doing tonight?

Brenda Brown: Doing good.

Dean Rodwell: Good, thanks.

Jeff Traeger: Excellent, excellent. Dean, how long have you worked at Maple Leaf in Brandon and what exactly is it that you do there?

Dean Rodwell: I worked at Maple Leaf just over 19 years, I started there March 17th, 2000. I work in the maintenance department as a plumber-gas [hitter crosstalk 00:16:41]

Jeff Traeger: Okay, and you must have started right shortly after the plants opened, right? Because I think the first employees were hired in '99, weren't they?

Dean Rodwell: Yeah, fall of '99 was when the plant opened up.

Jeff Traeger: Yeah, okay. About how many UFCW members do you look after as the Chief Steward over there?

Dean Rodwell: As of yesterday, Jeff, there's 1,902 members.

Jeff Traeger: So we're actually up over 1900 again. I know at one point when we were at full capacity we had about 2,300 but we'd also fallen off to under 1800 a while ago, so sounds like they're starting to kick up again. How many total people are there including management working under that one roof?

Dean Rodwell: There's also 148 for management, so we have a total of 2,050 people working right now.

Jeff Traeger: Right in one building too, wow, that's amazing. Now I know that many of our members came to Brandon from other countries through the Temporary Foreign Worker program, so what countries are represented at the plant?

Dean Rodwell: The ones through the Foreign Worker program started off with Mexico, that's probably about 15 years ago. We've got some people from Ukraine, El Salvador, Honduras, and Mauritius. They were the main ones that came to Foreign Worker program. We also have other members from places like Ireland, Germany, places like that.

Jeff Traeger: There must be an awful lot of different languages that are spoken at the Brandon plant, eh?

Dean Rodwell: Yeah, we have about 19 different languages right now being spoken in the plant.

Jeff Traeger: And the contract is available in how many?

Dean Rodwell: It's in five different languages, English, Spanish, Chinese, Ukrainian, and Hindi. If we have more than a hundred members, then the CBA has to be translated into that language.

Jeff Traeger: Right, okay, and obviously we have a large training center out there in Brandon. How busy are those English as an additional language courses?

Dean Rodwell: They're really busy, they've been busy for a long time. A lot of people take advantage of it. The nice thing is of course they're being offered in the mornings, afternoons, and evenings, and on the weekends because of the hours that people work at Maple Leaf, there's lots of different shifts. So the union does that so they have ample opportunity to get the training.

Jeff Traeger: The plant probably almost always has somebody working there, right? Like 24 hours a day with the engineers and wastewater and all of that?

Dean Rodwell: Yep, pretty much 24/7.

Jeff Traeger: And how many hogs is the plant capable of processing in a single day?

Dean Rodwell: We can process 18,000 a day.

Jeff Traeger: 18,000 hogs a day, how many is that in a year? Dean, you got your calculator handy?

Dean Rodwell: Well, actually it works out to about 90,000 a week or if they work the full 52 weeks of the year, they can kill 4,680,000 hogs per year.

Jeff Traeger: Wow. There's just over a million people in Manitoba. That's amazing. So where does the pork go when it leaves the plant? Where's the market? What markets does Maple Leaf sell their pork in?

Dean Rodwell: Well it goes to different distribution centers, and also for processing it goes into Winnipeg which is processed through bacon. Also they have a big plant down in Hamilton for their processing meats. As far as the markets, Maple Leaf, they sell to Canada, of course we export to USA, Tibet, Korea, and Mexico and also export to China.

Jeff Traeger: Wow. Yeah, and the Winnipeg does ham as well as bacon, right?

Dean Rodwell: Yes, it does.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, all right. Brenda, how many grievances do we have at any one time? That's an awful lot of members in one building, so about how many grievances do we have going on at the plant?

Brenda Brown: Right now we have 130 outstanding grievances.

Jeff Traeger: Holy smokes, that's an awful lot. What are some of the common issues that grieved out there? Is it all discipline or are there other issues?

Brenda Brown: No, there's overtime, improper rates of pay, they're the majority of them.

Jeff Traeger: Wow, okay. Dean, you remember we had our executive board meeting out in Brandon, I think it was last summer when we take our board on the road trip and this summer we're headed up to Steinbach and we're going to be touring Granny's Poultry and Sun Gro and a few other units. But when we were out in Brandon, you and the other board members voted unanimously to support a new initiative at the Assiniboine Community College. That was basically to help train butchers. Can you tell us a little about that program?

Dean Rodwell: What they wanted to do to start with, they wanted to do an international recruitment program so they could bring people in from different countries, get them trained in the meat processing, like cutting and so on and so forth to become a licensed butcher. Through discussions with us and everybody else too, we also pushed to have our members be able to go through this training, you know because to have skills for cutting meat, not everybody has them right away so by taking this course it'll help people get the skills. It'll also help people to get licensed so if they so decide to move on, they can. They want to do this program too, not only for Maple Leaf people but for [HY crosstalk 00:22:13] and for people who work in places like Sobey's and Safeway and Loblaws where they have their own butcher shops and that.

Jeff Traeger: Great. Program's originally starting out for foreign exchange students, right?

Dean Rodwell: Right, yes.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, we're really hoping that we can go through our education training trust fund and provide a bursary to people to help them, the current members, active members, help them take advantage of that program so that they can earn a better wage.

Speaking of better wages, Brenda, this is a negotiations year. So what preparations are we making to get ready for bargaining?

Brenda Brown: Right now we have set up to gather up proposals. We have where members can go online, send in their proposals. We have set up blue boxes at the plant where they can drop their proposals or they give them to the union rep or shop steward. We picked the negotiating committee the beginning of April and it was the Chief Steward, [Jeff B.crosstalk 00:23:18], myself, and the two Assistant Chiefs that picked the negotiation team and the negotiation team is a mix of different people from all different parts, on the floor and in the maintenance department, engineers. So we could get the ideas from the whole plant.

Jeff Traeger: Yeah, we tried to do different shifts as well, right? Make sure that we had people represented from the AM and PM shift.

Brenda Brown: Right.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, now so if a member at the plant wants to give us an idea for proposals because we're right in the middle of trying to collect proposals, how do they do that?

Brenda Brown: We have set up five boxes at the plant. The first one is at the main entrance when you go into the plant, the second one is in the main cafeteria, then we have three upstairs in the main walkway where everyone has to walk by so we gather up these proposals every day.

Jeff Traeger: Folks can do that online too, right?

Brenda Brown: Right.

Jeff Traeger: They can get the proposal in online because we've got a webpage for bargaining or they can email you, if they want, so there's [inaudible 00:24:30] ways that they can get it. We had a couple of member forums out in Brandon, can either of you tell our listeners a bit about what a member forum is and what kind of topics were discussed?

Brenda Brown: We had the member forums in Brandon on April 6th and we ended up doing an additional one on the 27th because there was an overwhelming response of people who would like to attend. We had those on a Saturday and we had

people go online to register, we had 650 people or more register. We weren't set up to take that many people at once so we randomly chose 50 people for each day plus our shop stewards and health and safety attended. So in the forums we talked about Union 101, which is an outline of what the union does for you, explaining what the union is. We also talked about the process of negotiations and then we went into the outline of what's happening in the meat industry.

Jeff Traeger: I know we talked about the bargaining committee already but when are they going to be meeting to finalize proposals to go through negotiations training?

Brenda Brown: The committee is going to meet on June 5th and 6th here at the union office in the training center and we'll make sure we have all of our proposals ready so that we can present them to company on June 26th and 27th.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, all right and Dean, I understand that you're going to be helping us by delivering that training. You used to be a regular facilitator for the Local, right? Maybe you can tell us a little bit about what that was like.

Dean Rodwell: That was very good, I believe it was around 2005 when I took the training for train the trainer and then I started facilitating after that. Did a lot of facilitating, especially level one and level two steward training. I really enjoyed it and in my opinion our training is extremely well-oiled here, very good training and I'm looking forward to doing the training on the 5th.

Jeff Traeger: Excellent, excellent. When does the contract officially expire and when do you expect bargaining to be completed?

Dean Rodwell: The contract expires December 31st, 2019 and as far as dates from what I understand, the main dates that we have right now are September 3rd, 4th, 5th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 16th to the 20th inclusive and September 30th through October 4th so 22 dates in total. My opinion, I'll be surprised we're done in 22 dates.

Jeff Traeger: Well, yeah I would be surprised too. You said the contract expires December 31st so I guess if we have a problem, we'll all be spending New Year's Eve together, right?

Dean Rodwell: Absolutely. New Year's Day, I guess out in the picket line.

Jeff Traeger: Sounds like a good time. So when I think about things that can affect bargaining, I think about African swine flu, can either of you tell us just a little bit about that disease and how that can play a part in bargaining?

Dean Rodwell: Well, from what I understand the African flu swine is very bad over in Asia, especially in China. They're losing thousands and thousands and thousands of hogs every day. Apparently this flu, there is no vaccination for it, there's no cure

for it, so once the pigs get it, they die. If humans eat the meat, it doesn't affect us but from what I understand it can be transmitted on people's clothes and so on and so forth, so for example, from what I understand when people go to China for holidays, they're supposed to let Maple Leaf know when they're leaving and when they come back and when they come back they can't work on the kill site anywhere close to where there is hogs just so that they can't transmit it. To my knowledge, it's not in North America yet and I hope we never get it because it could be devastating to our plants. I'm sure when we negotiate Maple Leaf we're going to want to set up some pretty strict guidelines for people to follow and set processes in place to make sure the plants are protected.

Jeff Traeger: Yeah, it does sound like it's a global problem and hopefully the veterinary medicine takes care of that soon. So is there anything that either of you would like to add or talk about while you have all of us on the line?

Dean Rodwell: No, just looking forward to starting negotiations and I think it's going to be a tough run but I hope we can get through everything well and get a good contract for all the members.

Jeff Traeger: Excellent, well I want to thank you both. Thank you Dean and thank you Brenda. If any of you on the line are interested in the following the progress of Maple Leaf Brandon negotiations, you can get the most updated information by following the Maple Leaf Brandon page on our website at [ufwc832.com](http://ufwc832.com). I see that the vote to approve the Secretary-Treasurer's report has been passed, so it's time to make a motion to approve the President's report which is the final document we have to approve at tonight's meeting.

Bea Bruske: Moved.

Jeff Traeger: 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 that question. And speaking of questions, we've got two folks on the line so we're going to go to Dale. Dale, go ahead.

Fred H.: Oh, it's me, it's Fred Holisco.

Jeff Traeger: Oh Fred, sorry, it's coming up Dale.

Fred H.: Okay, this is why I'm phoning. I had to drive all the way over to Dale's house because this is the third time in a row nobody's phoned me for this meeting, I'm looking on the website, there's no access codes there, like what's going on with this thing? And again in the morning at work, I polled the guys by the punch clock there, "Does anybody know about a town hall meeting?", everybody looked at me like wide-eyed and like "What the heck was I talking about?".

There's no signage up and so here's me, I have to drive all the way over to my buddy Dale's house to get on this thing or else I wouldn't have got on.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, well I'm sorry you're have those problems, Fred. I hope-

Fred H.: That's three times though.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, well you've got communications guys listening on the line right now, so-

Fred H.: I hope so, but-

Jeff Traeger: But we're going to do well, he's sitting right across from me working one of the computers.

Fred H.: Blake?

Jeff Traeger: What I'm going to get him to do, no Blake is now a negotiator and my executive assistant, it's Chris Noto who is our communications coordinator-

Fred H.: Oh yeah, I met him. I came to a meeting one time on a Saturday with Aaron, yeah.

Jeff Traeger: So there you go, so what we're going to do is we're going to make sure that we look you up on UnionWare, make sure we have the correct contact information from you, and do we everything we can to make sure that you don't go through that again and usually the general member meetings are on the website but you're saying you'd prefer to have something posted in the workplace?

Fred H.: Like I say, the workplace I think should be done because we have a various new Canadians that probably don't even know about your website, so they could come up to one of the stewards at work and say, "What is this?" and I could explain what it means and what it does. I explained to a few people today, so I don't know if they're going to phone or not, but geez, here I'm a 42 year guy and I can't even get on the line, I had to drive across the city.

Jeff Traeger: All right, I'm sorry. That's not right and let us fix it, okay?

Fred H.: Okay, no problem. [crosstalk 00:32:11] One more question, I got. Is there any final accounting of Heather grand jury?

Jeff Traeger: Well, actually I can give everybody an update on that. Bea and I went back, I forget the exact date to the day we're in, March, that we went to two days, and that's where Bea and I testified and where the police officer testified as well and then Heather testified one full day, what is left is the argument, so the lawyers presenting their arguments, that's on June the 7th, so that's coming up very quickly. It's only a couple weeks away and what will happen at that is the

lawyers will argue and then shortly we're after that we're told, the judge will have a decision and I'm sure that will be broadcast widely but I will report on that once it's complete. It's been three and half years for us, [crosstalk 00:33:16] bowling through this, the wheels of justice do turn slow, so I will make sure I give everybody an update on the town hall meeting once that's complete and hopefully that's by our September meeting. I think our next meeting is September 10th, so I'm hoping to be able to give a final report on that situation after that.

Fred H.: Can I ask one more question?

Jeff Traeger: So, we're going to move on to Pavitar, I think, Fred, I heard you asking for one more question, call back and we'll put you on the line again but we're going to go to Pavitar from Superstore. Go ahead.

Pavitar: Hi.

Jeff Traeger: So, how are you?

Pavitar: [inaudible 00:33:57] sorry. I work on front and my question is that to health and safety. You mentioned already what happened on Saturday but my concern is now, you know, that Garden Centre tray, that we have cash in it all the time. You know, these shoplifters are so aggressive, I work at night and they're stealing going by you and they call you names and stuff. Maybe they shouldn't have a cash tray outside, just debit and credit, and as soon as they figure out we have a cash-in tray, it'll be dangerous. We just started last week at the Garden Centre, so [crosstalk 00:34:38]

Jeff Traeger: Okay, Pavitar, I've got both Bea and Curt dying to respond to you so I'm going to let them answer your question.

Bea Bruske: Thank you for raising this issue and just before I let Curt answer your question, I do just want to point out that we have a meeting with senior-level management at Loblaw coming up within the next two weeks to discuss the violent workplace issues and the violent customer issues at Superstore so I'm hoping that they're going to be able to come up with a good strategy and I appreciate you calling in and talking to us specifically about the Garden Centre so we can raise that issue.

Curt Martel: Thank you, Bea, thank you, Jeff. Pavitar, I can't agree with you more. I suppose that's why I work on the union side of the table rather than the management side of the table. Absolutely, this is something worth bringing up, something worth discussing, [crosstalk 00:35:25]

Pavitar: -want do something after something happens, right? It should be, do it before something happens, yeah.

Curt Martel: Of course and I mean, that's where the role of the health and safety committee comes into play here, it's that you've identified a potential hazard, now it's up to the committee to get it on the minutes, start working with management to actually have that addressed. So if you haven't done so already, and I'm sorry, I don't know if you sit on the health and safety committee in your workplace or not just off the top of my head.

Pavitar: No, I don't. Other girls does, I talk already to Vicki, you know Vicki is the one in the health and safety committee in my store.

Curt Martel: You know what? I would strongly encourage you, have that conversation with her, get her to bring it forward onto the minutes with the recommendation that they switch to either strictly electronic payments at that location or move the cash back inside once it's a little bit late, look at having more than one employee working there because that's where we're seeing these issues coming up. When somebody is working alone, they're isolated, particularly if they're handling money.

Pavitar: Oh yeah, sometimes it's like now it been beginning, there's a lot of cash out there. Soon as shoplifters figure out, they'll be every [ten 00:36:45] hours, they'll be pulling a knife out there. It's really dangerous, it's a little farther from the store, so you know, sometimes you're by yourself. Cashiers by themselves so I think they maybe should just have electronic payments and not have cash out there.

Curt Martel: Absolutely, get the issue on the minutes and have the health and safety committee start working on a resolution.

Jeff Traeger: All right, thank you very much Pavitar. We do have one more caller but I want to reach out to Fred because I did hear Fred a [inaudible 00:37:15] ago say that he had one more question, so Fred we only have one more caller on the line so if you'd like to call back, we'd gladly take your question.

We're going to go to Richard now. Richard, from Brandon go ahead.

Richard: Yes, hi there. Question about yesterday, I phoned in a family day at work, and I was talking to somebody here that lives in the same building as me, that used to work out there and the guy advised me, I don't know how long ago this happened, but he told me and advised me, "If you're sick, don't go outside." Because he told me this happened to a friend of his, his friend phoned in sick, but it's like they send somebody to spy out the guy or whatever. I don't know how long ago this happened, but I said to that, "For all they know, they as a person could be going to a store to get some Tylenol or whatever."

Jeff Traeger: Oh okay, I don't know if, Brenda, are you still on the line?

Brenda Brown: Brenda's still here.

Jeff Traeger: Hey, do you have any comments about what Richard's talking about there? Being the rep out there at the Maple Leaf plant in Brandon?

Brenda Brown: Well if he phones in for a family responsibility day, he has that right. We have family responsibility days in the collective agreement where he can phone in and the past practice has been people phone in and they don't ask them for whatever reason. They just phone in family responsibility and once you've phoned in, then no need to worry. If they're checking up on people like that, then obviously they have nothing else to do.

Richard: I guess the question, can I say one more thing? I guess the thing I wish I would've told that guy, he was retired from the plant now, we just happen to live in the same building. I wish I would've said to him, "Well, that's a form of stalking." Isn't that a form of stalking? Spying on the person or whatever, know what I'm trying to say here?

Jeff Traeger: Yeah, I'm not sure it's actually would qualify as stalking but certainly it's inappropriate behavior and like Brenda said, you would think the employer would have a lot better things to do than to see what you're doing on your family day when it's something you're entitled to under the agreement anyways. So-

Brenda Brown: I would like to add, Richard, [crosstalk 00:39:57] if you have any questions or concerns with any of this kind of stuff, don't hesitate to give me a call at the office or on my cell phone. My numbers are posted at the plant, or ask any shop steward or health and safety and they can give it to you.

Jeff Traeger: Perfect, thank you Brenda, that's very good advice, very good advice. Now we've got Fred back on the line, Fred.

Fred H.: Yeah, Jeff, just one quick question here. The last magazine, or the one before that, there was an MB group you guys organized, or group MB? What actually is this group MB?

Jeff Traeger: So those are lumpers, if you've ever worked in a warehouse before-

Fred H.: 42 years.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, but a food warehouse, what happens is the product comes in, I know that you've worked at a beer warehouse, each of the folks that actually pile the product off of the large pallets and pile it onto separate product onto separate pallets so that it could be tagged by the receivers and put away, and these folks are basically paid minimum wage with no benefits and they just get piecework wherever we have food warehouses. It's a smaller group now and they primarily are working at Sysco, but apparently there's a lot of room for expansion here because a lot of different food warehouses use those type of workers through that MB group, so we're hoping it's something that'll turn out to be a lot more

members for us. And like I said, they have virtually no pension, no benefits, and very low wages, so there's only-

Fred H.: But wouldn't they undercut the regular wages?

Jeff Traeger: No, well, that's the problem and that's why we're trying to bring them back up is because that's what they're doing right now, undercutting the regular wages by providing cheaper labor that doesn't have any benefits. We've got lots of room to bring these folks up and there's really no room to take anything further away from these folks.

Fred H.: So you don't see no conflict of interest here on some of this?

Jeff Traeger: Not yet.

Fred H.: For jobs?

Jeff Traeger: No, but if that happens, if that does come up, we'll obviously look at it and deal with it but right now the warehouses are using these people all the time, they have been, even back in the day when I worked at that warehouse, because I worked at the same warehouse where these folks are, so they've been doing the job for decades now, and it hasn't created an issue for us, but it was long past time that we organized them.

Fred H.: Okay, like I say, some of the guys at our work were a little nervous with the organizing them, as our place has lowered wages, you know, who knows, in this environment what can happen.

Jeff Traeger: Right. Well, we will certainly keep an eye on it, Fred and make sure that doesn't happen, okay?

Fred H.: Okay, thank you.

Jeff Traeger: All right, no problem. Bye-bye. Now we've got Dennis on the line now from the Retail Sports Centre, go ahead.

Dennis: Yes, hi, good evening to everybody. My question is about health and safety, about disciplinary action. We had an incident at work where one of our workers barely, he hit a post which was already loose, he didn't report it at the moment, but I didn't know who hit it but when I went and reported it, after they did the investigation. So you know, they called me into the office to sign off on what he wrote down and after we finished that, I asked the supervisor if there was going to be any disciplinary action and he told me no, and then I went on holiday and after I came back from holidays, I found out that the person that hit the post was suspended for two days, even though they told me there was not disciplinary action going to be taken.

Bea Bruske: So, thanks for that information, Dennis. Unfortunately I can't speak to a specific situation that your rep may be dealing with as a grievance or not, but certainly all of the employers have various different health and safety policies, and employers are expected to follow those health and safety policies so if there is an incident or an accident, reporting it is of utmost importance because of course, it could impact other workers within that workplace or the worker themselves. And so without knowing the very specifics, that's something that your rep is going to have to speak with about, Dennis. The employer always has the right to discipline, the union always has the right to file a grievance on discipline we don't think is appropriate or shouldn't have been issued.

Dennis: Okay, that's my only question.

Jeff Traeger: Okay, thank you Dennis and that answers all the questions we have on the line for tonight. I see that the vote to approve the President's report has been passed, and we have answered all the questions. I just want to do another plug for another parade and that is Pride Parade, which is June 2nd starting at 11:00 AM at Memorial Park and UFCW as usual will have a strong presence and a float for the parade. So if you can make it, hopefully the weather's good, come out and join us on Sunday, June 2nd at 11:00 AM at Memorial Park.

I want to thank all of you for joining us on our May 2019 telephone town hall. We will be conducting our next general membership meeting Tuesday, September the 10th, 2019 starting at 7:00PM. Have a great summer everyone and we'll talk again in September, if not before. We are now adjourned.