

UFCW Canada Local 1006A General Membership Meeting

October 18, 2023

Telephone Town Hall Event Transcript

Glacier Effs-Samuel:

Hi, everyone. My name is Glacier Effs-Samuel, Recorder of your union. Thank you for joining us for our final General Membership meeting for 2023. We're excited to welcome you to our town hall, which is about inspiring and empowering our membership. Plus, if you stay with us for the entire call, you'll have a chance to win a Samsung tablet. We have more details on that later on. We've dialed thousands of members from different workplaces, sectors, and cities, so thank you for your patience while we were connecting to everyone.

Tonight, we'll hear from President Wayne Hanley about the latest union news, including our preparation for the upcoming Loblaws Great Food and Superstore negotiations. We'll also hear from 1006A Union Representative, Gloria Elstone, and 1006A Executive Board member and grocery store worker, Shane Morse, about the union's commitment to Indigenous communities and to truth and reconciliation.

Tonight, also, we hope to hear from you. Telephone operators are standing by to take your questions and pass them on us. To ask a question, all you have to do is press star three on your telephone keypad. Make sure to give your full question, name of where you work to the operator, and they will pass it on to us. Once again, press star three. Questions about individual workplace issues will be forwarded to your union representative who will contact you no later than tomorrow night.

As we've done in the past, we'll post an audio file, meeting transcript, and meeting minutes on our website. During each Telephone Town Hall General Membership meeting, members vote to adopt the minutes of the previous meeting. Let's get started with that part. We'll be taking a vote for the adoption of the minutes of the Telephone Town Hall General Membership meeting as posted on our local union's website and held on August 15, 2023. Use your telephone keypad to participate in the vote.

The question before us is, do you approve of the minutes of the Telephone Town Hall general membership meeting held on August 15, 2023? Press one to approve the minutes of the August 15, 2023 meeting, or press two if you do not approve of the minutes of the August 15, 2023 meeting. Once again, press one if you approve of the minutes or press two if you do not approve of the minutes.

As we wait for the results, I want to encourage you to check out our union's webCampus program, which offers more than 220 free online courses to our members and their families. You can participate in any course on the wide variety of topics, from personal development, to health and safety, to skilled trades from the comfort of your home or phone, or wherever you have access to internet. I encourage you to visit ufcw.ca. Once again, visit ufcw.ca to learn about webCampus, a dynamic, free educational online program offered by your union.

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The results are in, and the minutes of the August 15, 2023 Telephone Town Hall meeting have been approved. 86% voted yes in favor of the minutes.

I'd like to remind members that telephone operators are standing by to take your questions and pass them on to us. Once again, if you want to ask a question, just press star three on your cell phone or telephone keypad. Also, a quick reminder to all about our membership contest. Members who stay on the line for the entire call will have a chance to enter a draw to win a Samsung tablet.

Congrats to Jean Lamorena from RCSS Toronto, who was our contest winner from our August meeting. Stick around for your chance to enter as well. Now, it's my honor to introduce the president of our union, Wayne Hanley.

Wayne Hanley:

Thank you, Glacier, and welcome, everyone, to joining us this evening for our union's general membership meeting. As always, your union is working hard to serve our members, whether it's negotiating strong contracts or creating safer workplaces. We continue to improve, innovate, and strengthen our union to meet the needs of our membership, and building a better life for our members is at the core of our union mission, and I'm proud to report that we continue to achieve gains for our members at a variety of workplaces and industries across province.

Recently, we have secured gains in new union contracts, renewed contracts at NexCycle in Guelph, Courtyard by Marriott in Brampton, Ryder Truck Rentals in Caledon, Heidi's YIG in Petrolia, and at Telepartners, right here in Toronto. Since our last town hall, we have continued with the preparations for our negotiations on behalf of the 13,000 members at Loblaws Great Food and Real Canadian Superstores.

Early in October, we held proposal meetings and elected members to the negotiating committee from across Ontario. I'm pleased to report that members made their voices heard by voting and electing 14 rank and file negotiating committee members to the committee. Half of those elected are part-time and the other half are full-time, and we've also ensured that we have representation from across the province.

These committee members will work alongside experienced union negotiators, including union staff and executive board members from the Loblaws Great Food and Superstore to form the 1006A negotiating committee. Their goal? Well, that's to achieve the best possible contract for our members. I want to thank all of our members who ran for the election to be on the negotiating committee. Our union is made stronger when our members step up and get involved. Also, thank you to everyone who attended the meetings and voted to make your voices heard.

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The union committee will be holding its first meeting this Friday, October the 20, to discuss and prioritize the many proposals that we've received from the members, and to prepare for meeting face-to-face at the bargaining table with Loblaws and RCSS. I can also report that we have recruited two member negotiation liaisons in each of the 60 Loblaws and RCSS stores that we represent across Ontario. With the union contract set to expire, engaging in mobilizing our membership remains a top priority.

Again, thank you to all those who have stepped up to participate in the various roles. One of the issues that we'll be looking at during bargaining is dynamic scheduling, and specifically shift offer and shift marketplace. This issue remains unresolved. It's an unresolved dispute. We've had many multiple meetings, with multiple grievances filed from across the province. Arbitration hearings have taken place in June and August, and more dates for arbitration are scheduled in March and April of next year.

Currently, what's happening is Loblaws is breaching our members' seniority rights to available hours, through how it chose to implement shift marketplace and shift offer. Member seniority rights need to be respected and observed. Members should get access to shifts that they're entitled to. The process for shift selection must be transparent, and the process has to work for our members, and we will ensure this happens and does not violate the contract.

I can also report to you that the union continues to grow in strength and size, and we now have approximately 42,000 members in 1006A, making us stronger than ever. This year's workers from Swiss Chalet in Ancaster, Contact Centre Growth Corp, Organic Garage in Toronto, voted to join our union. Their victory is a testament to the determination of our new members who took actions to improve their workplaces.

I'm so proud to welcome you all to our union family. Lesley Prince, Director of Organizing, joins us now to share her insight.

Lesley Prince:

Good evening, everyone, and thanks for having me here tonight. I am so thrilled to welcome our newest members to the UFCW Canada Local 1006A family. What an achievement to be bold enough to enact change in your workplace, and these workers were engaged, motivated, and inspiring, and I hope they negotiate all the workplace improvements they deserve. It is well established by now that union members earn better wages, have better benefits, job security representation, access to WSIB and Health and Safety Specialists.

UFCW Canada takes that a step further, and we also provide our members and family members access to webCampus and scholarship programs, the Union Savings Program, and so much more. Imagine there are workers who don't even know that unions exist and how we can help. They move from one bad job to another, in hopes of finding improved working conditions, and that doesn't have to be the only answer for them. We encourage anyone that is in a non-union

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workplace to reach out and let us support you in making your workplace a better place, for not just you, but your colleagues, and even those who are coming behind you.

UFCW Canada Local 1006A is your access to dignity and respect at work. You have your employer when asking for things like wage increases, improved policies, better sick days, et cetera, et cetera. Our collective voices enact real change at workplaces and our strength is our solidarity. There are always going to be barriers, but no one knows us more than our UFCW organizers. We are equipped to support workers through this process. Imagine a world where all workers felt empowered. Imagine the changes we could make, not just to individual workplaces but to industry standards alike.

Employers will always be intent on resisting unionization, and of course, why wouldn't they be? UFCW holds employers accountable. A UFCW member is not disposable, not when we stand united, stronger than ever. We won't settle and we won't back down from what we deserve. Our newest members are the best examples of this. Let's continue the great work of growing our union and making our voices even louder. Thanks so much for having me here tonight.

Wayne Hanley:

Thank you, Lesley, and keep up the good work in the organizing department. I'm proud to report that our Annual Stewards Conference last month with a great success with over 250 1006A union activists attending from across Ontario. Our stewards are at the heart of the strong union, and play a vital role in helping our members on the job.

That's why we take great pride in holding events like our Annual Stewards Conference, to empower activists with knowledge that they need to better help our members and build fair workplaces. I'll ask Glacier now to share some of the feedback from the stewards who attended it. Glacier?

Glacier Effs-Samuel:

Thanks, Wayne. This is what Terry Powis, who works at Best Western Plus Mariposa Inn, had to see about the conference. "I learned more about the union and about the power of the union has as a whole. With UFCW 1006A, I know we can make a difference together." Joey LeBlanc, who works at Loblaws Great Food, said, "To me, UFCW 1006A means a group of like-minded people working together towards better treatment of society as a whole. It's great to learn about what it is to be a union steward, and how to be better and more effective presence for our members."

Kennedy Chu, who works at Real Canadian Superstore, said, "UFCW 1006A, to me, is like a family. They want you to succeed for your benefit. There's no better energy and feeling than being able to share such valuable time and experience with such genuinely kind, caring, and hardworking people."

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Wayne Hanley:

Thank you, Glacier, and thank you to Terry, Joey and Kennedy for sharing their thoughts, and thank you to those stewards who are on the line here who participate. I encourage our stewards who didn't get a chance to attend this year to join next year when the opportunity comes up in the fall. I'm also pleased to announce that our stewards training programs will be happening again this fall in Toronto at the union office, and also take place in London and Ottawa.

Our local union offers a comprehensive training program to help members and help them out with any issues that they face in the workplace. We train hundreds of stewards in the spring, and plan to do the same in the following weeks this summer.

On October the 24, your union will be participating in the annual Light the Night in Toronto. Together, we'll be raising awareness and funds for the Leukemia Lymphoma Society of Canada.

The walk is from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM. If you're interested in participating or donating, you can find more information on our union website or by talking to your union representative. With our participation, we'll be raising funds to find a cure, giving hope and support to those who currently are diagnosed with leukemia or lymphoma, and we will be remembering those who have lost loved ones due to this dreaded disease.

At 1006A, our efforts to support our members and communities never stop. As you know, violence is a heartbreaking reality for women and for children across Canada, many of whom suffer in silence. It is time to break the silence and speak out about this crisis. Kudos to the cities of Toronto and Hamilton, who have formerly recognized gender-based and intimate partner violence as an epidemic. Many other municipalities are doing the same.

Your union, with the support of the 1006A Women's Issues Network Committee, is also raising our voice to create change, and we will, once again, be observing the 16 days of activism against gender-based from November 25 to December 10. Please check our website closer to the days to find out ways that you can participate and create change. Our union wants all victims of domestic violence to know that you're not alone, and there are resources and information available to help you.

Your union is here to help you. Please talk to your union representative or visit ShelterSafe.ca for more information about resources in your community. Once again, that is ShelterSafe.ca. It's our responsibility to work together to eliminate gender-based violence against women and children. Step up, speak up, and create change. We must never lose hope that we can create change.

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Thanks to the work of the union and the community advocates, domestic violence, and sexual violence leave is now job protected leave of absences for Ontario workers. The law provides time off to be taken for specific purposes when an employee or an employee's child is

experienced or being threatened with domestic or sexual violence. Workers coming together and taking action helped achieve these changes in the laws.

Moving on, I want to thank all the participants or all the applicants who applied for a 1006A Scholarship. We awarded 42 scholarships worth \$1,006, and we do that every year. The deadline is now closed for this year. Next month, we will be publishing a list of the award recipients. Thank you for everyone who applied.

Now, lastly, I'm proud to report that we will be starting a 1006A Indigenous Committee at our local union. Our union stands in solidarity with Indigenous, Metis, Inuit people across Turtle Island.

We honor Indigenous rights, reaffirm our commitment to reconciliation, and vow to work towards the elimination of discrimination and barriers to work opportunities, and equality rights for Indigenous people. This committee will provide a space for members from Indigenous backgrounds to come together to build solidarity for Indigenous justice, to raise awareness, and to educate, to build connections with Indigenous and non-Indigenous workers, and assist our union in our work towards truth and reconciliation.

Our union is proud of the work that we've done on this important issue, and with that in mind, I'm pleased to pass it over to Glacier and our special guests who will serve as the founding members on this committee. Glacier?

Glacier Effs-Samuel:

Thanks again, Wayne. I'm excited to welcome Gloria Elstone, a UFCW 1006A union representative, and union steward and 1006A executive board member, Shane Morse, for our segment on Indigenous issues and our work towards truth and reconciliation. Welcome, Gloria and Shane.

Shane Morse:

Thank you.

Gloria Elstone:

Thank you.

Glacier Effs-Samuel:

1006A is proud of our committees, which include 1006 Outreach, Youth Committees, and WIN committee. We just heard about Wayne's exciting announcement that 1006A will be starting its

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first Indigenous committee. What was your reaction when you heard this announcement? We'll start with you, Gloria.

Gloria Elstone:

The announcement of the subcommittee immediately brought me so much joy. It just reminds me of how our local is so proactive in organizing solidarity within our membership, and it's a great example of reconciliation.

Glacier Effs-Samuel:

Shane?

Shane Morse:

I am very excited to hear the great news. It's truly a great day for the Union and Indigenous Committee. I'm looking forward to working with the newly formed Indigenous Committee. I know great things will happen and take place in our communities and in the union. I'm looking forward to working with Gloria and the people who will be called to the committee.

Glacier Effs-Samuel:

Great. You both are part of UFCW Canada's Subcommittee on Indigenous Issues. Gloria, can you share with us the goals and the aims of this committee?

Gloria Elstone:

Absolutely. The national sub-committee is a bit like a family in its own. We're all the odd cousins, and we discuss ongoing issues for members across the country, and how we as union workers can lend our voice.

This shows up with things like encouraging land acknowledgements in meetings, lobbying for the Truth and Reconciliation Day, and joining 3 million other workers this month to discuss important issues with our elected parliament officials on Parliament Hill.

We also learn about and help support health centers with integrated medicine to become more accessible and mainstream.

Standing in solidarity can mean a lot of things, like addressing inequity, of missing and murdered Indigenous women and two-spirit people, as well as just helping communities that you know, their nearest grocery store is a hundred kilometers, because there's no clean drinking water for it to operate any closer, and people that grieve generational trauma that changes the way that they can show up to work.

We speak on behalf of those brothers and sisters who deserve a voice too, and hopefully, one day we can bring all of them into a healthy and safe workplace.

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Glacier Effs-Samuel:

That's the goal. Raising awareness about Indigenous issues is part of the important work that our union is doing. What are some key issues facing Indigenous people in Canada right now? Shane, we'll start with you.

Shane Morse:

One of the main issues that we've been working on that is truly a real issue that a lot of people don't understand is clean drinking water. It's a major issue on a lot of First Nations, Inuit and Metis communities, something we actually take for granted every day in the inner cities and other places. Now, currently, there's over 140 long-term boil water advisories. What that is that's communities that can't not only drink the water, but some of them can't bathe in it, they can't do the dishes. A lot of the water has to be trucked in.

Even back home in Nova Scotia, some of the First Nations communities and my own community have been affected many times by that issue. It's one of those issues that is ongoing.

Now, there's over 259 short-term boil water advisories, and what the difference is long-term, they can't drink the water at all. Short-term, what that is they may have an issue where they can't drink the water for a short period of time and it goes away. Those are some of the issues that a lot of Canadians are shocked to hear that takes place in Canada.

Some of the solutions that need to be brought up and looked at is some of them, it's the water treatment plants need to be updated or have proper people working them, and some of them is just infrastructure. They don't have pipes and other ways to transport the water to those communities. Those are just one of the main issues that we're working on.

Glacier Effs-Samuel:

Gloria, what would you say are some of the key issues facing Indigenous people in Canada?

Gloria Elstone:

Another issue is the missing and murdered Indigenous women and two-spirit people. This is across Canada and across North America issue, also known as MMIW. This is a violence that Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people continue to experience. It constitutes as genocide according to the UN, and it impacts multi-generationally. It's enabled by Canada's settler colonial systems, and something that we're currently lobbying for is to create a national Red Dress alert system, which would notify public when Indigenous people go missing, very similar to the Amber Alert system already in place.

Currently, those families rely on Facebook. Some of our local members are already raising awareness with Red Dress Day with fantastic visuals at our office and at our other workplaces. We're standing as well with the government of Manitoba to prioritize and adequately fund a search of a landfill for two women who were victims of a serial killer. The police were told of the location. The BC government is actively campaigning against returning Morgan Harris and Mercedes Myran to their loved ones.

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46% of women that are Indigenous have experienced sexual assault. The reports also state that a third of non-Indigenous women have experienced the same issues of violence in their lifetime. Indigenous women are 12 times more likely to go missing or murdered than a non-Indigenous woman. That's definitely a key issue.

Glacier Effs-Samuel:

Wow. Just those two issues alone are so heartbreaking. It just supports the need for why we need to do this work. Shane, what do you feel about the union taking an active role in advocating for Indigenous people?

Shane Morse:

It's great to have the support of the union on a national level and on a local level. It's actually been a great asset to myself, and it's allowed me to see the bigger picture and to see some of

the challenges, but also to be able to work on some of the solutions. Now, as we continue to build the union locally, I'm just excited to be able to deal with some of the issues, but it's not only on the reserves.

There's a lot of work to be done in an urban setting, in the city with our Indigenous brothers and sisters as they struggle with some of the issues, but also to reach out and to make sure we deal with not only those issues in urban settings, but also on the actual reservations. I look forward to just being part of that, and also being able to be supported at a store level and on a national level has been such a great asset.

Glacier Effs-Samuel:

Thank you, Shane. How does your identity as a member of the Indigenous community shape you in the work you do? Gloria, let's start with you.

Gloria Elstone:

My community taught me very early on, the importance of family and community activism with sentiments like, if we treat every person with respect, and ensure they have what they need for success, we're all going to do better. It also taught me to listen closely and not be afraid to ask questions, which is something I bring with me to work every single day.

Also, the first time I was ever called a steward was in my community, and that was to be a steward of the land specifically. This is a name of the First Peoples. Our unions really, like Shane said, allowed me to reconnect with my roots from the subcommittee projects, as well as the ceremonies we do.

Glacier Effs-Samuel:

Shane, what about you? How does your identity shape the work that you do?

Shane Morse:

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I was born and raised in Toronto, even though my mom, my mother and my family is back in Nova Scotia and they're more connected to the community. What the union has done over the last few years, it's given me a sense of pride, and given me a chance to know more about who I am, and to learn about their traditions of my people, and to learn about the teachings.

As I've gone across Canada and met with other Indigenous peoples, and some of the teachings are very similar, it's also given me the support I need as we work together to solve problems. As I solve those problems, it's actually allowed me to understand more of what's happened in the past, and how we can fix it in the future.

Glacier Effs-Samuel:

Well said. Lastly, I want to ask you guys, can you talk about our union's campaign with the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation? Gloria, do you want to go first?

Gloria Elstone:

Absolutely. Truth and Reconciliation Day is also known as Paula's Orange Shirt Day or September 30th. This is a day not just to remember children that never made it home from residential schools, it's also not just another holiday that we're campaigning for employers to pay every one to stay home. This is a day of remembrance, and it's an incredibly important day for Indigenous people to stand tall, and to remind others that we're still here.

We are not going to continue to be victims of the condoned genocide by government. We see this as an opportunity for newcomers, and people that have very proudly been able to call themselves Canadian for a few generations, to educate themselves on the Indigenous people of this land, and use this as a national promise that it's never going to happen again.

In a lot of workplaces, there's an orange postcard, which will have a link to our website and a petition which spans all the way across the country to accept this promise, and add your name, telling our political leaders and our company owners to honor our first stewards. Thank you.

Glacier Effs-Samuel:

Shane, what about you?

Shane Morse:

In the last couple of years, I've really taken more of an active role, and what I've noticed is more non-Indigenous people to support. Our Orange Shirt Day is really an eyeopener. The amount of people I saw this year wearing an orange shirt, learning more about just the things that have happening. Like Gloria says, it's a day of reflection and it's also a day of remembrance. As we continue to move forward, it's also a day of change.

Some of the changes have already started to take place, but part of what we're still fighting for is the recognition of just having it as a day of reflection and a holiday, not only in some provinces, but right across Canada. What I'll leave you with is part of what I like about what the union has done. The union has a great webCampus course that our members can take that kind

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of give them a little bit of information about if they don't have a lot of information about just Indigenous rights, and things that have happened.

On that webCampus course, it's put together from people that just don't know anything to people that have a lot of knowledge. It's a great course to be able to just go and understand some of the things that have taken place if you don't have anybody to ask questions with. That's a great thing. I appreciate that.

Glacier Effs-Samuel:

Well, I want to thank you both so much, Gloria and Shane, for joining us today. The information you provided I believe will open a lot of our members' minds, and it was very informative. Thank you both again.

Shane Morse:

Thank you so much.

Gloria Elstone:

Thank you.

Glacier Effs-Samuel:

Take care. I'd like to remind folks that if you stay on the line until the end of the meeting, you have a chance to enter our membership contest. The winner, sorry, not winners, will receive a Samsung tablet. Once again, individual workplace questions will be forwarded to your union representative who will contact you no later than tomorrow.

Before we wrap up the agenda today, I'm going to pass it over to you, Wayne. I don't know if there's any questions available to answer right now, but I'll pass it over to you.

Wayne Hanley:

Thanks, Glacier. I too want to thank Gloria and Shane for sharing their experience and their expertise with us here tonight. I look forward to working with you and our newly found Indigenous committee, and we'll undertake and we'll listen to you to undertake us down our path to reconciliation. You've been tasked with a huge ask. We will be there to listen and to assist in what you think is need, what the committee thinks is need, and provide you with the tools to fulfill your mission.

If there are any Indigenous members on the line here tonight, please speak with your union representative, or leave a message at the end of the call tonight if you're interested in getting more involved in this project and with this committee. As far as questions, Glacier, they're mostly individual workplace questions, and we will have the reps follow up. We have had a number of people that have asked questions and put what I'm taking as proposal statements towards the Loblaws and RCSS negotiations.

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I will assure you that the issues raised in this call tonight, or as a result of this call tonight, will be raised with the committee on, if they're not already on the list, they'll be added to the list and will be raised with the committee when we meet later this week.

I think I'll just sign off tonight by encouraging all of you to stay engaged with the local union, keep your local union informed of activities in your workplace, and I hope you can register and join Local 1006A for Light the Night in Toronto. Glacier?

Glacier Effs-Samuel:

Thank you, Wayne. Again, your rep will get back to you for those that had individual questions about their workplaces within 24 hours. If you don't know your rep is, you can go on our website www.ufcw1006a.ca, click the Find Your Rep button, and you'll be able to figure out who your rep is. Please remember that the audio file and transcript of tonight's meeting will be posted on our website for your convenience. As well, the minutes of tonight's meeting will also

be posted for your review and to be approved during the next meeting, which is scheduled next year, 2024.

Now, we have one more piece of business to take care of, which is the membership contest. This will be our last poll for the night. To enter the contest for the Samsung tablet, simply press one on your cell phone or telephone, and the winner will be announced on our website tomorrow by 3 PM. Once again, if you want to enter into the draw for the Samsung tablet, press one on your phone, and we will announce the winner tomorrow by 3 PM.

Again, our website is ufcw1006a.ca. That's ufcw1006a.ca. For those that would like to leave us a question or comment, please stay on the line and you can do so after. I want to thank you all again for joining us for our last Telephone Town Hall for 2023, and we'll see you or you'll hear us in the new year. Have a great evening. Thank you.