

UFCW Canada Local 1006A General Membership Meeting
January 16, 2024
Telephone Town Hall Event Transcript

Glacier Effs-Samuel:

Hi everyone. My name is Glacier Effs-Samuel, Recorder of your union. Happy New Year and welcome to your first Telephone Town Hall meeting for 2024. We're excited to welcome you to our Town Hall, which is about informing and engage out members. Stay on the line for the entire call, and you'll have a chance to win your choice between a Samsung tablet or a pair of Maple Leaf tickets. We'll have more details on that later on. We've dialed thousands of members, as I mentioned earlier, from different workplaces, different sectors and cities. Your patience was appreciated when connecting everybody.

Tonight we'll hear from President Wayne Hanley about the latest union news, including information on the great work our negotiating committees has done. We'll also hear from Executive Assistant to the President and Director of 1006A security guard sector, Jeff Ketelaars, who will discuss the unique challenges faced by thousands of UFCW 1006A members who work in the security sector. We'll also hear from you telephone operators or standing by to take down your questions and pass them on. To ask a question, press star three on your telephone keypad. Please make sure you give your full question name and where you work to the operator who will then pass them on to us. Again, press star three to ask a question.

Questions about individual workplace issues will be forwarded to union representative who will contact you no later than tomorrow night. As we have done in the past, we'll post an audio file, a meeting transcript, and the meeting minutes on our union website. During each telephone town hall general membership meeting, members vote to adopt the minutes of the previous meeting. So let's get started. 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 website, which was held on October 18th, 2023. Use your telephone key pad to participate in the vote. So the question is, do you approve of the minutes of the telephone Town Hall general membership meeting held on October 18th, 2023? Press one to approve of the minutes of the October 18th, 2023 meeting. Or press two if you do not approve of the minutes of the October 18th, 2023 meeting. Once again, press one if you approve of the minutes or press two if you do not approve of the minutes of the October 18th, 2023 meeting.

As we wait for results, I want to encourage you to check our Union's WebCampus program, which offers more than 220 free online courses to our members and their families. You can participate in courses on a wide variety of topics from personal development to health and safety to skilled trades, from the comfort of your home or phone, wherever you have internet access. I encourage you to visit ufcw.ca. Once again, visit ufcw.ca to learn more about WebCampus, a dynamic, free educational program offered by your union. So the results are in and the minutes of the October 18th, 2023 telephone Town Hall general membership meeting have been approved 90% in favour.

I'd like to remind members that telephone operators are standing by to take down your questions and pass them on to us. Just press star, three. Again, a quick reminder of our membership contest. Members who stay on for the entire call will have a chance to enter the draw, and win a Samsung tablet or a pair of Maple Leaf tickets. Congratulations to Blair from Loblaws Great Food in Kanata, who was our contest winner from our October meeting. It's the President of your union, Wayne Hanley.

Wayne Hanley:

Thank you, Glacier. Thank you to all you on the line here tonight for joining us for our first town hall of 2024. On behalf of the staff and executive board, I want to wish you and your family a happy new year. We're excited and thankful to have you as part of our union family. A new year is, a time to reflect and to renew a time to create our plans to go forward, to build and improve for the future. And I can assure

UFCW Canada Local 1006A General Membership Meeting

January 16, 2024

Telephone Town Hall Event Transcript

you that your union is actively doing that as we celebrate our successes of 2023. We also reaffirm our commitment to continue our work to strengthen our union and better serve our membership through constant improvement and innovation.

I can share with you that our negotiating committees continue to build on their successes by helping achieve improved contracts for workers in a variety of workplaces and industries across Ontario. I'm proud to report that over 13,000 members at Loblaws Great Food and Real Canadian Superstore, our largest bargaining unit voted last month to ratify an historic industry leading agreement with Loblaws. This is the best agreement we reached in the grocery retail sector in decades.

We faced intense and difficult negotiations, but with the strong support and participation of our membership, we achieved an unprecedented level of improvements for our contract. The new agreement covers members at 60 stores across Ontario. UFCW is by far and wide the union for grocery store workers, and we're very proud of our members for setting a new precedent for future contracts in this sector. Our negotiating committees were busy in other areas at the end of 2023. Since our last meeting October, your union continued to achieve gains for members at many workplaces across Ontario. These include Aramark food service at Seneca College at York University. Included the YIG store in Port Elgin, Fresh City Farms in Toronto, Residence Inn hotel in Toronto-Mississauga, The Revery Hotel in Toronto, La Clementine Childcare Centers in Ottawa and Amica Food Services in Toronto.

I'm thankful for the work of our negotiating committees. They are relentless in ensuring the voices and concerns of our members are heard and we're proud of their efforts and commend them for their dedication and commitment to improving the lives of their coworkers. But most of all, I want to recognize the members. The members who participated in the negotiating process at their workplace, either by filling out proposal forms and forwarding on to the union reps to simply talking to your union rep and sharing your concerns during the negotiating process. And every time you see your union rep or for attending a union meeting or voting, I'll tell you that member participation makes our union strong.

On another matter, for our friends working at Loblaws Great Food and Superstore, I'm pleased to update you on the long outstanding issue regarding dynamic scheduling and more specific shift offer. Those of you who have been on this call and been following this issue in your union material, after filing several grievances and participating in multiple days of arbitration meetings, I'm pleased to say that we've reached a settlement with Loblaws. That settlement is being sent out to all of our members who we have emails or notice of the settlement is being sent out to members that we have emails for.

As we've discussed in previous town hall meetings, the software that the employer was using to execute the shift offer program does not uphold members seniority rights to available hours as outlined in your union contract, and the company refused to fix the issue.

1006A's position has always been clear, we do not oppose technological advancements that make switching shifts or picking up extra shifts easier for our members. In fact, we promote it. However, our members contract rights must be respected. With this settlement, the shift offer functionality will be discontinued on or before January 28th, 2024. The process for replacing employees who cannot work their shifts will revert back to the process used prior to the introduction of shift offer. The settlement does allow the company to reinstate shift offer if the functionality ensures that shifts being offered are available to be claimed by the most senior available person claiming the shift. This has been an issue for many of our members and if Loblaw reintroduces the Shift Offer program, we will be there to ensure that your seniority rights to available hours continue to be protected.

In addition to advocating for our members rights, we continue to strengthen our union as we grow. Last October, members at Mountain Equipment Company on Queen Street in Toronto voted to join the

UFCW Canada Local 1006A General Membership Meeting
January 16, 2024
Telephone Town Hall Event Transcript

union. They're now the first group of MEC workers to be unionized in Ontario. The bargaining unit is composed of 80 members who work in a variety of roles such as providing customers with advice on outdoor gear, clothing sales and services. I'm proud to also announce that workers at Swiss Restaurant and Harvey's takeout in Ajax have voted to join UFCW 1006A. They join the 1400 Swiss Chalet workers who are already represented by our union. This particular restaurant consists of 48 members working in the kitchen, kitchen staff, hostesses, servers, and at the takeout windows. Congratulations on your victories and welcome to our 1006A family.

While workers are voting to join our union, some employers are also fighting hard against unionization in the workplace. While workers at Chapters Kennedy Commons in Scarborough, who voted to join 1006A in 2021, they were told just before the holiday season that their store would be closing and their jobs would be terminated. This was devastating news for our members, many who worked at the location for decades. Your union is pressing Indigo the parent company of Chapters to treat our members fairly. They deserve the right to transfer to other stores, which Indigo has provided to workers at other non-union locations at time of store closures. They're entitled to fair severance and we believe they should be entitled to maintain their health benefits during the transition time as they adjust to losing their jobs.

UFCW 1006A rallied outside the store during the holiday season to support our members and raise awareness in the community. Currently, the workers are asking members of the public to support them by contacting Indigo and making sure that their concerns are heard. So I ask that you please visit our social media to find out how you can help make a difference. And if you're in the Scarborough area, please stop by the store to share your support.

Empowering our stewards with training and education has always been a key priority for our union, and that's why I'm proud to report that stewards training programs will be taking place again this spring. The training provides stewards with the necessary skills and knowledge to better help their coworkers with issues at work. Last year, hundreds of stewards from across Ontario participated in various courses. If you are a steward, be sure to check your email as registration packages will be sent out at the end of the month. I encourage you, our stewards to register for training.

Our union also continues to do important work in advocating workers' issues at Queens Park and Parliament Hill. Last fall, UFCW 1006A took part in the series of advocacy meetings in Ottawa with elected officials from across Canada. Our team ensured the voices of our members and their families were heard in meetings with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh, the conservatives refused to meet with us and to listen to your concerns. We advocated for workers' rights and interests, discussing a wide range of issues affecting and including affordability, freezing retail food prices, PharmaCare and affordable housing for all Canadians. Glacier was a part of that UFCW Canada delegation that met with Prime Minister Trudeau Glacier. Perhaps you can share with us is some of your reflections of the day's events.

Glacier Effe-Samuel:

Sure, Wayne. It was an inspiring and empowering to be among UFCW Canada activists, raising our collective voices for this positive change on Parliament Hill on behalf of our membership. I felt it was a personal honour to represent our members in these meetings with Canada's leaders and to help advocate for workers' issues. Our delegates spoke to several MPs and discussed in detail the real challenges that working people across this country are facing when it comes to affordability, whether it's dealing with housing or food prices, basic necessities, families are struggling and unions are the key to helping to lift the standards up for everyone. 1006A members who were taking part in the UFCW

UFCW Canada Local 1006A General Membership Meeting

January 16, 2024

Telephone Town Hall Event Transcript

Canada Young Workers Internship program, phase two also joined the lobby day. I'd like to share a couple of comments from two of our participants.

The first was from Amedee Benoit-Revert, who works at the Loblaw's Great Food in Ottawa. Amedee shared his experience instead. The experience was amazing. It was great to learn about a world that I didn't know much about. Advocating for basic human necessities like retail food price freeze, and affordable housing meant a lot to me. Everyone deserves the basic necessities of life, a roof over their head and food in their stomach regardless of their background.

Another participant named Jennifer Haringa. Jennifer worked at the Milton Superstore and she said that it was great to see firsthand that our collective voices matter. We're pushing for a national PharmaCare plan. Prescriptions aren't cheap and not everyone has coverage. It's a basic human right to be healthy and people shouldn't have to worry about financially, about not being able to take care of their medication or their prescriptions.

Wayne Hanley:

Thank you Glacier and a special thank you to Amedee and Jennifer for sharing their thoughts so that Glacier could share them with all of you on the line here tonight. It's so important that workers in their union engage with politics and particularly with the political leaders. They need to hear from workers about the challenges that you face and public services that you rely on. Too often it's the voice of the CEOs and the corporate lobbyists that are heard by government, and I truly appreciate your efforts to raise these issues on behalf of members and all working people. So thanks again, Glacier, Amedee and Jennifer.

Now, last year of 1006A welcomed 8,000 members who work in the hospitality and security sector. The growth in membership is due to the merger of local UFCW Local 333 into 1006A. As a result of that merger, 1006A continues to grow in those sectors. And we also grow in sectorial diversity and have 42,000 members strong in our local union. Now, with that in mind, I'm pleased to turn things back over to Glacier for the next segment tonight that I think you'll find very interesting. Glacier.

Glacier Effs-Samuel:

Thank you, Wayne. So next up, I'm excited to welcome Executive Assistant to the President and Director of our security guard sector, Jeff Ketelaars, to give us an overview of this sector. Welcome, Jeff.

Jeff Ketelaars:

Thanks.

Glacier Effs-Samuel:

So Jeff, we're proud to be home of 8,000 security workers. What type of work do our members do and what are the workplaces that they work in?

Jeff Ketelaars:

Well, our members actually work everywhere from Pearson International Airport to the Parliament Buildings in Ottawa, even the courthouse in Thunder Bay. We secure hospitals, banks, and embassies in every corner of Ontario. The truth is that private security is one of the fastest growing sectors in Ontario, keeping pace with the gig economy. As public spaces become more open and as private buildings are more and more integrated with public infrastructure like subway accesses train stops or transit stops

UFCW Canada Local 1006A General Membership Meeting
January 16, 2024
Telephone Town Hall Event Transcript

and underground spaces like the Toronto Pathway, private security is playing a more pivotal role in security of everybody who lives in Ontario. Our members work in uniform carry batons and handcuffs. Some have specialized training and mental health and mental health first aid, nonviolent crisis intervention and violence de-escalation training. We have members who serve in plain clothes jobs as well, executive protection positions, bodyguards so to speak, embassy security, even jobs that work directly and are related with CSIS and US Homeland Security. Our members perform those duties. Our members are everywhere and they do the exact opposite of the comedic character of Paul Blart Mall Cop.

Glacier Effe-Samuel:

Well, thank you for that overview. What are the unique challenges that security guards face in this sector, Jeff?

Jeff Ketelaars:

Well, I wish I could say something else, but unfortunately, the current most unique challenge that we face is a wave of violence and crime, which has become more prevalent with the economic downturn. Robberies are on the rise and aggression and panic are becoming more common against security guards. Guards have an unusual position in our society. Everyone knows the police can arrest and detain you when you break the law, but security guards are often believed not to have those similar authorities. So when making arrests, for example, oftentimes not only the bad actors are surprised about being detained, but bystanders misunderstand the authority and the roles that the security guards play.

Glacier Effe-Samuel:

And how vital is union representation in this sector?

Jeff Ketelaars:

Union representation is more important than ever. Now, more than ever guards need to be protected by unions. UFCW provides health and welfare benefits. We provide training, we provide WSIB support for guards that face more risk to life and limb in their jobs than ever before in their history. We get to act as their voice in the political arena as well. We've been able to force the government to listen to our grievances, and we've forced the government to pivot and change legislation which protects security guards. In addition, our current conservative government has seen fit to reduce policing their own rules. So letting countless new mom and pop agencies get licensed with little or no oversight. So these predatory companies are out there lowering the standards, lowering the training, lowering the compensation of our guards and resisting coordinated efforts to improve our members' health and safety.

Glacier Effe-Samuel:

And our final question for you tonight, Jeff, what else would you like to tell people? What else do you want us to know about this sector?

Jeff Ketelaars:

You know what I'd like to ask, I'd like to ask if you know a security guard or if you work in a store or a facility where there's a security person, take a moment to chat with them and ask them, do they have a

UFCW Canada Local 1006A General Membership Meeting
January 16, 2024
Telephone Town Hall Event Transcript

union? If they're unionized, just remind them... say, what does your union provide? Remind them that their union is there for them and more importantly, if they don't have a union, which almost half don't tell them what you appreciate about your union and please give them our number. Security guards they need to be unionized. And the UFCW, especially local 1006A is the best union in this province for our members to join.

Glacier Effs-Samuel:

Thank you so much, Jeff, for joining us tonight. The information you shared was very impactful.

Jeff Ketelaars:

Well, I really appreciate you letting me talk. Thank you.

Glacier Effs-Samuel:

You're welcome. I'd like to remind folks that if you stay on with us until the end of the meeting, you'll have a chance to enter our membership contest. The winner will receive either a tablet, computer, or a pair of Maple Leaf tickets. Your choice. So before we wrap up for tonight, I just wanted to pass it over to Wayne to find out if there are any audience questions that need to be addressed.

Wayne Hanley:

Thanks, Glacier. There are a number of questions that have been posed here on the call tonight. Not surprisingly, many of them are questions on clarifying the terms of the Loblaws RCSS negotiated agreement. And as you said at the beginning of the call, Glacier, we'll have the individual reps respond to those questions with the members sometime tomorrow, certainly hopefully before tomorrow night. And please be sure to answer your call when your union reaches out to you to answer your questions. So having said that, maybe I'll just try and start the wrap up here. Glacier, I know you've got a little bit more business to do, so I want to thank you Glacier once again for doing the great job that you do. Jeff, thank you for sharing your experience and expertise with us here tonight.

I can tell you every time I hear on the news that a security guard has been involved in an incident, I worry about it being a 1006A member and a worker in general. And I know that Jeff and his team been able to assist some of the more recent incidents members that have been involved in incidents and stabbing, especially over the holiday season. It's great to have all the guards on board, and we look forward to strengthening the relationship there. We've got a busy 2024 ahead of us, and I encourage all of you on the line with us tonight to get more involved in your union. There are many ways to get involved from contacting your union reps to applying for union scholarship or attending a union events. So I'll sign off tonight, but I encourage you to stay engaged and informed. Glacier.

Glacier Effs-Samuel:

Thank you, Wayne. And again, as mentioned earlier by Wayne and myself for those with questions about individual workplace issues, your union rep will be getting back to you within 24 hours. You can find out who your rep is by visiting www.ufcw1006a.ca, and just click on the find your rep button and the audio file and transcript. 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 on Wednesday, April 17th, 2024. Now let's get to the final piece of business, which is our membership contest.

UFCW Canada Local 1006A General Membership Meeting

January 16, 2024

Telephone Town Hall Event Transcript

So to enter the draw or the contest to win either the Samsung tablet or Maple Leaf tickets, you need to press one on your telephone keypad now. So press one if you want to enter into the contest for the tablet or the tickets. And the winner will be announced on our website tomorrow by 3:00 PM. Once again, press one to enter for the contest. If you don't know our website, it is ufcw1006a.ca. Once again, our website is ufcw1006a.ca. And for those that would like to leave us a comment, please stay on the line and you'll be able to leave your question. I want to thank everyone for joining us for our first Town Hall for 2024. Have a wonderful evening and take care.