

UFCW Canada Local 1006A General Membership Meeting

August 19, 2025

Telephone Town Hall Event Transcript

Lesley Prince:

Good evening everyone. My name is Lesley Prince, Director of Organizing for your union, and I will be your moderator for tonight's call. It's great to see so many members joining us for our third town hall general membership meeting for 2025. We are excited to welcome you. We have lots of updates to share with you. We'll find out more about our scholarship programs, learn about our free online courses. Plus, if you stay with us for the entire call, you'll have the chance to win a Samsung tablet. We'll have more details on that later. As we've dialed thousands of numbers from different workplaces, sectors, and cities, we thank you for your patience as we connect everyone.

Tonight, you'll hear from President Wayne Hanley about the latest union news and member opportunities. We'll hear from Secretary Treasurer Kevin Benn, who's also on the line to provide a summary of the locals 2024 audited financial statement. We'll also hear from UFCW Canada's Training and Education Director Marv Funk about webCampus an online learning platform where UFCW Canada members and their families connect to hundreds of courses for free. Tonight, we'll also hope to hear from you. Telephone operators are standing by to take down your questions and pass them on to us. To ask a question, all you have to do is press star three on your phone keypad.

Please make sure to give your full question, name, and where you work to the operator, who will then pass it along to us. Again, that's star three to ask a question. 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 with our past meetings, we'll post an audio file, meeting transcript, and meeting minutes to 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. Our first poll for tonight will be taking a vote for the adoption of the minutes of the telephone town hall general membership meeting as posted on the local union's website held on April 16th, 2025.

Use your telephone keypad to participate in this vote. The question before us is, do you approve of the minutes of the telephone town hall general membership meeting held on April 16th, 2025? Press one to approve the minutes of the April 16th, 2025 meeting. Press two if you do not approve of the minutes of the April 16th, 2025 meeting. Once again, press one to approve the minutes. Press two if you do not approve the minutes. As we await the results, we would like to remind you that the deadline for our 1006A scholarship program is quickly approaching on September 30th. Every year we award 42 scholarships worth \$1,006 to members and/or their dependents.

Our scholarship program has helped hundreds of our members and their families across Ontario cope with the high cost of post-secondary education. Applying is easy. Visit our website at UFCW1006a.ca to apply in minutes. Once again, that is UFCW1006a.ca. Our results are in and the minutes of the April 16th, 2025 telephone town hall has been approved. I'd like to remind members that telephone operators are standing by to take down your questions and pass them along to us. To ask a question, all you have to do is press star three. Also, a quick reminder of

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our membership contest. Members who stay on the line for the entire call will have the chance to enter a draw to win a Samsung tablet computer.

Congratulations to Laura who works at the Arc Hotel in Ottawa, who was our contest winner from our April meeting. Stick around for your chance to enter. It's now my honour to introduce the president of our union, Wayne Hanley.

Wayne Hanley:

Thank you, Lesley, for joining us as a first time moderator of our town hall, filling in for Glacier Effs-Samuel, our usual moderator and our recorder who sends her regrets and her well wishes while she's enjoying her holidays. I want to extend a warm welcome to our members for joining us this evening, and thank you for making the time, and thank you for being a part of our union family, especially when it's on the same night as our first place Toronto Blue Jays who are on TV tonight. To kick things off tonight, I'd like to invite all members to join us this Labour Day, September 1st. Union members and staff will be marching through downtown Toronto to the CNE grounds in support of fairness of all workers.

If you register in advance, you and your family can receive wristbands for free entrance to the CNE. Please visit our website UFCW1006a.ca to register your participation. All members are invited to bring their families and friends to march along with us. Now, since our last town hall, I'm pleased to report that our union negotiators continue to make great strides on behalf of the members of our great union. Through their skills and hard work, our union negotiating committees have secured fair and strong contracts for our members. Members have ratified gains at many workplaces, including the Spark by Courtyard, a Marriott Hotel in Markham, at Frulact in Kingston, at Brown Foods Services in Meaford, at Talk Transit in Orillia, at HMSHost at the Pearson International Airport.

And as recently as today, at iFLY recreational workers in Oakville ratified a contract. As union members, one of the biggest advantage you have is the ability to participate in negotiations and achieve improvements to your wages, benefits, and working conditions. Every contract renewal is an opportunity for members to advocate for their contract priorities. Those in non-union workplaces do not have this advantage and lack of voice when it comes to their working conditions. I encourage you to take advantage of this benefit as a union member to get involved with negotiating a contract renewal, the process, and supporting your negotiating committee is important.

This means you could assist by filling out contract proposal forms or attending a ratification meeting. Every action that you take makes us stronger at the negotiating table. Remember, as a union member, you play a critical role in negotiations. When members support each other and their negotiating committee, it sends a strong signal to employers that members are serious and committed to making the gains that they deserve. We've recently seen that in the news with the Air Canada flight attendants. Along with negotiations, our incredible stewards continue to work hard, and that comes with enforcing our members' rights under their union contracts.

They assist our union staff in resolving issues daily on behalf of our membership. I want to thank each and every one of our stewards for the exceptional and critical work that they do

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every day. Now, this past spring, nearly 200 stewards from across Ontario participated in the local's comprehensive education and training program, which empowers them with the knowledge and skills they need to help their co-workers. I encourage all stewards to register for training for the fall sessions. On that, I'll turn it over to Lesley to share with us some of the stewards and what they had to say about their stewards training. Lesley?

Lesley Prince:

Thank you, Wayne. First up, we have Asal, a 1006A steward who works at Loblaws and became active in the union to stand up for fairness and to build a better workplace. She said, "Through stewards training I've gained knowledge about workers' rights, handling grievances, and how to support my co-workers effectively. Stewards training is essential and helps build a more informed and united workforce. It empowers members and strengthens our union." Next, we have Hira, a steward who works at Swiss Chalet who said, "I've gained more knowledge on communication, problem-solving, teamwork and leadership. I was inspired to become a steward by a desire to stand up and advocate for workers' rights and to make sure the work environment is safe and healthy.

Effective training empowers union stewards to represent members fairly, understand their collective agreements, and have the knowledge to handle the complexities of workplace issues." Thank you very much to Asal and Hira for sharing their thoughts with us about our training programs. Back to you, Wayne.

Wayne Hanley:

Thanks, Lesley. Thank you, Asal and Hira, for volunteering your time to help members as union stewards. Members like you are critical in ensuring that members' rights are protected in the workplace. I'm also proud to report that nearly 270 stewards have registered for our 2025 Stewards Conference to be held in Markham. It will take place in September, and we will bring together stewards from across Ontario for a day of education, inspiration, and empowerment. For many union members and stewards, 1006A committees are also a source of empowerment and support. I want to recognize the efforts of our 1006A outreach committee who helped organize the local union's participation in Brockville, London, Toronto, and Kingston.

Marching in these parades was about demonstrating our support for our members who are part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and standing up for equality and fairness for all. Now, on August 24th, I encourage our members in the Ottawa area to join Capital Pride. If you and your co-workers are interested in marching with the union alongside friends and family, contact your union at outreach@ufcw1006a.ca.

At 1006A, we're working hard to empower young workers within our union, and that's why I'm pleased to report 1006A had a strong turnout at this year's Young-Workers Internship Program, also known as YIP. YIP is UFCW Canada's flagship training and empowerment initiative for young workers from across Canada.

Through this training, young workers gained the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge to create a change in their workplaces and communities. The program took place over a week and

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1006A members participated in a variety of workshops and interactive activities focused on labour history, workers' rights, organizing strategy and social justice issues. Thank you to all the young workers who stepped up to make a difference.

Our locals also continues to work and empower and support members who are part of the Indigenous community. Most recently, our local Indigenous committee help facilitate a workshop on reconciliation for local union staff.

Through the symbol of Indigenous moccasins, the workshop aimed to connect everyone to the land beneath our feet and the treaties that bind us. Later this year, the local union is preparing to unveil on the outside of the local union office in Woodbridge, a mural created by Indigenous artist Philip Cote, to honour and support the Indigenous community and reconciliation efforts.

As we work to build fairer and more just workplaces in community, we as Canadians continue to face some grave threats from our neighbours to the south. As you know, the American administration continues to economically attack our country with ever-changing tariff threats that create instability and turmoil for million of workers in Canada and the United States.

We know these are difficult and uncertain times for our members and their families, and we want you to know that we continue to protect your interests in workplaces across Ontario. In response, we continue our call to all workers to buy Canadian and travel within our country. Our National Union is home to more than 270,000 workers across Canada, including many who work in the food, retail, manufacturing, processing, and of course, hospitality sectors. Grassroots boycotts and people pivoting to buying and supporting Canadian-made goods and services is having an impact. The US tourism industry alone is expected to take a hit in the billions of dollars as Canadians cancel their trips south of the border and opt to spend their dollars at home.

This is the time for all of us to support each other by buying UFCW-made products and services, vacationing at UFCW-represented hotels, and eating at UFCW-represented restaurants. You can check out our buy UFCW Canada main directory by visiting ufcw.ca.

Finally, I want to thank you for being with us on the call tonight and being part of the 1006A family. We're always here to help you. If you have any issues at work, please connect with your union's representatives. Once again, you can find their contact information on your union bulletin board or the union website, ufcw1006a.ca. On that note, I'll turn it back over to Lesley, and an important presentation from our Secretary Treasurer, Kevin Benn.

Lesley Prince:

Thank you, Wayne. Now, it's my pleasure to introduce Secretary Treasurer Kevin Benn, who will present the local's 2024 audited financial report.

Kevin Benn:

Good evening, everyone, and thank you, Lesley. It's good to be here with all of you once again and to provide you with a summary of the local union's 2024 audited financial statement. I'm proud to say one of the reasons we are the best local union in Ontario is because of our

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responsible financial management. Over the years, we have established and maintained a strong track record of operating the local union's finances with integrity and very careful stewardship. This enables us to be in a powerful financial position year after year to do the necessary work of the union, improving and protecting our members' rights while holding employers accountable.

As part of our commitment to careful financial management, an independent third-party accounting firm audits our finances annually. In June, our 2024 audited financial statement was reviewed by our executive board and approved at the local union's executive board meeting. Backed by our healthy financial position, in 2024, we achieved fair contracts for members at several workplaces, as Wayne had earlier alluded to. This included a strong contract for our members at Swiss Chalet locations across Ontario. In addition to that, we have achieved improvements and gains in many other workplaces adding to Wayne's list such as Ecotex, a launderer of healthcare linen. Park Inn by Radisson in Toronto, Markham.

AlSCO, another launderer of linen and uniforms, and Indigo in Mississauga to name but a few of the contracts our union negotiated last year. Achieving fair union contracts, as you may imagine, come with significant expense. From the cost of meeting rooms, to covering our negotiating committee member's wages, and as necessary, from time to time their accommodations. With Swiss Chalet negotiations, for example, the union and the company met for eight days of bargaining until we achieved that strong contract for the membership. Having a sizable membership of 43,000 members means that different negotiations are often happening at the same time. As such, we do incur expenses for a wide range of workplaces every year.

These expenses are essential and necessary costs, of course, in achieving gains for our members. Along with negotiations, we realize and incur expense organizing new members in order to grow our union. Last year we welcomed new members from Sessions Cannabis in Hamilton, TelePartners Call Center, and SilverCity Theater in Brampton. A security guard firm by the name of ASP in Ajax, and a Swiss Chalet in Harvey's location also located in Ajax. Often our organizing expenses include legal costs incurred while attending to matters at the Ontario Labour Relations Board to ensure workers' rights are protected. Enforcing and upholding our members' rights in the workplace is who we are.

It's what we do as a union family, having highly skilled and trained union representatives, highly skilled and trained workplace safety and insurance board representatives, highly skilled and trained health and safety representatives, and of course, highly skilled and trained legal counsel requires significant investment. In addition to that, as Wayne had mentioned, we work hard to develop a strong steward space, which currently includes more than 700 activists across Ontario. Our training and education program is vital in empowering our stewards with the necessary skills and knowledge to resolve workplace issues and is a necessary and positive investment in strengthening our union.

Similarly, and again, Wayne touched on this, we continue to host an incredibly successful stewards conference annually to offer an educational experience as well as a moment of camaraderie for our stewards, and an opportunity to show our gratitude and respect for their

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contribution to our great union. Part of the expenses we incur, of course, include those related to costs in acquiring a venue to hold our conference, accommodation costs for stewards, and fees for guest speakers, for example. With that said, I am pleased to report that we continue to operate the local union on a balanced budget and continuously work hard to meet this target year after year.

Revenue for the local union is primarily generated through membership dues, initiation fees, and investment income, as you well know. In 2024, our revenue was \$29,096,684. The total expenses that we realized in servicing our members for that same period was \$21,868,385. Our investment portfolio as at December 31st, 2024 held \$44,327,815. Now, when we combine our fixed assets such as the depreciated value of our office building and equipment in Woodbridge to our cash and investments, our total net assets as of December 31st, 2024 were \$54,911,252. In our roles of leadership, President Hanley and I are proud of the strong foundation we've established and maintain in order to support our members at the highest of levels. Thank you to all of you for choosing to spend your time with us this evening. Lesley, that concludes my report.

Lesley Prince:

Thank you, Kevin. As you should be proud. I will now move to adopt the Secretary Treasurer's 2024 audited financial report as presented. Please get ready to vote on your report using your phone keypad. For our second poll, press one on your keypad to vote to accept the Secretary Treasurer's report, or press two to reject the Secretary Treasurer's report. Again, press one to vote to accept the Secretary Treasurer's report, or press two to vote against accepting the Secretary Treasurer's report. While we wait for those results, each year we provide a summary of the previous year's audited financial report during one of our town hall meetings.

Remember, if you have any questions about the financial report, you can talk to your union rep. As the results are coming in from Secretary Treasurer's report, it has been approved. 96% yes, and 4% no. Great. Thank you very much. Again, I'd like to remind folks that if you stay with us until the end of the meeting, you will have the chance to enter our membership contest. The winner will receive a Samsung tablet. Next up, I am very excited to welcome Marv Funk, Training and Education Director at UFCW Canada for a conversation about the many educational opportunities available to union members, particularly through our webCampus.

For those of you who don't know, webCampus is a popular online learning platform where UFCW Canada members and their families can access more than 270 courses for free. We're proud to welcome Marv for our telephone town hall tonight.

Marv Funk:

Hey, Lesley, how are you doing?

Lesley Prince:

I'm excellent. Thank you, Marv.

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Marv Funk:

I'm happy to hear that.

Lesley Prince:

I'm so glad that you're here.

Marv Funk:

Yeah, me too. You guys run a wonderful, wonderful local union and you've got great people. Yeah, I'm excited to be here too.

Lesley Prince:

Perfect. We know Nelson Mandela once said, education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world. As the training and education director for the national office, how important it is for union activists and members to engage in training opportunities offered by the local?

Marv Funk:

I think it's an opportunity. There's a saying that says when the student's ready, the teacher will appear. I always value members when they're ready, when they're interested, but when they are, so is 1006A and UFCW. Education is actually how we turn values into action. It's one thing to say education's important, and yes, we all affirm it. It's another thing to live on the edge looking for a break, looking to figure out how to do things better. I think that's the same difference between that and facts and insights. Everyone can spout facts, but it's the insights that actually matter. It's how to use the facts.

The other thing is I think education is the way leaders eventually become leaders. Most people don't just come out as, I mean some kids do, they're born leaders, but most of us, we're enticed, we're encouraged, or we're challenged to speak up. One of the things I've learned as a steward for many years is that that role is so, so important. When you talk about the changes that are happening, whether it's AI, corporate restructuring, health and safety risks, attacks on workers, it's really, really important that we recognize our members are our greatest strength. The intelligence harnessed within the membership is still to be untapped.

The more members that get involved, the more members that are encouraged, I think we become stronger every day. The other thing that I think is absolutely key to this is the idea that training needs to reflect real lives of workers. In other words, yes, there's options at university and college and things like that and they're valuable and worthwhile. However, at some point they need to translate into real world. I think it's important that the training that is offered to members, and again, webCampus is a good example. We're very focused on ensuring that people understand what the course is about, why it's important.

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We're also very conscious that for many of our members, they're welcomed into Canada and English may be their second language, that's not a deficit. Diversity adds to all of us, so we see that as an advantage.

Lesley Prince:

Well, I couldn't agree more, and as usual, speaking with you is always so insightful. I have to ask you, in an effort to achieve education and training for members, UFCW Canada offers free online training courses for members and their families through webCampus. For those of us that are with us tonight that may not know about webCampus, can you elaborate a bit on what it has to offer our members?

Marv Funk:

Absolutely. It's really important too, because for some people listening right now, they're saying, "I'm just so happy I'm out of school. I don't want to go back." I identify with that. I get what you're saying. I think it's really, really important to also recognize that some of the challenges we face, we have to learn through. Wherever you get that, whether it's on YouTube, AI, whatever, go for it. webCampus, we're not slouches, and we also realize that we have to keep up and offer our members our very best. Basically, webCampus is 24/7. Whenever you want to learn, that's when we're available. The downside to that is sometimes life takes up a lot of challenges, so it's difficult.

I guess what I want to say as director of education, I want to be really clear with everyone out there. If you want to take a course and not complete it, it doesn't bother me in the least. Now, if you're paying a thousand dollars for a course, I can see how that'd be a real problem. But because this is free, sometimes you only learn that you hate a course after you started taking it, and I can identify with that. I would encourage members to take courses. If you're not interested, un-enroll, we don't keep track of that. However, what we do keep track of is those members who want to learn and they want to learn more. In other words, our focus for the members is giving courses for real people, not for academics.

While our courses are recognized by universities like Athabasca, Toronto Metropolitan University, Conestoga College, we have great partnerships. We're more concerned with the members and what they're going to learn and how they're going to benefit. Whether it is an OTG, which is an on-the-go, it's 15 minutes long, it's perfect on your break or lunch, or whether it's a full course or a micro-credential, which is again, you can click twice and you can share it online on social media, on LinkedIn. There's a lot there to be offered. Finally, again, I can go on forever, as you can tell, it's not just personal it's strategic. Learning, it's really important that you figure out how learning can continue and how you can enjoy it.

Lesley Prince:

I have to say, I'm certainly glad that you mentioned you don't keep track of those of us that don't finish courses because I'm certainly guilty of that.

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Marv Funk:

It's all good. It's all good.

Lesley Prince:

I'm also curious to know which courses have the highest completion record, and why do you think that is?

Marv Funk:

You know what? Since we introduced it, our pharmacy assistant course consistently year in, year out, month in, month out, it's something people go to. Here's what I believe. I believe that sometimes when we get into a job where the employer tells us, "Here's your sandbox, play in it. That's all we want you to do." It stifles the human spirit. I can identify with that working 20 years in retail and being a dairy clerk. I really do get the idea that someone else is telling you who I can be, what I can be, and when I can be. I think pharmacy assistant is one of those courses that cashiers, night crew chiefs, whatever, you're interested in science and you're going, "I wonder what this is about. I think this is what they take on."

Then, the other one is exploring digital skills. While there are many ways of being literate, media literacy, computer literacy is first and foremost. This is a course designed specifically to help you gauge what part of this huge internet world and IT world you're interested in. Finally, just very briefly, I mentioned OTGs. These are the 15-minute modules. Our most popular one is effective responses to unreasonable managers. For those of you who have idiots as bosses and jerks for your supervisors, it really makes your day long and frustrating. Again, this isn't going to answer all your questions or provide you with kryptonite.

But what it will do is give you options on how to deal with idiots in your life, especially when they're telling you what to do. Over 500 members from across the country have taken it.

Lesley Prince:

Wow, and funny that you mentioned the success rate for the pharmacy assistant course because I had a personal story about that where a newly organized member had taken that course and then was able to get a job working at a pharmacy because of that. That's excellent.

Marv Funk:

That's great to hear.

Lesley Prince:

Yeah, webCampus has a lot to offer our members. Is it difficult to sign up for a course?

Marv Funk:

No. No. Seriously, it's under two minutes. You have a first name, you have a last name, you have some basic information so we can contact you and we know that it's not you and not

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someone with the same name. That's it. Literally, if you can't sign up in two minutes, give us a call and we'll help.

Lesley Prince:

Beautiful. Historically, our local has always focused on traditional in-person stewards training, and then again, as a result of the pandemic, we had to pivot to online training for a couple of years when we couldn't meet in person. What are your thoughts on in-person versus online, and are more people turning to online training over in-person simply because of the convenience?

Marv Funk:

Okay. Really quickly, I think online training and live training, yes. I think it's a mistake to pit one against the other. However people learn we need to be there. Yes, when you have a great facilitator and you can feel the solidarity there in the class, I'm a hundred percent in favor of live training. However, when I've got daycare, travel issues, and many other things that prevent me, I think online fits the bill. I've been part of this for a long, long time, so I don't think it's an either or situation. I think it's an and situation. Just in closing though, I'd want to encourage people to give it a try. Like I said, there are times when online, maybe second best, but not doing it would be a waste. I think there's an opportunity for everyone to learn. I think your local is taking the lead by making that available.

Lesley Prince:

That makes complete sense. I'm so happy you mentioned that. Marv, I want to thank you very much for joining us tonight and participating in this important discussion. For our members who wish to sign up for webCampus, I encourage you to visit ufcw.ca. Again, that website is ufcw.ca. Now, it's time to turn our focus to answering some of your questions. Wayne, would you be able to let us know if there's any questions that need responding to?

Wayne Hanley:

Well, there's lots of people on the line, but there aren't very many questions tonight, Lesley. As usual, the questions are focused on individual situations, individual workplaces, and we do commit to have reps follow-up directly with the member within the next 24 hours. I think we'll just put a hold on the questions tonight and maybe move things along a little bit as we wrap up the agenda. Lesley, I want to thank you again for stepping in tonight. I'd also like to thank Secretary Treasurer Kevin Benn for his thorough financial report, and the great job that he does and the assistance that he provides me as part of the leadership team within our local.

Finally, Marv, I want to thank you for sharing your insight with us tonight. If our members haven't checked out the web courses yet, I would encourage each and every one of you to do so, and remember that it's also offered to members of your family. I'll sign off tonight in my part of the meeting by encouraging you to stay engaged as members and stay informed. I hope

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you do take the time to register and to join us on Labour Day. It'll be a great time. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible out on Labour Day in Toronto. Thank you.

Lesley Prince:

Thank you again. For those with questions, your union rep will be getting back to you within 24 hours. You can find out who your union rep is by visiting www.ufcw1006a.ca, and click on your union rep button. Please remember that the audio file and transcript of tonight's meeting will be posted to our website for your convenience, as well as the minutes of tonight's meeting will also be posted for your review and to be approved during the next meeting, which is scheduled for November 19th, 2025, so mark your calendar. Again, that's on Wednesday, November 19th. Of course, we have one more piece of business to take care of, which is our membership contest.

Our last poll of the evening, poll three will have you enter into a draw to win a Samsung tablet. To be entered, simply press one on your telephone keypad now. The winner will be announced on our website tomorrow by 3:00 PM. Once again, press one on your phone to enter the contest. Our website again is UFCW1006a.ca. I encourage you to definitely check out our website as well as our national office website, which is www.ufcw.ca. For those that would like to leave us a question or comment, please stay on the line. Thank you all again for joining us and have a great evening. Meeting adjourned.