

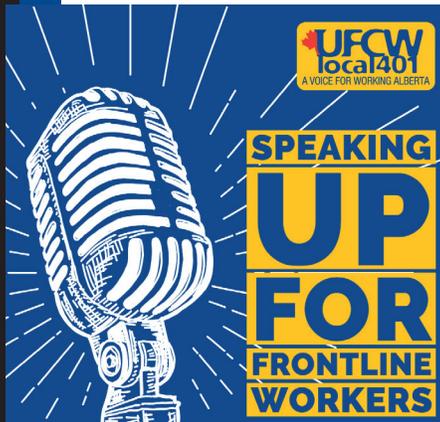


UPDATE

SAFEWAY UNION NEGOTIATIONS

“NICE WORDS JUST DON’T CUT IT”

April 18, 2020



We’ve been working hard to get the kind of agreement you deserve, the need for which has only been highlighted by the important work you are doing right now. Just like you, we’re pushing through.



In spite of COVID-19 and new social distancing requirements, our bargaining committee has been in video conference bargaining meetings this week with Sobeys to continue our negotiations for a new Safeway contract. We’ve been working hard to get the kind of agreement you deserve, the need for which has only been highlighted by the important work you are doing right now. Just like you, we’re pushing through.

This week was our first week of negotiations in the presence of a government-appointed mediator, and it was also our first meeting since the declaration of the global pandemic, COVID-19.

With all that in the foreground, we are now working through monetary discussions with the company, and we are told that the company intends to table a full monetary proposal next week.

COVID-19: an unexpected challenge

Much of the terrain of bargaining has shifted since our last meeting – from the introduction of Sobeys’ controversial “hero pay” program to the various challenges presented by ensuring the safety of our members in the stores. Reflecting on these concerns, we pressed hard on issues related to COVID-19.

Here is a letter President Hesse and Secretary-Treasurer Stewart provided to Sobeys’ Vice President of Labour Relations, which summarizes some of the issues we raised this week, particularly around COVID-19 workplace safety concerns and Sobeys’ “Hero Pay Program.”

Visit gounion.ca/covidaction to see our letter

“We have heard from so many members that go to work every day to make sure Albertans have food

If you have any questions, please e-mail bargaining@ufcw401.ab.ca or contact your Representative at your union office.

Toll Free: 1.800.252.7975 • Edmonton: 780.452.0362 • Calgary: 403.291.1047 Red Deer: 403.342.0150 Fort McMurray: 780.743.4190 • High River: 403.652.2063 • Brooks: 403.501.8486 • Lethbridge: 403.328.4245

[w ufcw401.ca](http://ufcw401.ca) [t /ufcw401](https://twitter.com/ufcw401) [f /ufcw401](https://facebook.com/ufcw401) [i /ufcw_401](https://instagram.com/ufcw_401)

to put on the table,” write President Hesse and Secretary-Treasurer Stewart. “They feel like second class heroes. You requested that we address this issue in collective bargaining, and today we did. We tabled a proposal asking that all employees be paid at a rate of time and a half for all hours worked. This would help to compensate and acknowledge the tremendous risk being taken by every grocery store worker.”

“Nice words just don’t cut it:” Monetary discussions begin

Another important development in negotiations was the beginning of monetary discussions. On this, our committee pushed very hard.

To their credit, Sobeys has made some movement on their proposals this week. But they also reported a 37% increase in sales since March 8 and still have monetary concessions on the table. This is a problem, and our bargaining committee was clear: they need to do better if we are to be the heroes they say we are.

It’s simple: if we really are heroes, we shouldn’t have to push so hard for improvements to benefits and pay for Safeway employees.

Next week, we are back to the table with Sobeys. We are expecting a full monetary proposal package from the company, which our committee believes will really decide where things will go.

Please stay connected. It’s a hard time, we know, but knowing how hard you are working and what you’re enduring right now inspires us to keep pushing hard at the bargaining table.

We’ll be back at it next week.

In Solidarity,

Your UFCW Union Bargaining Committee

“We have heard from so many members that go to work every day to make sure Albertans have food to put on the table. They feel like second class heroes. Y

ou requested that we address this issue in collective bargaining, and today we did. We tabled a proposal asking that all employees be paid at a rate of time and a half for all hours worked.

This would help to compensate and acknowledge the tremendous risk being taken by every grocery store worker.”

- Thomas Hesse, President
Richelle Stewart, Secretary-Treasurer
UFCW Local 401