

John Grant:

Good evening. This is John Grant, President of the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 770, your union, broadcasting live from the Santa Barbara Fairgrounds. Welcome to tonight's quarterly membership meeting, wherein we'll be discussing the business of the union as well as an update around some of the most critical issues facing us, vaccination and the trauma that we've all suffered through this pandemic.

John Grant:

This is a process wherein we call out to all 31,000 of our members, so it takes a time for everybody to get onboard, so we will be repeating this announcement until you're basically sick of my voice. At that point, we'll commence with the meeting. So again, please hang on, it'll take a couple minutes to get everybody into the fairgrounds, and then we'll be able to, once people throw out their blankets, take their seats, open up the picnic baskets, we'll be able to commence with the meeting.

John Grant:

Again, welcome to the general membership meeting of UFCW local 770, your union. This is required by the constitution and bylaws, and it's been the practice of this for over 80 years. We will be commencing with the program in a few moments as we wait for more and more of your brothers and sisters in this union to get onboard.

Kathy Finn:

Just some technical things about tonight's call. We will be taking questions live, so if you have a question, you press zero and you'll talk to a screener who will put you into the queue to ask a question. And if you want to hear, and I'm going to say this in Spanish in a second, if you would prefer this call in Spanish, we do have a Spanish number. [foreign language 00:01:47].

Kathy Finn:

Again, welcome. I'm Kathy Finn, Secretary Treasurer of local 770. We're about almost halfway, not quite halfway, through the dial out to almost 32,000 members now. And so as we are dialing out to everybody and waiting for them to get on, we're just going to continue to make these initial announcements.

Kathy Finn:

This is the general membership meeting for the first quarter of 2021. So welcome. We're dialing out now to the entire membership and tonight we have a lot of important information and business to go over, and we'll also be talking about mental health during the pandemic and other important matters.

Kathy Finn:

Again, I'm just going to remind folks, if you do have a question, you press zero on your phone to get into the question queue, and then we'll call on you. [foreign language 00:03:15].

John Grant:

Good evening, this is John Grant. We're broadcasting live from the Santa Maria Raceway in the Nipomo. We're very excited here tonight. With me tonight is Kathy Finn in a Studebaker Lark at the starting line, Linda Ngyuen, Chief of Staff in a Corvair, and Danny Garcia, Field Staff Coordinator, in a Yugo.

John Grant:

We will be discussing tonight the business of a unit as is required by the bylaws and the practice of this union, going over the various activities that we've had to and needed to carry out during this pandemic, but also taking a quick look at some of the vaccination updates, as well as a special guest tonight, Dr. Florence Gardner, a psychotherapist who specialized in anxiety and trauma recovery, and comes out of the labor movement, and I think is especially equipped to help us sort things out through this pandemic and the stresses that have been not only on our bodies, but especially on our whole being as a result.

John Grant:

It takes a while for all 31,000 folks to file into the Raceway and find their appropriate seats, buy the popcorn, a couple of beers, so it'll take us probably another two or three minutes, but at that time we will then commence with the evening's business. There'll be an agenda that will review the business of the local union. Prior to that will be a special presentation by Dr. Gardner. Then the directors will give their reports on just a variety of subjects from Kaiser, to cannabis organizing, to training and development, as well as the vaccinations and what's going on with Food 4 Less negotiations. So it'll be just a few minutes and we'll commence with our report then.

Kathy Finn:

You can start now.

John Grant:

Those few minutes just go by like seconds so actually we're ready to start right now. Good evening, I'm John Grant, President of your local 770 and tonight is a general membership meeting as is provided and required by the constitutions and bylaw of your local union.

John Grant:

Tonight, our agenda will be Dr. Florence Gardner to discuss with us the traumas or the effects this pandemic has had on us, and then Kathy Finn will make the Secretary Treasurer's report, who is with me tonight. And then there'll be a series of director's reports from Danny Garcia, Cindy McGuinness, Matt O'Malley, Paul Edwards [Mamlay 00:06:18], and Bertha Rodriguez, reviewing the wide variety of events and activities that we've undertaken.

John Grant:

With that, let me first introduce Dr. Gardner. And this is special, so it's rare that we have a guest. I think this pandemic has demanded that of your union, that we look at all the aspects of our work and how that's affected us and what steps we can take to make sure to guarantee our health and the health of those we work with. Dr. Gardner is a private practice psychotherapist who specializes in the field of anxiety and trauma recovery, which all of us know every day is something that we've been facing for well over a year.

John Grant:

For 20 years before that, she worked in the labor movement, as well as a variety of social justice organizations as a researcher, as an organizer, and as an educator. She then decided to become a psychotherapist in part from witnessing and understanding and suffering with them, all the personal

injuries that play out in social justice movements and the labor movement as well, and how they complicate our efforts for not just to get through the daily life, but our efforts to make change.

John Grant:

As a therapist, she works with many frontline workers, service workers, teachers, school counselors, nurses, doctors, and their families as well, because we know that this pandemic does not just affect you at work, you bring the effects of this, both literally and figuratively, home with you every night. She works with other therapists as well to help make trauma support more available for all of us during this exceptionally difficult time. And please join me now in welcoming Dr. Gardner. Florence.

Florence Gardner:

Thank you, John. Can everyone hear me okay?

Kathy Finn:

Yep.

John Grant:

Yep.

Florence Gardner:

Okay, great. Thank you. Good evening. 770. Thank you for taking the time to be here tonight and for letting me to come join you for a little bit of your meeting this evening. You all have been at the very frontline of this pandemic for over a year now, making it possible for millions of families to have access to food, to healthcare, medicine, and to other essential goods and services. Your hard work has made it literally possible for other people to survive.

Florence Gardner:

Let's take a moment and ask this question. What has this cost you personally? I want to check in with you about the impact the pandemic is having on our mental health. I'm going to talk for a bit and then we'll have some time for just a couple of questions, and then in a couple of weeks, we'll meet and go deeper on all of this.

Florence Gardner:

I want to start by quoting a recent post on Twitter that went viral by a scientist named Elizabeth Tang. She wrote, "Am I working at my regular capacity? No. But am I prioritizing and taking care of the most important tasks? No. But am I at least taking care of myself and my mental health? Also no." I think she speaks for a lot of us right now.

Florence Gardner:

I want to convey, as much as I can, how normal it is that we're all feeling kind of broken down right now. We won't feel this way forever. In the meantime, it helps if we can accept that it's normal right now to feel miserable, exhausted, angry, or depressed. What we're talking about here are the effects of long-term stress and trauma on the mind and body.

Florence Gardner:

I'm going to use these words, stress and trauma a lot, so let me briefly say what they are. Stress is something going on in your surroundings that drains your coping resources and threatens your wellbeing. Trauma is an experience that leads you to fear for your life or fear that great harm is going to come to you. Trauma also includes being exposed to an experience where other people's lives are threatened, so you don't have to be the direct victim in order to be traumatized by something.

Florence Gardner:

For instance, just to give a couple examples. Stress is not knowing how you're going to do your job and take care of your kids when they have to do school remotely. Trauma is being afraid you're going to catch COVID at work and get seriously ill, or maybe even die. Trauma is also being afraid day after day for the lives of your loved ones. And trauma is witnessing people dying of COVID all around us, even when it's people we aren't personally close to.

Florence Gardner:

As humans, we're pretty well adapted to recover from stress, and even from trauma, when it lasts a short time. We can push really hard to meet a big deadline. We can pack up all our belongings and start a life in a new city.

Kathy Finn:

Uh oh. Florence?

John Grant:

[inaudible 00:11:24].

Kathy Finn:

Hello? We can't hear Florence all of a sudden, but can people still hear us? [crosstalk 00:11:34].

Paul:

Yes.

John Grant:

Somebody text us.

Paul:

Yes.

John Grant:

Paul, can you hear her?

Paul:

I can hear Kathy [crosstalk 00:11:39].

Kathy Finn:

You can't hear Florence either?

Paul:

No.

Kathy Finn:

Shoot. She somehow got disconnected. [inaudible 00:11:50]. Hang on. Let me see.

Speaker 1:

Sorry folks, if you just bear with us for just a minute, we're going to try to patch Florence back in. Give us just a minute.

John Grant:

This is one of the difficulties, obviously, we're making best as we do. This is an example of stress, where in fact things are sort of beyond our control and how are we going to get through this meeting if the speakers... I just want to take an opportunity. Dr. Gardner, this is something, an aspect that frankly no other union is taking up this issue of stress, anxiety, and trauma, and when we understand that this understanding didn't come in your executive room boardroom with a sort of brilliant flash of understanding. It came from, which is the strength of this union, that collectively we share our experiences, collectively we share our understanding of what's going on, and then as we share these things collectively, we're then able to take the appropriate steps to resolve those problems, and that's how we came about to find Dr. Gardner and talk about it.

Florence Gardner:

John, I'm so sorry. I lost you guys. I'm back. I don't know-

John Grant:

Okay great.

Florence Gardner:

Any idea where I left off? [crosstalk 00:13:10]. I was talking about stress and trauma, right?

John Grant:

Yes, I got stress and trauma, yes. [crosstalk 00:13:16] bodies able to deal with it on a short period of time, but for longer periods of time, that's when it becomes complicated.

Florence Gardner:

Okay, great. I'm so sorry about that. I'm not sure what's happening on this end. I've been kicked off twice. I swapped out earbuds, so hopefully it'll work now. So basically what I was trying to say is there's stress and there's trauma, and that as humans we are well adapted to recover from stress and trauma if it lasts a short time. We can push through stresses. We can recover from traumas like surviving an earthquake, a wildfire, or a car accident. We may need a little bit more help recovering from something traumatic like that, but still most of us do recover.

Florence Gardner:

This pandemic, however, is not a one-time stress or a single event trauma, as you all know. It's multiple layers of stress and trauma that have been going on for over a year now. And as humans, we're not well equipped to cope with that kind of chronic, complex, ongoing stress and trauma.

Florence Gardner:

For most of us this time has demanded that we keep drawing on extra coping reserves that are really only meant to last for a few weeks or a couple of months at best. Let me quickly share a few statistics. Before COVID happened roughly one out of five people in any given year have an anxiety disorder, about one in 10 people have major depression, about one in 12 people have a substance use disorder, and about one in 20 in any given year would qualify for a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD.

Florence Gardner:

Early data since the pandemic suggests that the pandemic has at least doubled all of these numbers. And that means that likely well over half of the general US population right now would qualify for a diagnosis of anxiety, depression, substance use, or PTSD.

Florence Gardner:

An important point is that the stress of this time and its impact on our mental health isn't the same for everyone. Some folks are more affected than others because they're carrying more stress. So let me ask you about your experience in the past year. Have you been regularly exposed to COVID as part of your job? Are you a parent who's had to navigate school closings and the impacts of COVID on your kids' wellbeing? Do you have an elder or medically vulnerable person in your life who you've been worrying about losing to COVID? Are you a woman or a person of color? Are you over 50 years old? Do you have an underlying health condition that puts you at higher risk of death from COVID? Did you come into this pandemic with a history of anxiety, depression, or other mental health issue, even if mildly so? And, last question, did you come into this pandemic, having already experienced something traumatic earlier in your life? This could be childhood abuse, sexual assault, being the victim of a crime or other kinds of violence, or having had to flee a wildfire, for example.

Florence Gardner:

If you answered yes to any of these things, it's even more likely that you're experiencing mental health impacts from COVID. It wouldn't surprise me if nearly all of local 770 members were experiencing symptoms of anxiety, depression, trauma, or other mental health issues. It's not because you don't have enough strength as individuals. It's not that. It's because you have too many external pressures on you.

Florence Gardner:

Let's talk for a minute about what it might look like to be feeling the impact of those kinds of external pressures. Ask yourself if you've had any of these symptoms in the last month, trouble sleeping, muscle tightness, headaches or other unexplained body pain, being easily startled or feeling more sensitive to light and sound, having trouble finding pleasure in things, crying more than usual or feeling numb and not being able to cry at all, having trouble focusing on tasks or motivating, feeling bad about yourself or worried about letting people down, feeling exhausted even when you do get enough sleep, having intrusive thoughts or images of situations that worry you, having a shorter temper than usual, experiencing more conflict with partners, children, or coworkers, drinking more alcohol or using more recreational drugs to take the edge off the stress.

Florence Gardner:

These are all totally normal, understandable responses to long-term stress and trauma. It doesn't feel normal and it's definitely not comfortable, but we have all been affected. Whatever you do, don't think that you're struggling because of some character flaw or weakness in you. Everyone's mental health has been affected to some degree this year and by this year of unrelenting stress and trauma.

Florence Gardner:

In my own psychotherapy practice over the past year, working with a lot of frontline and essential workers, I've witnessed smart, strong, capable people slide into major depression, have panic attacks for the first time in their lives, and get into conflicts with people more than they usually do. I've seen people have to cut back their work hours and accept pay cuts to reduce stress. And I've seen people turn to harmful coping habits precisely because their healthy coping habits have been taken away from them by COVID.

Florence Gardner:

Before COVID, when we wanted to recharge ourselves, we might have gone to the gym, or gathered with friends, had weekly dinner with our parents, gone away on holidays, attended worship services, or gone to a movie. We've had these outlets taken away from us for a year at the same time that our jobs have become much, much more stressful.

Florence Gardner:

Most of my clients have sought out additional help to help support their mood and reduce stress during this time. Things like joining online groups, trying medication or supplements, or coming to therapy more often. They're also cutting themselves a lot more slack than they used to and they're more intentional about seeking out some kind of modest connection and relaxation every day. Doing these things obviously doesn't fix the difficulties people are experiencing, but I see week after week that getting more support onboard does make people's daily lives more manageable.

Florence Gardner:

My work pre COVID tells me that it can take months to more than a year for people to recover their mental wellbeing after going through a long stretch of stress and fear. Picture the person who loses their job and gets divorced in the same year. Or imagine the person who moves in with their mom or dad to care for them at the end of their lives. We are all, in some sense, those people now. We are people who have been experiencing fear and loss and grief week after week, while showing up for very demanding jobs as well as our other commitments.

Florence Gardner:

On top of that, we've had to survive much of this time more alone than we've ever been. When going through a particularly tough time before, our friends and family may have rallied around us and offered support, but now everyone is experiencing tough times so there's no well rested, unstressed, pool of friends to lean on.

Florence Gardner:

The stress and trauma of this time, the extra workload, the isolation, and the loss of our previous ways of recharging ourselves, and then all of that going on for months and months, means that many of us

need to seek support in ways we previously may have not been open to. For some of us, that means talking to a therapist for the first time. For some of us, it means taking medication for the first time. For some people, it means significantly lowering expectations for yourself way beyond what you normally would.

Florence Gardner:

I have other ideas from my own work that I can share with you when we meet next time. The main point is that when we go through exceptional stress, we need to be open to getting help and lightening our load in ways that we've never done before. Because we haven't been here before, there's no roadmap for what we need to get through to recover from this. What I do know is that we all deserve whatever support and kindness we can find.

Florence Gardner:

In the meantime, I'd like to invite you in the next couple of weeks to notice what this pandemic has cost you. As you name these costs, notice what feelings come up for you. Do you notice grief? Do you notice anger? Whatever it is, say to yourself, it makes perfect sense I would feel this way. Pausing just for a few moments each day to name the impacts on us and to acknowledge the feelings that come up when we do, is to start the process of recovering from this traumatic time.

Florence Gardner:

We can talk more in a couple of weeks about some other ways we might set ourselves up for recovery psychologically from all what's been thrown at us. We're going to come through this time changed in various ways. There's an old saying that what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. Psychologists call this post-traumatic growth. It's a feature of traumatic experiences that many people find precious jewels in the ashes afterwards. But for now, we're just still trying to get through it as best we can. Let me stop there and see if you have any questions or would like to make a comment.

Kathy Finn:

Thanks, Florence. That was really very powerful. We do have a number of people who are on in our speaker queue that have questions that came up while you were talking. So the first one is from someone at CVS. I don't know their name, did not get into the thing. If you're from CVS 9767 can you-

Pamela:

Hello?

Kathy Finn:

Hi.

Pamela:

Hello?

Kathy Finn:

Hi, you're from CVS 9767,.

Pamela:

That's correct.

Kathy Finn:

Do you want to introduce yourself and say what your question is?

Pamela:

Yes. My name is [crosstalk 00:23:56]. I'm Pamela, and recently with...

PART 1 OF 4 ENDS [00:24:04]

Camilla:

By the way, that was very informative. The therapist that you had on. Thank you. I guess [crosstalk 00:24:15] I'm just saying recently with all this COVID that we had to deal with, I do believe, because where I work and I think a lot of people feel like this. I mean, it's something that's happening. There are a lot of more shoplifters or thieves that come into the store and they had this bravado where they don't care and they know that we can't put our hands on them. We can't do anything, honestly. And sometimes, they threaten us and it's very scary and there's no security. There's no one around, sometimes it's all girls there working at night or in the daytime, wherever it happens. And we're not going to do anything with the six foot three, man, who's just putting stuff in his pocket and threatening us. And I'm just wondering is there's something we can do about this, or you can help with this.

Kathy Finn:

So you're talking about- [crosstalk 00:25:17].

Camilla:

I feel like this COVID or this cold time has made people more dangerous. My associate yesterday caught a shoplifter and he threatened her right in your face. And we're to the point where she took a break and had to go home and called in later and said, I can't go back.

Kathy Finn:

Okay. Thanks Camilla for your question. I think we'll see if Florence can talk a little bit about how to deal with the stress of like hostile customers. I know we've had a number of cases of people who refuse to wear masks as well, come into the store. So hostile customers. And I think the increase in hostility in customers is related to this period of COVID.

John Grant:

Right. There's a lot packed in that question. Laura, do you want to take a stab at it?

Kathy Finn:

Oh, now she can't hear us. [crosstalk 00:26:28] I don't know. Do you want me to just call her?

John Grant:

So we're trying to figure out, because obviously there's three different sources of speaking. There's the one here at the union office where Kathy and I, Danny, Linda, there is Dr. Gardner who's on the East

coast, actually. It's 10 30 her time. Then the third is that of the membership at various places within Southern California. So it's a question of almost triangulating, if you will, bringing all three sources together, enable them to hear each one. So what I think we're going to do is put call Dr. Gardner separately and put it on speaker, then put the mobile phone against the landline and hopefully we'll hook up two tin cans with a long string, actually three tin cans with a long string. And then see if we could really stretch that tones across America, in a way that people were able to understand that, [crosstalk 00:27:36] in the meantime-

Kathy Finn:

Okay. I'm putting Florence on speaker phone, hopefully folks can hear her. So she's on speaker. [crosstalk 00:27:47]

Florence:

Can you all hear me?

Kathy Finn:

Yeah.

Florence:

Okay. So sorry for the technology glitches tonight. So I hear, I think it was Camilla who was speaking from a CVS and she was speaking about feeling threatened by shoplifters who come in quite aggressively and there's not security in the stores. And they're wondering how to create a sense of safety or cope with that stress. So speaking as a therapist, right? Not as the person who knows how to manage stores, I can say that in the course of doing your job, you feel threatened by violence, by somebody showing up with a violent demeanor, and you feel threatened for your safety. And there isn't somebody there to protect you like security or somebody whose job it is to get that person out of the store.

Florence:

That means you're showing up to a traumatic experience to work. It means part of your job is requiring you to face a threat of real violence. So as a therapist person, I just want to say that's going to have a real impact on your nervous system. As you try to go do your job while also be frightened for your physical safety while doing your job. And it's the threat against you.

Florence:

I also hear a potentially, a gender piece there you said at one point, I think that sometimes it's just women in the store and some of the men who come in and shoplifters are very aggressive, right? So there's a piece there of just feeling afraid of assault and that experience is traumatic and it's going to take time to recover. But the first part that needs to happen before recovering is really how to create safety. And who's responsible for safety in the store so that you don't have to be afraid of violence when you're working there. I hope that helps to just answer the question at the psychological level, right? You're going into a traumatic situation, when you go into just perform your everyday job. And it's not just the threat of COVID, it's the threat of physical violence against your person.

Kathy Finn:

Thanks Florence. I hope that that was helpful for Camilla. We have another question related to dealing with stress from somebody from [crosstalk 00:30:08] route seven O two. Hi, somebody [crosstalk 00:30:14] seven O.two. Yeah, your name isn't on here, but are you there?

Speaker 2:

Hi, I'm here. It's Helen from seven O two. I want to say hi. I want to thank you all. And thanks to therapists. My name is Helen and I'm a recovered alcoholic. My sobriety date is August 17th, 2014. And that's my question to the therapist. It's been very difficult. So I'm asking for myself, I'm asking it to put it out there to my 31,000 coworkers, if you could talk a little bit about the extra stress about alcoholism and people in recovery, the isolation factor, the restless irritable discontented, I haven't had a drink and I could say yes to every question that you listed. So, that's my question. If you could elaborate a little bit more on some extra coping mechanisms for those of us in recovery and those of us who may need help during these times.

Florence:

Okay. Helen, thank you for your question and for sharing your experiences, sobriety. So 2014, some years ago, congratulations on that. And thank you for asking and for bringing that issue forward. Anyone who comes into the pandemic with a substance use issue, whether they're in recovery, way in recovery or actively using the stress of this time is going to make everything that you're facing harder.

Florence:

So it's harder to maintain sobriety in the face of additional stressors, which is probably not something I needed to tell you. We know that, but when then stresses go on across weeks and months, it becomes really, really tough to maintain sobriety that we previously had to begin a course of sobriety if we, if it's time, but we haven't been able to begin. So all those things are harder, just like you said, with the additional stress, the additional isolation for some people, the difficulty of having an in-person meeting, to go to. I know some of my clients who are very active in going to AA, Al-Anon and other kinds of 12 step programs, had to figure out how to go online and what was their experience of going to online meetings.

Florence:

And I'd say some people have had a really great experience with that and some people not so much. So it's layered on a whole bunch of additional challenges for people in recovery or who otherwise just struggle with substance use. I would love to offer a bunch of coping stuff. And I'm hoping when we have time in a couple of weeks and beyond this, to be able to get more specific about coping in terms of sobriety and supporting sobriety, I guess I would just pose the same questions that we would in any, for any person who's in recovery and struggling with a stressor, which is if you have regular contact with a sponsor who you like, if you don't like your sponsor, or if your sponsor isn't really engaged with you in providing additional support, is it time to find somebody new or to try that out?

Florence:

If you are doing a program and you're doing regular meetings and you have a good relationship with a sponsor, it might also be time to reach out to a therapist who has a background in substance treatment because they can provide kind of an enhanced and more diverse range of tools above and beyond a 12 step program. Do you have on board, some basic stress reduction tools and a good understanding of the triggers that you face that might tip you into or tempt you or create stronger urges for substance use?

So that's just the landscape of how I think about it, as how do we bring more support on given that we can see the light at the end of the tunnel, right? Vaccines are headed towards us, but we know it's going to take us some months beyond that to recover. And before we really start to feel the stress lifting off our shoulders, how can we think about reducing stress for you in the next month, in the next three months? And then beyond that.

Kathy Finn:

Thank you so much for that awesome question and answer. We have one more question for Florence and then we're going to move on. And this is absolutely a good question to lead into, what's going to happen in a few weeks with more support. So this question is from Wyatt, from Ralph 271. Are you there Wyatt?

Kathy Finn:

Wyatt from Ralph from 271 are you there? [crosstalk 00:35:21].

Wyatt:

Hello. Can you hear me?

Kathy Finn:

We can hear you. Yeah, we can hear you now.

Wyatt:

Alrighty. First of all, I'd like to thank you for having me on and being able to ask the question. I'm currently working at the moment. So I just wanted to kind of listen to everybody and listen to all the good advice. And I won't take too much of your time. I guess my is, without going too much into detail, I lost my mom right before COVID around November and with COVID and everything on of that, I feel like my mental state has really gone down the drain and I've never been to therapy. I've never really done any sort of like mental health coping. I know my mom and my dad's trying to get me to go to Al-Anon meetings and stuff like that as a way to try to help. But I guess this is more towards the therapist or psychoanalyst. What are some places I can go to? What resources can I take advantage of to get some proper mental help, like from the therapist and all that?

John Grant:

Great question.

Florence:

Great question Wyatt and thank you for asking that? And I'm so sorry to hear about your mom, what a tough time that you must be having to have the stress of this time, come right in behind the bereavement and grief of the loss of your mom. So I just want to say that and acknowledge the depth of that. And to imagine other people like you in this moment who came into COVID already feeling raw or hurting or vulnerable or under stress, and then have this whole thing to send on top of that. And so in fancy psychology language, we would call that a kind of complex grief, right? The grieving from the loss of your mom is now being complicated by all this additional stress that's come in behind it. So enough said about that. Your question about therapy is such a great one.

Florence:

And I end up working with lots of people to help get them to therapy for the first time, because many people are very understandably nervous or unsure about what is this therapy stuff and how will it help me? And we have all kinds of beliefs about, if I go, is the therapist going to tell me I need to do the ABC and D and what if I don't want to do them? Or are they going to have a bunch of opinions about how I should be, or they're going to have judgments about things I should have done. So I want to say really clearly therapy is primarily a place where we receive support and healing through a safe space and a relationship with somebody we can trust. And the trust part builds up over time. But it's with a professional who is really skillful at building trust and being trustworthy that way.

Florence:

So a really good place to go to try to find a therapist and you can search by what issue you're interested in and how close are they to you and are they doing tele-health and do they take your health insurance plan? You can go to Psychology Today, would be one place. So psychologytoday.com and you can search for a therapist in your area. There's I believe nationwide service now that maybe [inaudible 00:38:42] can give you a link to this and we can put it out on the website. It's low cost and low fee therapy for frontline and essential workers. So I'm trying to pull up the contact information right now. Miranda's on the phone. She might have it. Does anybody there has the name of that service?

Kathy Finn:

Miranda may be on, but she's not on the speaker line, but we can, Therapy Aid Coalition.

Florence:

So there's an organization called Therapy Aid Coalition that also provides low cost and no cost therapy, right now for essential in frontline workers. And there're some resources that we're helping to develop to sort of help get people to therapists like people are uncertain about what do I say that first phone call or that first email? What do I say? What about what kind of help I'm looking for? And we can help kind of coach people really directly to go. Here's what you say at the very first time. And here's what you're looking for in a therapist. And here are red flags if you run into this, but a really good place to start Wyatt is with Psychology Today, or that Therapy Aid Coalition. And then you may need to hang in there and meet with, or have phone conversations with two or three people before you find somebody you click with.

Florence:

And so this would be the advice I give to everybody, which is allow yourself to talk to a couple of different therapists, because you really want to find somebody you feel comfortable with. It's a really individual thing, and it's somebody you're going to be speaking to about personal stuff, right? And so you just want to have a good feeling about them, and that's not something anybody can kind of decide for you. So it takes a little bit of conversation with people to kind of listen and figure out who you feel comfortable with. So I hope that helps kind of get that started for you. Yeah.

Kathy Finn:

Thanks Florence. I was going to say just one other thing, and I don't know, for those folks who are in our health plan, the UFCW Trust Fund health plan, either in the food trust or the drug trust or the Kaiser folks, some of the [Converse 00:40:57] folks have have a trust fund plan and not everybody has that, but

for those that do, which is most of our members, there are a lot of mental health options as well. So there's HMC as depends what trust fund you're in, but we have some mental health management too, that provide referrals as well.

Kathy Finn:

That was our last question on the mental health issue. We do have other questions that we're going to take later in the meeting. And at this point, we're going to move on to the business of the meeting. But I do want to mention before we move on that, first I want to thank Florence so much for being here. I think it's been a huge help and the members who've spoken, thank you. I want to thank you as well, just myself for, for taking the time to be here and let folks know that we are going to be continuing this relationship with Florence. We're going to have another meeting on March 23rd, which is going to be all dedicated. That whole meeting will be dedicated to mental health and Florence will be there assisting us and talking about these issues further, and Florence is helping us develop resources similar to what Wyatt asked for and some other people ask for. So just a huge thank you to Florence for being here. And we'll continue this journey together towards healing.

Florence:

Thank you for letting me be on the same evening. I hope the rest of your meeting goes well, and I'll talk to the rest of you soon. Take care.

Kathy Finn:

Okay. Thanks, Florence. Bye. Have a good night. Bye. Okay, so we're going to move on to the regular business of the meeting. So the first, let me just explain. So for those of you on the call in order to vote, we'll have some business where we'll have some, a few motions. This part will go very fast just before we do the directors reports and get to your questions. The motions will be done on as a poll question. So we'll ask the question and if you want to vote in favor of the motion, you'll press one for yes. And if you want to be opposed to the motion, you'll press two for no.

Kathy Finn:

So the first order of business is the minutes of the general membership meeting from December 8th, 2001, they are available to be read, or as is the custom, we would entertain a motion to waive the reading of the minutes and approve all the expenditures they're in. [crosstalk 00:43:41] did somebody make them the motion?

Danny:

Oh I thought your making the, [crosstalk 00:43:49] I'll make the motion.

John Grant:

I'll second.

Kathy Finn:

Okay. Danny made the motion and Paul seconded it. So we'll now vote on that motion. If you want to approve the minutes of the general membership meeting, press one for yes, or two for no, on your phone. So press one, to approve the minutes of December eight, press two for no, we'll give folks a

minute or maybe not quite a minute, half a minute to finish voting. So, the motion on the floor right now is to approve the minutes of the general membership meeting from December 8th, 2021.

Kathy Finn:

And if you want to approve them, you press one for yes and two for no. Okay. It looks like most people have voted now and the motion passes by 91%. The second order of business is the trustees report. I'm going to read through the trustees report and then we'll entertain a motion to accept that.

Kathy Finn:

So this is the trustees report for January 1st, 2020 through December 31st, 2020. So this is for the entire year of 2020. The fund balance at the beginning of the year was 28,495,942. During the year we had revenue of 20 million, \$701,664. And that was made up of primarily dues income, and then as well as fees and assessments and some rent income, investment, and interest income, and a small amount of other cash receipts.

Kathy Finn:

During the year of 2020, there were expenses of 24 million, \$213,630 made up of per capita tax, which is the money we pay to our international union for the many services that they provide, operating expenses, which includes the salaries of the staff, professional expenses, which would include lawyers, accountants, things like that, organizing and negotiation expenses, hardship expenses, and a small amount of other disbursements. And then we are due reimbursements from the trust funds in the amount of 614,776. And that is for those folks who worked for the local union, who do the benefits, who give advice, not advice, but help the members with, eligibility issues or other issues regarding their benefits. And we have an ending balance of 25,598,752. And that is the trustees report. Is there a motion to accept?

John Grant:

I move to accept? [crosstalk 00:47:02].

Kathy Finn:

Okay. Is there a second by second?

Camilla:

A second.

Kathy Finn:

Okay. Thank you. There's been a motion and a second to accept. No, she's good. To accept the trustees report all those in favor of approving the trustees report as read into the record, please vote. Yes. By pressing one on your phone. And if you do not want to approve the trustees report, you can press, you can say no by pressing two on your phone. So we'll give folks a minute. So I'll just repeat it one more time. This is a motion to approve the trustees report for January through December 2020 out as was read. If you want to approve, you press one for yes. And if you do not want to approve you, press two for no.

Kathy Finn:

Give people a few more seconds.

PART 2 OF 4 ENDS [00:48:04]

Kathy Finn:

Let's give people a few more seconds to vote. It looks like everyone's voted, who wants to, and the motion passes by 93%. The final order of business is the approval of the investment transactions. So some of the money that's that's held is invested to make additional money. And so we often have some investment transactions, so these are those for the month of January 2021. So during that month, we paid down some Merrill Lynch Government Securities in the amount of \$57,663. We sold a Citigroup corporate bond in the amount of \$256,034, sold exchange traded funds. Those are some stock funds in the total amount of \$45,644. Purchased common stocks through Merrill Lynch in the amount of \$103,583, and sold some other common stocks through Merrill Lynch in the amount of... in the total amount of \$175,797. And that concludes the investment transactions for the month of January, and that also requires a motion. So let me move to that one. So is there a motion to approve the investment transactions?

Speaker 3:

Motion to accept.

Kathy Finn:

Okay, [crosstalk 00:49:56] there's been a motion. Is there a second? Okay. Thank you, Paul. There's been a motion and a second to approve the investment transactions. All those in favor should press one on their phone for yes. And if you're opposed to the investment transaction report, you can press two on your phone for no. So again, this is a motion to approve the investment transactions for the month of January. In order to approve press one on your phone and to vote no, press two on your phone. We'll give people another 15 seconds to vote. Okay, so we'll stop the vote now, I think everybody's had a chance to vote. And the motion passes by 94%. I got one more thing, which is the monthly membership report for February 2021. So in the month of February, we had an increase in food membership of 129 members. We had an increase in our drug membership of eight members.

Kathy Finn:

We had a decrease of three members in general sales. We had no change in the professional division. One less member in the barber's division, no change in the beauty culturists. We had less seven members in the meat cutting division, we added an additional 47 members in meat packing, we added an additional two members in cannabis for a total addition of 175 members. And now we have a total of 31,880 members. And there are currently 1,870 members on withdrawal status due to leave of absence. That report doesn't... That's just for information only and doesn't require approval. And that is the end of the business portion of the meeting. And we can go on to director's report.

John Grant:

Thank you, Kathy. So at this time we'll have seven very short reports from the different directors reviewing the work that's been done over the last quarter. So I first ask Chief of Staff Linda [inaudible 00:52:39]. The subject is of special interest for the membership: that of the work that's been done around vaccinations.

Linda:

Hi, good evening, everyone. So, 770 has been working many months advocating at the state and local level to ensure that you and your co-worker's issues remain at the forefront, from COVID protections to hazard pay, which you'll hear more about, and really making sure that you are recognized as critical essential workers in California and are prioritized for vaccination. So the great news is that most of you and your co-workers should be able to get vaccinated at your workplace, at your pharmacy, or at another store nearby. If not now, then very soon, right? The supply of vaccines is expected to increase dramatically in the coming weeks, if you have not yet been able to get a vaccine.

Linda:

So the majority of our members who do not have access are ones in LA County. 770 has partnered with LA County and Curative to be able to vaccinate those without access at their workplace. And to date we've vaccinated roughly 2,700 folks in LA County and will be vaccinating an additional 7,000 folks in the coming week. 770 is also partnering with the Central Coast Labor Council to vaccinate our members in the tri-county's area on March 20th and the 21st.

Linda:

So if you haven't already been vaccinated, we strongly urge you to please consider vaccinating to protect yourself, your co-workers, and your loved ones. It's really the only way that we can make sure that we end this pandemic. And also just a brief plug. We'll have a full vaccination discussion with Dr. Gary Richwald, an epidemiologist, and Natalie Ourishian next week on Wednesday, March 17th at 7:00 PM. We'll send out details soon and there'll be a full discussion of all the various types of vaccines out there, and Dr. Richwald and Natalie Ourishian can answer all of your questions. Looking forward to it.

Kathy Finn:

Next is Danny Garcia giving you the field report.

Danny Garcia:

Thank you, Kathy. Good evening, everyone. So I will be reporting on Food 4 Less negotiations. So as of this Sunday, March 7th, our Food 4 Less contract expired. We have been negotiating with Food 4 Less since January and on Wednesday, March 3rd, we were scheduled to have a two day of negotiations, Wednesday and Thursday, and the company decided not to meet with us or our committee made up of members, our bargaining committee. And so they want us to vote their unfair proposal. So we will, I will cover the proposal really quick. It's a three-year offer with the first two years of 50 cents offer and 55 cents on the third year. But the company has also failed to recognize our proposals of a bargaining around hazardous conditions, addressing full-time positions, including putting our Food 4 Less workers to be part of the same scholarship program that the Ralphs members are. They've also failed to bargain over an additional week of vacation for those members who started on or after October 4, 2004.

Danny Garcia:

So we will be taking their proposal to a vote all of next week. We will be voting at every Food 4 Less store throughout the week at different times, different dates and times, but also on Friday, the 19th, we will be hosting all day voting at our offices and at I-B-E-W Local 11 in the San Fernando Valley. We know our Food 4 Less workers deserve better, and our members are willing to reject this offer and show Food

4 Less that they deserve better and expect more from a company who has made billions of dollars throughout this pandemic.

Danny Garcia:

So I just wanted to also share that on their offer, it is only for the top rate and that would only be about 38% of our members that would receive that increase and our UC's and the rest of our members would not receive any kind of raise based on their proposal to this. So we know we have to do better by our members and we expect to have a high turnout for our vote next week. I'll pass it over to Kathy now.

Kathy Finn:

Okay. Next, we're going to hear about another negotiations that we're just about to get into from Cindie McGinnis. We'll talk about Kaiser.

Cindie:

Hi everyone. Thank you, Kathy. As you know, we have joined The Alliance, the last bargaining go round. So we're getting ready for local and national bargaining on our national contract. We're looking to keep our retiree benefits and our medical benefits the way they are. We're also looking at a few things of rolling over your life balance days. Instead of only being paid out of half of what you don't use, we want to be able to roll them over so that you'll be able to continue using them the following year. We're also looking at parity pay for our current county area. They make a significant less amount of money than our LA County area does. We're also looking at our bilingual pay increase for the amount of interpretation that our employees do. They deserve to have a higher increase for that.

Cindie:

We're also looking at staffing. Since COVID hit, our medical centers have been hit terribly hard and staffing has decreased tremendously due to the labor pool and pulling our employees and the way we do our work. So we're looking at how can we have better staffing in our facilities and in our departments. Those are just a few of the things. Those of you that are on the call, we've sent out surveys. Please be sure to take your surveys. This is how we know what you're interested in and what you would like us to address with the table. Thank you.

John Grant:

Thank you, Cindy. We appreciate the Kaiser report and that's an upcoming battle that we're all going to have to unite behind. Next I'd ask Matt O'Malley, Director of Research and Bargaining, to give report on both research and the cannabis work that he's been directing.

Matt:

Thanks, John. So I'm happy to report that the cannabis division started off 2021 on a good foot by ratifying a new five-year collective bargaining agreement with the California Caregivers Alliance in Silver Lake. Their contract guarantees living wages, access to affordable healthcare, and includes a new robust policy protecting members from discrimination and sexual harassment, which were our members' top priorities. Beginning in February, we began negotiations with our largest signatory employer, MedMen. This is a multi local of bargaining that includes shops in both Orange counties and San Diego counties. The negotiating committee includes members from every affected shop and the main priorities that we're focusing on are the companies tip policy, wages, health insurance, and then also sexual

discrimination and harassment. So the cannabis division has established a ambitious goal of doubling its membership in 2021. Despite the limitations of COVID, we intend to do this through a combination of organizing related entities to our existing signatory shops, as well as organizing union operators and spanning into our jurisdiction and non-union operators that include the Shryne Group, Catalyst, and Sweet Flower.

Matt:

So the research department has primarily been focused on providing the data and the facts to underpin our efforts, to both secure vaccinations for our essential members, as well as giving our allies and elected officialdom the information they need to defend against the onslaught from corporate America through its attack dog, the California Grocers Alliance, trying to undermine our ability to win hazard pay at the various cities and counties throughout 770's jurisdiction. So it's been essential for us to be able to provide them updated facts about the scope of COVID infections in grocery stores and just the really immense scale of profiteering that's gone on by grocery and drug retail companies, as well as meat packing and food processing plants throughout the pandemic. Thank you.

John Grant:

Thank you, Matt. As we all can imagine by just looking at tonight's hearing sized phone call, the difficulties that working virtual during this pandemic has, and yet, despite that, we're taking aggressive moves to in fact, double our membership and continue the organizing and giving more and more and more workers, the right to exercise a voice at work. But the work that we do at work is important, is that we have to keep ourselves developed and ahead of the times, and the ways that enable all of us to become more productive and exercise democracy. And Paul Edwards, who wears many hats, the Chief Financial Officer for the union, as well as the Director of Workforce Development, will report back on some of the work that the successful grant that he's steered this union towards to be able to make our membership more productive and more effective. Paul.

Paul Edwards:

Hi, good evening everybody. Thank you, John, I appreciate that. So local 770 is currently active in several workforce training and development programs for our members right now, as John had mentioned, and I'll just briefly try to touch on some of those, the most important. One of which would be the COVID-19 Food Worker Safety Training program. This program is actually in collaboration with UC Berkeley's Labor and Occupational Health program. UFCW union reps and stewards will have the opportunity to participate in the COVID-19 food sector leader training sessions. Some of those have already occurred, but basically what the purpose behind the program, as in the training program, is to identify and document COVID related hazards and needed preventative measures at your work site. Some of the other bullet points would be to assess the employer's work site for the proper COVID prevention plans that are required under Cal OSHA regulations, and the third major point that we want to walk away from with the training is to describe workers' rights for a safe and healthy workplace.

Paul Edwards:

Then the workers, you know, our members' ability to take action in the workplace without having retaliation. So, as I mentioned, this was in collaboration with UC Berkeley. It's a very comprehensive training program. If any stewards are still interested in participating in one of these training sessions there, they should reach out to their union representatives who can get them the proper information through me. The last training session available will be actually next week on Monday and Wednesdays,

3/15 and 3/17, both dates for two hours each day, 9:30 to 11:30 AM. So other than the Food Worker Safety Training Program, we've also just been fortunate enough to receive a public health council grant through a local 770's foundation. We just received \$150,000. The funding will be used to develop public health councils and our food processing industry. Workers will identify potential health officer order violations and enforce compliance with the work sites as well.

Paul Edwards:

Health officer orders are mandated, so they are legally enforceable now through local directives that companies are required to implement to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in their workplaces and in the community. And this is especially important to any members or anyone who is employed in the food processing industries. We've seen the outbreaks of COVID spread rapidly throughout many of those facilities.

Paul Edwards:

Let me touch base on one of the other programs where we actively have up and running at one of our packing houses, Overhill. We have an employment training panel COVID program as well. The state just a couple of weeks ago, I believe it was, approved funding for this program as well, which will provide onsite training to our packing house members put on by both the employer and the union in partnership for safety and compliance measures, to make sure that members in our packing house division, the Overhill plant, have COVID-19 measures in place for compliance and for safety for all the workers there.

Paul Edwards:

So that's a pretty much an overview of all the programs we've been successful in garnering in regards to health and safety for our members. And I just want to mention one last thing, because I know I just talked longer than everybody else, so I'm in trouble now, but for those members out there who are interested in learning more about some worker's compensation, benefits, and rights, we will be having a webinar on that, that you'll all be invited to on March 23rd. We'll be emailing and text blasting out, everybody on this call and all of our members to attend an hour workman's compensation training on how to fill out forms and educating people about their rights in the workplace. And again, that would be on March 23rd, and you'll receive information on that directly. That'd be a text or an email, and that concludes my report. Thank you, John.

John Grant:

Thank you, Paul. Everybody's taking all my lines for the rest of this thing. I just want to say, somewhat immodestly, before Nam Le, our Director of Politics and Civil Rights, speaks about the work we've done on hazard pay. There is nobody else. There is nobody else within the UFCW, much less the rest of the labor [inaudible 01:07:26], that has a psychotherapist on to talk about trauma and the results of this within the workplace. There is no one else that's taken the lead like we have around the delivery of vaccinations to our membership and within the community. The leadership that we provided within the Kaiser negotiation through Cindie McGinnis stands out ahead of all the other locals. There is no one else in terms of this and the groundbreaking work around cannabis that we've done here. And as evidenced by Matt's report, much less the training and workforce development grants that Paul did. But before I ask them to do it, I actually would ask Bertha Rodriguez to talk about how she's tied this all together, what some of the other ways we are of illustrating what we've done to our membership.

Bertha Rodriguez:

Thank you, John. Good evening, everyone. So with the purpose of keeping all of you informed about the most relevant issues that have an impact on our union, Local 770, and in fact, the issues that have an impact on you and your life, our comm's team have been sending out updates and notices around hazard pay, their vaccine clinics, and that our local has hosted, as well as the Food 4 Less negotiation. Actually, we offer a spokesperson's training for the Food 4 Less bargaining committee members for them to be able to give interviews to media outlets during this contract I'm paying. So we also been documenting all actions and mobilizations related to all these issues. Our internal and external communications world has utilized various communications channels, such as text messages, hustles, there's 770's website and social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Hopefully you guys are already following us on our social media pages.

Bertha Rodriguez:

If not, you can look for our 770 Facebook page, Instagram, and also Twitter. We're working on the final special [inaudible 01:09:59] timeline project that highlights all the achievements that our local has gained throughout the COVID pandemic in the year 2020. It includes key initiatives and policies that our members and the union won last year as part of our fight for a safer workplace and better working conditions for all of you. And so we're working and supporting all the different campaigns and initiatives. And also, as I mentioned earlier, we've been working with numerous media outlets to highlight our members' stories as essential workers during the pandemic. And we actually got in great media coverage in various media outlets, such as NPR News, NBC 4, and all the mainstream media that you will know. So this is my report tonight.

John Grant:

Thank you, Bertha. And then last I'd ask our director of Politics and Civil Rights, Nam Le, to report on another ground bank breaking era of, sort of activity around ordinances for hazard pay. And Nam, as you give your report, can you, I know there's a question that's been popping up a lot amongst the membership is, "Why has hazard pay been affected at some areas of the city, but not in others? And what happened with that? And how has this thing to be unfolded?"

Nam Le:

Will do John, thank you so much for the intro. Good evening, everyone. It's my great privilege to do this report out on behalf of your union and a lot of hardworking staffers and directors. Our team is led by Rachel Torres, who's not here tonight to give the report, and I'll tell you why. She is listening now, but she's also monitoring the city of Santa Monica. She finished Alhambra earlier tonight... Excuse me, Glendale and-

PART 3 OF 4 ENDS [01:12:04]

Nam:

But earlier tonight, give me Glendale. And what that says is we are doing our best to expand to as cities as possible. But let me kind of go backwards and give you a little preview... background, I should say of how we got here. In the past few months we saw a huge upswing in infection rates in our membership. In December and January alone, we had over 2,500 members who were infected with COVID-19 yet companies are not paying hazard pay for your sacrifice, dedication, risking your lives to keep our communities fed and receiving essential items. So we took the fight to our local leaders, and we're proud to say that we have passed Hero Pay all across our region, throughout the state of California and

Washington. Let me repeat that. We have started a movement and it started with all of you. For the past 12 months, you've gone to work, you've made sacrifices, you've risked your health and safety of your families, of your coworkers to do what you can to be heroes, essential workers, frontline workers, take your pick, it all applies.

Nam:

But most recently, let me tell you about our victories. The victories were led by rank and file members and your union reps and the union in collaboration with all of our resources. Let's talk about victories, Montebello, \$4 hazard pay per hour for grocery and drug retail for 180 days. Moving onto West Hollywood, \$5 for 120 days for grocery only. We're not giving up in drug stores in West Hollywood. We're coming back to the next council meeting. This is a step-by-step process. And I'll explain that in a little bit. Los Angeles City and L.A. County unincorporated, \$5 per hour for 120 days for grocery and drug stores. We're not stopping there, we have to go city by city, but that's the only choice we have. But we're moving in other cities, for example, Pasadena led by rank and file members who recently testified at city council with moving testimonials. That is what is needed. It is you. It is your voice. It is your action. And it is what you have sacrificed for all of us. To have access to food and essential services. We're also moving onto Glendale, Burbank, Alhambra, and we are working to introduce in Santa Barbara.

Nam:

Many of you have been a part of our efforts for the past three months to make this possible. You have submitted thousands of postcards to your elected leaders, spoken at hearings, as I mentioned earlier, and encourage your coworkers to get engaged. That is so critical. It can't just be some rank and file members. It has to be as many of us as possible. So please keep up the great work, spread the word. If you got the hazard pay, tell others who haven't had the hazard pay to step up and fight. We can win. We are proud.

John Grant:

Thank you. [inaudible 01:15:29].

Nam:

We will continue to work with you to get this policy passed, but we need you. And I know there's a lot of questions of why and how, or more importantly, when the movement starts, you have to start in a place of victory and it grows. It spreads like wildfire, Long Beach, Northern California, Seattle, Washington. It takes time, we can't just flip a switch and just turn all the cities on, but we can do it city by city, county by county. And it's going to take all of us. So if you have questions and we don't ask them today, contact us, we will get back to you. I want to hear from you. We all want to hear from you. You live and work in your communities. That's who these council members listen to and are concerned about. We can't do this statewide yet. We got do it city by city and we'll continue to do so. John, I'll turn it back to you and please let me know if I miss anything.

John Grant:

Right. Thank you Nam. I think Kathy's... We're going to take some questions and comments from the membership that Kathy has on her-

Kathy Finn:

Yeah.

John Grant:

... laptop to be able to find out whose in their queue or the line.

Kathy Finn:

Yeah. We only have a few questions. I do want to say that there are several of them about why certain areas don't have hazard pay and other areas do. So a lot of people put in, "Why does my city..." Somebody of Agoura Hills and other people asking why they're... When is it coming to Ventura? When is it coming here? When is it coming there? So there're many questions about that. And I think Nam answered that we have to go city by city. It's moving. I know it's now in Alhambra and some other places. So anyway, it is moving to a lot of other cities. As Nam said, it just goes where there's member activity trying to get it done. So that's the answer to that question.

Kathy Finn:

Then I did want to say one thing before we get to the questions, which is a really important part of the hazard pay ordinance, which is an anti-retaliation portion of the ordinance, which would not permit a company, such as Ralph's or Food 4 Less, for example, and I'm picking them out on purpose, to cut people's hours in response to the passage of hazard pay. So we are hearing from a number of Ralph's members and a number of Food 4 Less members that their managers, or other people in management, have told them that the company is specifically cutting hours in response to this hazard pay ordinance. And we really need to get statements from folks to challenge that because that is illegal under the hazard pay law. So reps are going to be out trying to get statements and information, investigate these allegations of retaliation. It's really super important that people participate so that we can keep the Kroger companies of Ralph's and Food 4 Less from cutting hours during this hazard pay period.

Kathy Finn:

Okay. So let's see here. Oh, here's a good question from Tomasa Resendiz and Ralph's 294. Are you there, Tomasa? Tomasa, are you there? Tomasa from Ralph's 294? If you're on mute, you need to unmute yourself because we can't hear you. Well, Tomasa's question was asking about a contact number, where to schedule a vaccine. So I'm going to let Linda maybe answer that question. If somebody wants a vaccine, what's the best way for somebody to schedule a vaccine.

Linda:

So this is Linda. If you'd like to schedule a vaccine, we are creating a landing page on our website with resources, because there are so many places now that are coming up for you all as essential food workers to be able to vaccinate. So whether it's through your city council member or your community clinic, or through us at 770, or the Central Labor Council, there are many different access points. And so we are pulling together a website to be able to direct you all so that you can find the place that's nearest and the most convenient to you. At your workplace, if you have a pharmacy and you work at a grocery store and you have a pharmacy, you should be able to vaccinate there soon as well.

Kathy Finn:

Okay, great. The next question is from Beatrice Carrillo, are you there Beatrice?

Beatrice Carrillo:

Hi Kathy. Yeah, my question was the same thing. It was about that hazard pay because many of my, I call them my brothers and sisters, they were asking me about it and no one's been able to give them an answer. So that's what I wanted to bring back to them.

John Grant:

Just to add a little bit to what Nam said, the strategy was this, go big where we're likely to get success, which is why we started with L.A. City and L.A. County. Because if we start this ball rolling and we have a couple defeats at the beginning, other municipalities, other cities would be reticent to adopt it. So we want to just go strong. Cities that will not be bullied by the California Grocers Association. So when we pass it in the L.A. County, unfortunately that doesn't mean that every city in L.A. County gets it, it's only those cities that don't have, basically, a city council or a charter. So that's why it's so spotty and we want it to build an L.A. County before we take it up to the Tri-County. So that's a little bit of explanation. It's really, how do you build a movement that can incorporate all these different cities, municipalities, counties, and different sort of governmental entities? And it's sort of a strategy that's unfortunately, a bit like playing checkers, you sort of hop to hop and skip and jump before you can be successful.

Kathy Finn:

Part of Beatrice's question, at least what the screener wrote, was about how can you find out if your store or what stores are covered and what stores are not covered. And I think, which I'm not sure that we've done this, but if we haven't, I'm going to suggest that we will, in fact, we'll tell somebody here to do it. We are going to start a web page on our website that gives the progress of hazard pay and what stores are impacted where, so people can go and find their store and see whether they're entitled to hazard pay. And if they're not entitled yet, if their store is in an area that's currently working on hazard pay and what you can do. Because we do have some movements going in some areas where folks are doing postcards and pushing for hazard pay.

Kathy Finn:

And there's another thing, we have a new app. I don't even think we had this at the last meeting, so this is a good time to announce. We have a new app that you can find on the app store. They just look for Onsite 770? Yeah. So you go to the app store, you search for Onsite 770. And that app has all kinds of information, including whether your store qualifies for hazard pay or we'll put it on the app?

John Grant:

We'll put it on there.

Kathy Finn:

We're going to put it both the on the website and the app and everyone will be able to find out where your store stands in terms of... on the road to hazard pay.

Beatrice Carrillo:

That's great news. Kathy. I know that Hilda's solution is really.... She's very compliant. She's very understanding and I know she's for us, so I'm hoping that she'll continue to push for us.

Kathy Finn:

Okay. Well thank you.

John Grant:

Yes, she is.

Kathy Finn:

Yeah. Thanks, Beatrice, for your question. Because now we're going to get this on the website and so it's going to help.

Beatrice Carrillo:

Thank you for your help. It's just a big help. Thank you.

Kathy Finn:

Okay. Bye. Let's see, we'll try this one. We'll take a question from Victoria at the Vaughn's in Ojai. I love that town, by the way.

Victoria Macintosh:

Hi, my name's Victoria Macintosh.

Kathy Finn:

Hi. Victoria.

Victoria Macintosh:

Hi, I have a question about everything from how we've been protected, because I'm a union steward, to where we're going now. I have a lot of questions actually. So.

Kathy Finn:

Well, we're running short on time. So we're going to take your... I think your main question is about safety protections, right?

Victoria Macintosh:

Right. I've I've been fighting for that for a year for my coworkers and I've been ignored. And then they finally gave us these stupid plexiglass things behind us, where we have to go in and out of our check stands, because we're not six feet apart. In and out of our check stands [inaudible 01:25:06] do anything.

Victoria Macintosh:

They came up with this after a year, when I had talked to the new district manager, I don't know, three to four months ago, he said it was going to happen. Anyway, long story short, they haven't been protecting us since this thing started. As far as keeping people out of our stores, limiting the number of customers, making sure they have masks. I know this is all old news. I mean, now people are getting vaccinated and it's supposedly better, but it's just been really frustrating as a steward to see how the company only cared... I mean, when L.A. shut down all their... All of a sudden, everyone came to Ojai because Sunset Magazine and LA Times said, "Oh, it's a safe place to go." You know?

John Grant:

Victoria, that's a good question. In a way, it is frustrating, disappointing, and tragic. And in a way-

Victoria Macintosh:

But you know me, John, you know me because I'm outspoken sometimes, but I've just been so frustrated with the fact that the union, in a way, he wasn't able to protect us from a lot of this stuff that I thought they could protect me from. When I would contact them, it wasn't like it was important. Corporate still won, you know?

John Grant:

Right. I'm going to take your point and I take responsibility to the extent that we haven't been. But it's, in a way Victoria, no different than any contract enforcement. This is a fight that, let's be clear, and I'm so appreciative of when you raise this, that we can never let our guard down. It is a constant struggle to fight for respect and dignity on the job. What we did, we gained many things this year and we're actually cataloging them now. We gained the worker's comp presumption. We gained the paid quarantine leave. We gained a whole new set of OSHA protocols. Now, so there were two aspects to that fight. The first was to figure out what's needed, as well as the mask requirement. And that was a fight in and of itself largely went with the different legislatures or governmental bodies.

John Grant:

But the second aspect, which is what you highlight, so correctly, is it's not enough to pass a law. It's not enough to get a new contract. What has to happen has to be an awareness and an empowerment at each market, each plant, each dispensary, to make sure that those laws, those protocols, those safety guidelines, are observed. How do we do that? That's a tough issue. That's one that we struggle with every day with reps who, frankly, have been going 70, 80 hours or more a week trying to get that. But in a way, the company has the power to do it. So how do we do that? It's when the workers in the store or the plant get up and decide and show their force and our force revolves around the question of labor.

John Grant:

Let me give you an example from my alma mater, Farmer John, when they've had instances where they've refused to observe the protocols there, those workers got together in a delegation and walked off the job went right to the personnel director's office and said, "We can't work because it's unsafe." Which is their right to do. Even though they're [inaudible 01:28:57], they won action by action, getting more and more protection. The same thing has happened in a variety of stores. Well workers have said, "we can't work like this. I'm not going to talk to this customer." It's an uneven process and we're not always perfect about this. The question is, how do you get that? And it's building up that strength with it, that a manager knows I'm not going to screw with these workers because I'm going to suffer the consequences on the shop floor. That they're actually more concerned about the reaction of a shop floor than they are the district manager. And right now they're leaning that way. We've got to push it the other way and it's a day by day battle. And we welcome your suggestions and these membership meetings and further meetings we'll have about how we can activate our membership to be more effective. But thank you for your question and highlighting it. And please, I know... Keep up with your strength and keep fighting to make your store in all of our stores safer.

Kathy Finn:

So we've reached 8:30, John. So I think we're going to have to wrap up, but I just want to say, so there's two questions pending. Well, there's several questions pending. We will have somebody for everyone who has a question that didn't get through the queue, your rep, or somebody will contact you tomorrow to make sure you get an answer. But I did want to say, somebody asked about the Johnson and Johnson vaccine on here about whether it's safe and it is safe. In fact, it's easier, you only have to come get your shot once. That is the shot that many of our vaccine clinics that we're running are going to be having going forward because it's easier. It's just as safe as any other and we believe, just as effective. So yes, the Johnson and Johnson vaccine, we think is, is excellent. There will be a call with Dr. Gary Ridgewell coming up soon, where you can ask your questions about that.

Kathy Finn:

Then someone else had a question just about suffering tremendous hardship and what does the union have to help? I do want to say we do have a hardship committee. We'll have somebody call you, the person who had this question. There is a hardship committee where we hear the hardships of our members and try to support and help our members through some super hard times. So I just wanted to let that person know that we'll be reaching out to you, as well as others on the call who had questions. But John, you want to wrap up?

John Grant:

Yeah. So just three things to sort of continue this conversation we've had tonight. On Wednesday, March 17th, St. Patrick's day. So before you go out to celebrate St. Patrick's, you probably can't go anywhere anyway, before you stay at home and tint your beer green, we'll be having another vaccination discussion with Dr. Gary Ridgewell, an epidemiologist. [inaudible 01:31:50] If you recall, has actually been on a call with us before and was very well received. So Dr. Gary will answer Wednesday, March 17th, St. Patrick's day at 7:00 PM, all our questions and ideas and comments you have around vaccinations. The following week on Tuesday, March 23rd., this issue of when you get sick and you get sick at work, the workers' compensation law firm, Gordon Edelstein is going to have a workers' compensation webinar from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM and all these will be recorded. So you can actually pick them up later to talk about workers' compensation. What's the interplay between the new laws between COVID-19 and your ability to, in fact, to get rehabilitated recuperate and recover from the company for any illness or injury that you suffer at work.

John Grant:

Then later that same day, it's a double header. Florence Gardner will return Dr. Gardner at 6:00 PM, not physically, but by phone, to discuss with us the issue of trauma. It is one... I think she rightfully and so well, singled out, it is not like a cut on the arm, like a broken bone. These injuries are just, if not more serious, but they're internal and they're not visible to the naked eye. So Dr. Gardner's work is extremely important. So with that, I recall for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Danny Garcia:

Motion to accept-

John Grant:

There's a motion to adjourn by Danny Garcia and seconded by Paul Edwards. According to Robert's rules of orders, motions concerning adjournment are not debatable. Not that anybody would have. So all

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those in favor of, we don't have a polling question, so basically, if you please raise your right hand, if you vote yes to adjourn.

Kathy Finn:

Aye.

John Grant:

You can't follow instructions, Kathy.

Kathy Finn:

I raised my right hand and said aye.

John Grant:

And if you're raise your left hand. Judging from my position right here at the head of the table. Motion to adjourn passes and this meeting is now adjourned. We look forward to... Our next meeting is Wednesday, March 17th, at 7:00 PM. With Dr. Gary. Be safe out there and strength, vision, and a burden patience to us all.

PART 4 OF 4 ENDS [01:34:17]