

Local Executives Manual



The Union of Northern Workers' Mission is to inspire, engage, and empower workers and community through quality education, effective representation, model public service, and political action

Fifth Edition 2015



Securing the Future Through Solidarity and Service

LOCAL EXECUTIVES' MANUAL

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Thank you all!!

Chaka Rukobo

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UNW Local Executives' Manual

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A Word From The President

Dear Sisters and Brothers;

I am really excited that we have now finally written and produced this Manual that will help you, as leaders of our Locals, to run efficient Locals, in a way that reflects the reality of the times faced by our Union, the UNW. For me personally this has been a long time coming.

As a Union, we are now moving increasingly towards the grassroots and our efforts will be directed at providing more, better quality, reliable and efficient service to our members. We are talking about more and better services in education, representation, grievance handling, organising and so on. We will be addressing issues that directly affect our membership, their families and have direct impact on their lives and within their communities.

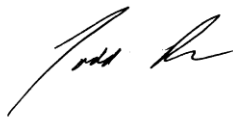
The labour movement also faces new challenges in the North. With the emergence of cutting costs, diamond mining, and possibly, oil and gas, a different set of employers will be working with us. The UNW needs to be prepared for these new demands. We see this future, however, as an opportunity to provide world-class service to more brothers and sisters who will be joining our Union as our organisation drive continues to bring in new members. Our numerical strength will be our advantage. The service quality we deliver for our members will be our distinguishing factor.

We need strong Locals to achieve these goals. Our Locals will need to become stronger because they are led by dynamic, focussed, dedicated and visionary Local Executives.

This Manual will assist you in this regard. The Manual is also part of a UNW education programme called Local Executive Training (LET). I urge you to actively participate in the LET programme so as to benefit from education, sharing experiences and the exchanging of ideas. Part of the LET programme affords you opportunities for mentorship attachments at the UNW offices. Other components include leadership development with the PSAC. Take full advantage of these initiatives.

I am confident that through our Locals we will, together, make the UNW a bigger and stronger Union of choice for workers in the North: a Union that responds to the needs of the grassroots members in a timely fashion: a Union that faces new and bigger challenges ahead with confidence, resolve and sense of purpose and determination.

In solidarity,



Todd Parsons

1. Introduction:

1.1 The new union agenda¹

Today's globalised economy presents our trade union movement with new challenges. Industrial relations and labour issues have been transformed as a result. Contracting-out, outsourcing, downsizing, cost cutting, offshore relocations, deregulation, privatization, total quality management are some of the current practices undermining long-established union problem-solving mechanisms such as collective bargaining and grievance handling procedures in Canada.

Unions, such as the UNW and the PSAC to which the UNW is affiliated, face challenges countering these developments. They need to reinforce their power at the bargaining table. As well, unions need to devise new, innovative and improved ways of servicing their membership in this new environment. Therefore, it is time for a new union agenda: an agenda that requires vision, strategic approach to problem-solving and appropriate reorganization of resources.

This agenda can be achieved through:

- ! political lobbying
- ! direct action (campaigns, involvement etc)
- ! negotiating collective agreements that are relevant to members' needs
- ! forming alliances with other unions and social justice groups
- ! organizing new workers and consolidating existing membership ranks
- ! education and training
- ! strengthening members' voices at the workplace and
- ! supporting effective Local structures.

Officers who lead the new labour movement will need to be adequately prepared for the challenges that lie ahead. Information and education will increasingly help to achieve this goal. An informed and knowledgeable leadership easily sees the big picture and can translate the Union's goals into success.

This Local Executives' Manual is a start in this direction. The Manual was developed for UNW members who choose to serve the general membership by being on their Locals' executive committees. It is designed to help these executive officers - the Union's frontline guard - to better prepare for the right attitude, develop skills and enhance the knowledge base required to run dynamic and effective UNW Locals.

¹ Parts of this Manual were adapted from the PSAC's *Local Officers' Handbook* published in September 1999. We acknowledge the PSAC's illustrious lead in developing a very informative handbook.

Strong Locals that can firmly respond to the needs of the membership and support the entire UNW structure are crucial. This way, with a sound foundation in place, the Union can concentrate its resources on adequately meeting the challenges of a fast emerging global economy.

This Manual can be used as a stand-alone reference. However, to gain maximum benefit from using the Manual, it is strongly recommended that Local officers participate in the Local Executive Training (LET) programme as well.

The LET programme:

- is available to Local executive committee members, especially those who are newly elected
- introduces executive members to current best practices in running efficient Locals
- provides a forum where officers from different Locals meet and compare best approaches to local administration
- enables participants to leave the programme with a concrete action plan that will help them determine the course and direction their respective Locals will take
- is an integral part of the overall UNW education and training programme which is designed to inform, educate and empower UNW members
- has a mentorship attachment component that allows Local executives to work at UNW headquarters. This way, executive officers can gain more knowledge and deeper understanding of how their Union works and experience first-hand practical situations dealing with a wide cross section of employers
- is directly linked to the PSAC Leadership Development Programme which develops skills in leading successful, responsive and dynamic Locals.

1.2 Let us hear your views!

This Local Executives' Manual was developed to help you, the Local Officer, manage and run your Local better. It contains guidelines, recommendations and suggestions for running an efficient Local. It also highlights the requirements laid out in UNW By-Laws and Regulations for running Locals.

As in all dynamic situations, things change and new ideas emerge. This is the same with the labour movement.

As you use this Manual, if you find that something is not working out quite the way it is supposed to, please let us know. We always welcome your feedback as it helps us improve the quality of service to you the Local Officer and, thus, to our general membership.

2. What is the Union of Northern Workers?

The Union of Northern Workers (UNW) was established in 1967. UNW is a component of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC).

The objectives of the UNW, as stated in the Union's By-Law 3.1, are to:

- (1) unite all employees within the Northwest Territories (NWT) into a single union that acts on their behalf
- (2) obtain, through democratic means, the best possible standards of compensation and other terms and conditions of employment for all employees within the NWT and to protect their interests, rights and privileges
- (3) support the PSAC to further its constitutional responsibility for the improvement and protection of compensation and other terms and conditions of employment of all employees
- (4) promote the objects outlined in the Constitution of the PSAC
- (5) conduct educational, political, economic and other activities that advance and protect the economic and social conditions of its members and other working people.

This is achieved through:

- ! associating or affiliating with other unions, federation of unions, or associations with similar objects and purposes
- ! organising NWT employees in a single union, and
- ! bargaining collectively and entering into collective agreements with employers.

Almost 6000 members make up the UNW. They work for the territorial government, in hamlets, towns, school boards, health authorities, social services, mining as well as at airports, on ferries, and in forestry. These members are organized into 24 Locals, which in turn are located across 7 regions. An 11 member UNW Executive, which is made up of a full-time paid President and 1st Vice President as well as a 2nd Vice President together with 7 Regional Vice Presidents and an Equity Vice President, is responsible for administering and carrying out the affairs and objectives of the UNW.

The diagram below illustrates the current UNW structure. Refer also to Appendix 1.

HOW THE UNION WORKS TOGETHER

(As of Dec 2014)

(This chart is for illustrative purposes only. Please check with your Local, RVP or UNW Executive for a more formal organizational chart)

23 LOCALS:

- X0001
- X0002
- X0003
- X0006
- X0009
- X0010
- X0011
- X0012
- X0013
- X0016
- X0019
- X0021
- X0022
- X0025
- X0028
- X0029
- X0030
- X0031
- X0032
- X0033
- X0036
- X0345
- X3050

(Executive Committees run Locals. Committee members are elected during AGM's, held every November)

7 REGIONS:

- Deh Cho, made up of:
(Locals 13, 31)
- Ft Smith
(Locals 2, 12)
- Hay River
(Locals 6, 21, 22)
- Inuvik
(Locals 3, 19, 29)
- Kimberlite
(Locals 36, 3050)
- North Great Slave
(Locals 9, 10, 11, 25, 345)
- Somba k'e
(Locals 1, 16, 28, 30, 32, 33)

(Each Region is headed by a Regional Vice President)

PSAC NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

- PSAC National President
- Executive Vice President
- 7 Executive Regional Vice Presidents
- 18 Component Presidents (including UNW President)

UNW EXECUTIVE:

- UNW President
- 1st Vice President
- 2nd Vice President
- 7 Regional Vice Presidents
- Equity Vice President

(All the above 11 Executive Committee members are elected to their positions and provide political leadership. Additionally, UNW employs a small staff based in Yellowknife)

Triennial UNW CONVENTION:

- All UNW Executive members attend
- Locals with:
 - *1 to 75 signed members can send 1 delegate to Convention
 - *76 - 175 signed members: 2 delegates
 - *176 – 325 signed members: 3 delegates
 - *More than 325 signed members: 4 delegates, etc.

(“Triennial” means “every 3 years”)

PSAC Triennial CONVENTION:

- Members of National Board of Directors
- One delegate for each 400 members, or major part thereof, elected at Component Conventions
- One delegate per Area Council

NOTES:

1. UNW is one of 18 Components that make up the Public Services Alliance of Canada. PSAC is a national union
2. UNW President is a member of the PSAC's National Board of Directors
3. UNW Conventions are held before PSAC Conventions
4. Both these arrangements formalise the linkage between UNW and PSAC

3. What is a Local?

3.1 Strong Locals mean a strong union

The UNW is a grassroots-based, democratic and inclusive organization in which all members can participate equally. To facilitate this participation by its members, the Union is based, and functions, at the workplace level. These unionised workplaces are also referred to as “bargaining units”. In turn, bargaining units make up Locals. UNW By-Law 8² states that the Union shall be organized as Locals. In other words, the UNW is composed of Locals. Currently, the UNW is organized into 23 Locals.

Locals are the roots of the UNW. They are an important daily link between the membership and their union. Members have an opportunity to express their views at regular Local meetings and regular contacts with their Local executives. Members also elect their own Local executives. They also either appoint or elect their own Shop Stewards to represent them at each workplace.

An important task of the Local is to ensure that members are informed about Union activities. The Local also helps members feel a common cause with the Union, both within and beyond their workplace. How often have you heard members grumble that “the union hardly ever does anything for me?” Unfortunately, if members do not have concrete evidence or real examples of the Union fighting on their behalf, or the Union updating them on key developments, such sentiments often become too frequent. If members hardly ever hear about the Union or from their Local, they will form their impressions from a generally hostile public media and other equally unreliable sources.

It is important therefore to have strong, proactive Locals. The UNW will only be a strong union because it has strong Locals. A tree cannot be strong if its roots are weak.

Keeping members informed about their Union and actively involving them in its activities also motivates them more to take part in Local and Union activities. As members become better informed and educated about the Union’s activities and workers’ causes at their various workplaces, they also begin to appreciate your role as a Local executive member in achieving UNW’s objectives. Your credibility increases and, in turn, more members start to come to you with their problems and even ideas or suggestions to make the Union a truly dynamic, democratic and participatory workers’ movement that is responsive to its members’ needs.

Note that UNW By-Laws permit Locals to be divided into Sub-Locals for more effective representation. This point will be discussed later.

² This Manual should be read in conjunction with UNW By-Laws. These are available from the Union’s Yellowknife offices and through the Regional Vice Presidents as well as our website www.unw.ca

3.2 What do Locals do?

Locals are responsible for 3 major areas:

- ! Representation (under the Duty of Fair Representation principle, every member has the right to Union representation through their Local, whether they are card-carrying or Rands.) Locals also advance and protect workers' rights and interests
- ! Administration (this includes financial administration, conducting executive and membership meetings, electing officers, correspondence)
- ! Action (for example, organising, political and social-justice action, community participation and involvement as well as other activities that help maintain the Union's presence, visibility and image)

In addition, a Local has the following mandate. It

- ! can charge dues. These dues help pay for the cost of running the Local's affairs
- ! may also adopt its own By-Laws as long as the By-Laws do not conflict with the provisions of UNW By-Laws or the PSAC Constitution. A copy of all such By-Laws and amendments should be sent to the UNW headquarters immediately following approval by the Local
- ! may designate any one of its elected officers as a full-time paid officer of the Local. However, before assuming such full-time office, the officer should first obtain leave of absence without pay from their employer. The Local or Sub-Local is responsible for all costs associated with designating and maintaining a full-time paid officer
- ! has power to deal with employers' local representatives on matters concerning members' interests, subject to ratification and confirmation of the UNW Executive
- ! may initiate action on matters that have a broader effect on members' interests. This can be done by writing to the UNW Executive, or by a resolution to the next UNW or PSAC Convention, whichever is appropriate
- ! has the authority to discipline any member in accordance with the PSAC Constitution and PSAC Regulation 19³.

3.3 Composition of Locals

A Local is composed of all UNW members within a geographic or interest area. By-Law 11 sets the requirements for the setting up and operations of Locals. Beyond this provision, the actual size, make-up, composition, geographical coverage, etc. of the Locals is left to the UNW Executive to determine. As a result, the size, composition, coverage, etc. of each Local varies greatly to reflect this reality.

³ In addition to UNW By-Laws, Local Executives should be fully familiar with the Constitution and Regulations of the PSAC. These are also available through the UNW office and from Regional Vice Presidents and on www.unw.ca.

For example, some UNW Locals cover employees in one interest area, sector or workplace only (e.g. Local 3050 at Ekati and Misery mines; NWTPC, Aurora College, Stanton Hospital, Avens' Senior Centre). On the other hand, Locals 6 and 10 cover workers in different interest areas. Other Locals are based in one community only (e.g. Local 12 which is based in Ft Smith and covers Aurora College employees in that community only). On the other hand, Locals 01 and 03 are spread out over very large geographical areas. As well, the size of each Local varies. Some are fairly large with more than 800 members (e.g. Local 01) whilst others are quite small (e.g. Locals 25 and 30).

Similarly, the number and composition of executive members in each Local differ. This is generally determined by the Local's size. Regardless, By-Law 11 provides for a complement of an Executive Committee that comprises of at least 3 officers, i.e.

- President
- Vice-President
- Secretary/Treasurer.
-

The Chief Shop Steward is usually also a member of this Committee.

All Local Executive members are volunteers who willingly give of their time and energy to help their fellow brothers and sisters at the workplace.

3.4 Sub-Locals

As previously mentioned, the Union's By-Laws permit formation of Sub Locals. By Law 11 (2) allows, in the interest of members, Locals to be divided into Sub-Locals.

The following guidelines apply to Sub-Locals:

- A Sub-Local may be formed where there are 15 or more members
- However, a community or bargaining unit with less than 15 members can also form a Sub-Local in certain circumstances
- The Sub-Local would be run by its own executive committee
- It would have the right to claim dues rebates from the parent Local for each signed member in their records
- In turn, the Sub-Local's executive reports its activities to its parent Local

4 Local Executive members

4.1 Multi tasking

The Local is the centre of all Union activities. It provides a democratic framework for the Union. It is also a forum which enables members to make decisions, to formulate policies and provide guidance to their elected officers at the local level. People who run Locals therefore should be Union members who can lead Locals effectively and provide vision to achieve the desired goals.

Local Executives (also called “Local Officers”) are volunteers who are dedicated to seeing their Union’s goals accomplished. Working full-time jobs, they still invest their time and energy to organize their workplaces, administer the Local, service the membership, and provide union leadership at the Local level. They work long hours, often during their spare time, filing grievances; providing representation and leadership both at the workplace but also within their communities as well as safeguarding the integrity of the Union and defending its members’ rights and interests.

Juggling the above roles requires a combination of personal qualities, skills and a knowledge base that is wide and varied in order to be successful.

- Being a committed trade unionist at heart is a good starting point
- So is the ability to work well with diverse groups of people, e.g. members, management, the community, as well as the UNW Executive and staff
- Also important are diplomacy and tact
- Equally critical are organizational, administrative, communication and listening skills;
- A passion for justice; an understanding of the ever-changing labour issues and industrial relations environment; as well as good knowledge of collective agreements, employer policies and labour laws are all good assets
- Last in the list can also be added stamina, resilience, courage and a genuine desire to make a difference!

A Local Executive’s juggling act includes:

- ! affording every UNW member the right to receive representation before the employer
- ! organizing, orienting and signing up members
- ! Seeking, mobilising and accepting input from the membership
- ! participating in the collective bargaining process
- ! providing opportunities for members to participate, voice and vote and stand for election at meetings
- ! sharing and distributing information to members about their Union’s affairs
- ! ensuring that UNW and PSAC policies are understood, followed and implemented

- correctly
- ! getting involved in decision-making
- ! leading, guiding members
- ! visioning and showing new opportunities and challenges
- ! being accountable for decisions taken

4.2 Election of Local Executive members

The Local Executive plays a critical role in the Union. Therefore, it is important that members choose women and men who are committed to the goals of the Union and capable of taking members' interests and workers' rights to greater heights.

Local and Sub-Local Executive members are elected annually by members of their Local or Sub-Local. This happens either at a membership meeting or by a secret mail ballot sent out to the members, if the Local or Sub-Local Executives believe it advisable to do so.

To be a candidate, a member should:

- ! agree in writing to stand for office and
- ! be nominated by at least 2 members in good standing from the same Local or Sub-Local.

If a member is nominated for Local or Sub-Local office when they are absent from the general meeting, that member is allowed to let their name stand for election, provided they submit a letter to the Local or Sub-Local Executive indicating that they agree to stand for the office.

UNW Executive members cannot be eligible for election as Local or Sub-Local officers. This allows for separation of powers and minimizes conflict of interest.

During Local elections, the order to be followed is:

- ! President
- ! Vice-President
- ! Secretary-Treasurer
- ! Chief Shop Steward.

For Sub-Locals, elections shall proceed in the order of: President, Vice-President then Secretary-Treasurer.

In the event of a vacancy or unavailability in the office of the President of a Local or Sub-Local, the Vice-President fills the vacancy. Any other vacancies may be filled by election in the manner described above or by appointment by the Local or Sub-Local Executive.

Shop Stewards are not part of the Local executive. However, Stewards work very closely with their Locals. They may, however, be elected by a simple majority of represented members or may be appointed by the Local or Sub-Local Executive. Stewards hold office for an indefinite period.

The names and addresses of Local and Sub-Local Executive members must be forwarded to the UNW immediately upon assumption of office.

4.3 Duties of Local Executive members

4.3.1 The Local President:

- ! ensures that UNW By-Laws, Regulations and policies are adhered to
- ! coordinates the proper and efficient administration of the Local's affairs through other officers
- ! presides at all executive and membership meetings
- ! participates in annual Local Presidents' meetings (LPAC)
- ! explains the UNW grievance process to all Shop Stewards and ensures that they understand the process and follow it
- ! ensures that Local funds are spent in a manner that supports and promotes the UNW and the union movement
- ! ensures that other officers of the Local are active in performing their required duties
- ! ensures that Local officers receive necessary training and resources to perform their duties efficiently
- ! informs the Regional Vice President about their Local's affairs in a timely and appropriate manner
- ! distributes all correspondence to the relevant Local officers
- ! is the chief spokesperson for the Local in its dealings with the employer (other than individual grievances) and the UNW
- ! maintains confidentiality in all matters of the Union

4.3.2 The Vice-President:

- ! performs the duties of the President in the absence, incapacitation or resignation of that officer and when delegated such duties by the Local President
- ! conducts meetings on behalf of the President and assumes the chair in the event of the President vacating during meetings for any reason
- ! co-ordinates, arranges and advertises union education within their Local
- ! ensures that all new UNW bargaining unit members are provided the opportunity to access a union orientation presentation
- ! maintains confidentiality in all matters of the Union

4.3.3 The Secretary/Treasurer:

The main function of this office is to provide secretarial and financial services to the

Local. This includes keeping accurate records of all meetings; keeping proper documentation, files, financial records; and all correspondence relating to the Local.

Note: For convenience, many Locals combine the above functions into a single office of Secretary/Treasurer.

As Secretary:

- ! records the minutes of all membership and executive meetings
- ! sends minutes of meetings to UNW offices within 14 days of the meeting
- ! maintains a filing system for the Local
- ! maintains a list of Rand members within the Local
- ! coordinates the signing up of Rand members within the Local
- ! ensures that new members' cards are sent to UNW offices
- ! liaises with the Local President on all Local matters
- ! is responsible for all communications, documents and reports emanating from or received by the Local
- ! produces reports and records to the Regional Vice President on request
- ! maintains confidentiality in all matters of the Union

As Treasurer:

- ! is accountable to the Local Executive for all accounts receivable and payable
- ! prepares and submits financial reports at each Executive or general meeting
- ! submits quarterly reports in a timely manner to the UNW offices
- ! establishes and maintains bank accounts, including signing authority
- ! maintains and keeps financial records, cheque books and ledgers
- ! collects and deposits Local funds (e.g. dues rebates)
- ! maintains confidentiality in all matters of the Union

4.3.3 The Chief Shop Steward:

- ! establishes a Shop Stewards' network
- ! co-ordinates the activities of Shop Stewards
- ! reports at Local meetings on all Shop Steward activities
- ! advises Shop Stewards and provides them with guidance and support in specific technical areas
- ! holds monthly meetings with Shop Stewards to discuss and review cases
- ! identifies training required by the Shop Stewards
- ! applies the UNW grievance process and ensures that Shop Stewards do the same
- ! ensures that both the employer and UNW members apply the collective agreement, arbitration awards, acts and regulations properly
- ! works closely with UNW Service Officers
- ! reviews quarterly service reports received from UNW offices
- ! maintains confidentiality in all matters of the Union

4.3.5 The Shop Steward:

- ! represents members at the workplace on a daily basis
- ! prepares and submits first level grievances in conjunction with the Chief Shop Steward and their Local
- ! liaises with UNW Service Officers prior to filing grievances
- ! submits copies of all grievances, responses and documents pertaining to a grievance to the UNW offices
- ! applies the UNW grievance process at the workplace
- ! attends meetings with management to bring forth and resolve issues
- ! maintains confidentiality in all matters of the Union

Note: As stated before, Shop Stewards are not part of the Local Executive.

4.4 What makes an effective Local Executive member?

Positions within the Local are filled by people who volunteer their time and effort to lead their Locals in order to make them effective and thus strengthen the Union as a whole. Local Officers work full time jobs, have families to take care of and lives to lead outside their Union responsibilities and interests. Thus they have to balance all these conflicting demands on their time. To reap maximum benefits from their Union involvement, Local Officers need to adopt business-like ways of running Locals. Their motto should be: work smarter, not harder.

Some suggestions to increase your effectiveness as a Local Executive are listed below:

- ! Take time to strategize as a Local. Think ahead and always focus on the “big picture”: where is your Local currently, where do you want it to be, how will you get there, by when, etc. are some questions to tackle while doing strategic planning
- ! Plan your Local activities. Avoid piling up work. Make time for Union activities
- ! Be organized. There will be numerous demands on your time. Accept that not everything can have the same priority
- ! Be a team player. While there is division of labour among the Local Executives, as highlighted in the responsibilities listed above, all members should be focussed on the same goal. A winning team wins together!
- ! Seek and access information. Learn from others. Attend courses. Broaden your mind. Adopt a life-long learning attitude and approach
- ! Delegate tasks. Ask for help. For example, you can organise “working meetings” during which you get people to help stuff envelopes, make phone calls, make signs, type letters, etc. Many hands make light work!
- ! Demonstrate genuine commitment to Union work. Lead by example. Attend Local meetings when invited; contribute your experience and knowledge willingly, follow through on assigned tasks, carry your share load of the burden

- ! Exercise diplomacy, discretion, tact and professionalism in the way you conduct yourself and carry out Union duties. Avoid creating enemies for yourself and minimise tarnishing the Union and trade unionism

4.5 Local committees

As noted above, Locals can get a lot of work done if they design effective methods of conducting business. One way of organising the way Locals work is forming committees. For example, issues such as management-labour consultation, health and safety, education and training, bargaining, human rights, and so on can be successfully done through committees.

A committee has the advantage that it brings many minds together in a small setting and, through its collective efforts, several ideas, opinions, solutions and experiences are availed to the Local. As long as its members are committed, caring and concerned, a committee is an effective vehicle through which ambitious projects can be achieved. The use of committees also distributes the workload within a Local and thus provides members an opportunity to be more involved in their Union. Committees promote democracy!

A committee can either be:

- ! “standing” (i.e. permanent) Examples of standing committees include “Finance” and “OHS”, or
- ! “ad-hoc” (i.e. one temporarily set up to address a specific issue, problem or accomplish a specific project/task) e.g. “Ratification”, “Convention” and “Membership drive” are some examples.

However, to be effective and functional, a committee should:

- ! have a specific and well defined objective and achievable goal(s)
- ! be chaired by an experienced member and keep a record of its activities
- ! be made up of a few, but interested, people
- ! adopt informal, but inclusive and democratic, procedures
- ! strive towards consensus
- ! meet regularly, following realistic time lines
- ! have an evaluation from time to time to check if it is on track and assess its progress
- ! produce timely reports (mostly in the form of recommendations)

The most common types of committees are:

1. **Union-management consultation** committee which provides an opportunity for the Local and the employer to discuss issues frankly and in a free atmosphere

that promotes dialogue. Typically, issues to do with scheduling annual leave, internal communications, training, employer policies can be tackled by this committee but it cannot discuss matters that lead to altering the collective agreement.

2. **Health and safety committee** which promotes appropriate level of health services, facilities and programmes designed to sustain the good health of employees as well as maintain healthy working conditions at the workplace.
3. **Bargaining committee** which can be set up for the purposes of gathering bargaining proposals from members of that Local only. The Local bargaining committee will be part of the UNW bargaining team if it is so elected. The end result of the collective bargaining process is a collective agreement, which is an employment contract signed by the employer and the Union on behalf of its membership.
4. **Human rights committee** which ensures that all forms of prejudices and discrimination are eliminated from the workplace and that employment equity policies are promoted and implemented. With the reality of increased diversity in the Canadian workplace, Locals have to play a visible role in ensuring that human rights violations do not occur at the workplace, and also within the Union. This committee would advise the Local on employers' Duty To Accommodate processes.
5. **Equity committee** exists to provide a forum to discuss issues relating to Equity - seeking groups (i.e. women; Aboriginal People; racialized minorities; people with disabilities; and GLBT members), to organize around these issues and to work collectively in the workplace so that the Union is truly inclusive.
6. **Education committee** which plays an important role in advertising UNW courses among the membership; identifying members' learning needs and then matching interested members with courses that best suit their needs. The UNW now offers its own in-house training and education service to members. Additionally, members can also apply for the courses offered by the PSAC.

4.6 Dissolution of a Local and Dismissal of Local Executive members

By-Law 11 also provides for the dissolution of a Local or Sub-Local and the dismissal of Local Executive members, as follows:

- ! where a Local or Sub-Local fails to carry out its responsibilities, the UNW Executive is authorised to dissolve or suspend the Local or Sub-Local or impose

any other sanction approved by the UNW Executive

- ! where a Local or Sub-Local is dissolved or suspended, the UNW Executive shall remove Local or Sub-Local Officers and appoint at least 2 trustees to manage the Local or Sub-Local's affairs and bring about the reinstatement of the Local or Sub-Local with minimum delay
- ! the trustees have a right to demand and seize all documents, property, and funds of the Local or Sub-Local. The Local or Sub-Local Officer(s) shall deliver to the trustees such documents, funds and property which are to be placed in trust for the Local or Sub-Local and these will then be used and expended by the trustees in the proper conduct of the affairs of the Local or Sub-Local.
- ! in the event that a Sub-Local is not reinstated within 1 year of its dissolution or suspension, all documents, property and funds of the Sub-Local may be applied at the discretion of the Executive
- ! a Local or Sub-Local can dismiss any Officer who misses 3 consecutive Local or Sub-Local meetings unless there is a satisfactory reason given.
- ! A simple majority of members represented by a Shop Steward may at any time revoke the mandate of the Steward and choose a replacement

5. Local meetings

5.1 Meetings are democracy in action

Meetings provide a medium for union members to meet and discuss issues. The Oxford dictionary defines a meeting as an “organized gathering of people for a discussion or other purpose.....a coming together of two or more people.”

A democratic organization, such as the UNW, functions through consultations and regular face to face contacts with its members. Meetings are a key component of this process. This way, all members get a chance to participate in union activities and have their voices heard. Similarly, meetings are an important and necessary part of a Local’s activities. They provide a forum for decision making and problem-solving.

Rights and responsibilities form a cornerstone of our democratic system. Union members are entitled to be consulted on issues and have the right to air their views. At the same time, they also have 2 major responsibilities in this respect. First, all members (including Local Executives) have the duty to attend meetings and, secondly, to participate in deliberations during those meetings. While no one is compelled to vote, and is free to abstain by choice, once a properly constituted meeting is held those members who decide neither to attend nor to vote when they have the opportunity to do so are bound by the result.

However, union meetings need to be organized properly and conducted efficiently, to avoid frustrations creeping in and their being viewed as “time-wasters” and “coffee drinking talking shops”. After all, a meeting is only called to conduct business and that objective should be met in every meeting. The box (see below) has some tips and hints for conducting successful meetings.

UNW Local meetings are conducted following the PSAC Rules of Order⁴. Established in 1974, these detailed regulations govern the conducting of meetings; procedures to be followed and set guidelines to which meetings should conform. The Rules of Order help to safeguard democracy by allowing everyone the opportunity to speak. When chairing a meeting, it is a good idea to explain the Rules that will be followed before the meeting starts. Clearly, there is also need for diplomacy, tact and commonsense required on the part of the Chair, while applying the Rules.

⁴ These Rules are available through the UNW office. It is strongly recommended that every Local have its own copy and that Local Officers who chair meetings thoroughly familiarise themselves with them first before applying them.

How to conduct successful meetings:

The PSAC provides useful tips for conducting productive meetings that are neither dry nor boring. These are:

- 1. Have an agenda*
- 2. Start on time and end on time*
- 3. Ensure the meeting time is well known, that the time is convenient to all and the venue easily accessible*
- 4. Organize for on-site supports such as child care, if this is required, or reimburse participants for such expenses to increase participation*
- 5. Include an informal event as part of the meeting e.g. a guest speaker, a film, or social function*
- 6. If you are chairing, be impartial*
- 7. Remember that meetings allow people to vent; the meeting is not just about business on the agenda, it is also about people's feelings, concerns and emotions*
- 8. Prepare in advance: reports, correspondence, etc should be circulated to participants well before the meeting, if this is possible, to save time*
- 9. Follow the PSAC Rules of Order but remember the meeting is also a collective effort*

In addition, bear in mind the following when convening meetings:

- ! only signed-up members can attend and participate at meetings. A sign-in sheet helps in this regard
- ! the press, media or individuals who are not UNW members cannot attend and participate in Local meetings. When any outside speaker is invited to a Local meeting, for example as a guest speaker or resource person, they must leave the meeting after they have spoken or when their question and answer session is over, prior to the Local's business commencing.

5.2 Types of meetings:

Sections 4, 5 and 6 of By-Law 11 govern Local meetings as follows:

Executive meetings:

- ! Executive members are expected to attend all Local meetings
- ! A Local Executive shall hold not less than 6 executive meetings in a calendar year
- ! Minutes or proceedings of all such meetings shall be recorded

- ! Copies of the minutes shall be sent within 14 calendar days to the Regional Vice-President and to the UNW headquarters

For a meeting to be properly constituted and convened, a quorum is required. A quorum is defined in the Oxford dictionary as “ the minimum number of members ... that must be present at a meeting to make the proceedings valid”. If all Local or Sub-Local Executive members are not available, a quorum shall be:

- ! The President and 2 other Local Executive members; or
- ! The Vice-President and 2 other Local Executive members; or
- ! The President, the Vice-President and 1 other Local Executive member.

Regular executive meetings are necessary and are held between membership meetings. These meetings provide the Local Executive a chance to make decisions and formulate recommendations for the general members’ decision. Executive meetings are chaired by the Local President or other delegated officer, usually the Vice President. Executive members can also meet on an informal basis to discuss matters of interest or concern to the Local. No formal decisions can be made during such meetings since informal meetings are information sharing sessions. Similarly, informal meetings should not take precedence or substitute or have priority over formal Executive meetings.

General membership meetings

There are 2 kinds of general membership meetings. These are regular general membership meetings and annual general meetings (popularly referred to as AGMs). Both are important to the Union and advance its democratic values because they provide an opportunity for:

- ! members to provide direction to the Local Executive
- ! members to obtain information and voice their concerns on issues affecting them
- ! the Local Executive to account for their decisions before the membership
- ! democratic, participatory forums for conducting elections and decision making

Business is conducted at membership meetings formally. This means that sufficient notice has to be given, members attending have to be in good standing, there is an agenda and a definite format to be followed, etc. PSAC Rules of Order are used (see box), minutes are taken and all decisions made are recorded. It is also a good idea to hold membership meetings before the executive ones in order for better input from members to be provided.

By-Law 11 provides the following, regarding membership meetings:

- ! Each Local or Sub-Local shall hold an AGM in the month of November. The

- ✓ purpose of the AGM is to:
 - ✓ receive annual reports from its officers
 - ✓ consider related business and
 - ✓ hold elections, as required by UNW, Local or Sub-Local By-Laws
- ! However, where the Local (or Sub-Local) Executive deems it impractical to hold the AGM in November, the meeting may, upon the approval of the Union President, be held at another time
- ! Each Local or Sub-Local should hold at least two membership meetings in a calendar year, one of which is the AGM
- ! Minutes of all membership meetings should be recorded
- ! Copies of these minutes should be sent to the Regional Vice-President and to the UNW office within 14 calendar days
- ! Each Local and Sub-Local should make all minutes, notices of election and other communication available to its members, for inspection

5.3 Minutes

One of the Local Secretary's tasks is to record the minutes during meetings. Minutes are defined by the Oxford dictionary as a "... *summarized record of the points discussed at a meeting*". To take minutes means to "record the points discussed at a meeting..." Therefore minutes, should be in writing and reflect and include all the business transacted at the meeting. Minutes do not, however, have to include every word spoken or action that took place. Rather a summarised version that captures the meeting will be sufficient.

To be complete, minutes should contain the following information:

- ! type of meeting (e.g. regular, executive, AGM, etc.)
- ! date, time and place of the meeting
- ! time the meeting started and adjourned
- ! names of the Chair and Secretary
- ! names of all members present (as well as those absent or those who offered apologies for missing the meeting, if this is possible)
- ! the adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting
- ! summaries of all reports presented
- ! all motions introduced, whether they were carried or defeated (with names of movers and seconders)
- ! signature of the Chair and Secretary

Appendix 2 shows sample minutes from a typical Local meeting.

After the minutes have been recorded, they need to be kept in a manner that facilitates their easier retrieval. The Secretary is responsible for this. During meetings, for

example, it is quite common for proceedings to be halted temporarily while information from a previous meeting is being retrieved. The way and manner in which minutes are kept should facilitate this. This can be achieved if minutes are properly filed in an appropriately labelled special file or a Minutes Book kept specially for this purpose.

6. Managing the Local

Other important tasks that need attending to are: Local finances, communication, correspondence, filing and public relations.

6.1 Financial administration

Each quarter, Locals receive dues rebates from the UNW. These rebates are based on the number of signed (or “full”) members in the Local. Dues rebates are an important source of funds for the Local. It is therefore important that Locals have as many signed up members as possible to receive higher rebates. For the Union to remit these rebates however, a Local should file its financial reports, minutes of meetings, etc in a timely manner. This way, there are checks and balances in the system.

Additionally, Locals also receive funding for political action and special projects from the Union.

Funding for political action is made once a year, in March. The amount paid out is \$10.00 per full member as of December 31st of the previous year. Special projects are paid out to a maximum of \$1750.00 per Local per year. Funding will be made on applications submitted to the Local’s Regional Vice President and approved by the UNW Finance Committee.

Funds so received help the Local to provide service to its members. While it is good financial practice to bank the amounts and maintain a positive bank balance, the intention is not for Locals to invest these funds and earn interest on them. Rather, each Local should conduct regular activities designed to provide better service to its membership or help the community. One example that easily comes to mind is increasing the Union’s visibility in the community by sponsoring some of the events. Another is paying for members’ education. Attending union-related conferences and workshops is a third possible use of funds. The possibilities are many. Consulting members and the community always helps the Local to decide its spending priorities.

The Secretary/Treasurer is responsible for a Local’s sound financial administration. This responsibility includes:

- ! setting up and maintaining a Daily Cash Book or other similar financial records
- ! preparing financial statements
- ! safe custody of funds, assets, books, receipts and cheques
- ! submitting quarterly financial reports to the UNW
- ! presenting financial statements and reports at all membership meetings.

The Daily Cash Book need not be complicated. It is merely listing funds moving in and out of the Local on a daily basis. The example below illustrates a typical page from a Daily Cash Book.

Local _____ : Daily Cash Book for March 201x

Receipts	Amount	Date	Expenditures	Amount	Date
<i>Opening balance</i>	204.29	<i>March 1</i>	<i>Stationery</i>	6.48	<i>March 7</i>
<i>Local dues cheque</i>	60.00	16	<i>Gift</i>	14.28	14
<i>Refund - decorations</i>	4.83	21	<i>Coffee for course</i>	7.39	21
			<i>Easter chickens</i>	19.87	29
			<i>Secretary's honorarium</i>	25.00	30
			<i>Bank service charge</i>	1.00	31
	-----		<i>Cash Book balance, (transferred to bank)</i>	<u>195.10</u>	31
Total	269.12		Total	269.12	

Financial statements include monthly, quarterly and annual statements. Monthly statements are a summary of all transactions for that month. A sample is shown below:

Local _____ : Financial Statement for the month of March, 20xx

<i>Cash Book balance, February 28, 20xx</i>		204.29
RECEIPTS:		
<i>Local dues</i>	60.00	
<i>Refund for decorations</i>	<u>4.83</u>	64.83
EXPENDITURES:		
<i>Stationary</i>	6.48	
<i>Gift</i>	14.28	
<i>Coffee for a course</i>	7.39	
<i>Easter chickens</i>	19.87	
<i>Honorarium for Secretary</i>	25.00	
<i>Bank service charge</i>	<u>1.00</u>	74.02
<i>Excess of expenditure over receipts</i>		<u>(9.09)</u>
<i>Cash Book balance, March 31, 20xx</i>		195.10
BANK RECONCILIATION:		
<i>Bank balance, March 31, 20xx</i>		215.63
<i>Less: Outstanding cheque, #59</i>	19.53	
<i>Bank charges</i>	<u>1.00</u>	<u>20.53</u>
<i>Cash book balance, shown above</i>		195.10
PETTY CASH		
<i>Balance on hand, March 31, 20xx</i>		18.45
<i>(Signed)</i>	<i>Honest Guy</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>

As indicated previously, each Local is required under the UNW By-Laws to submit an audited quarterly financial report. Where this does not happen, the Union will not remit the dues rebate to the Local concerned. An audit is conducted on the quarterly financial statements by any 3 members who are not on the Local Executive. "Audit" is defined as an inspection of the Local's financial accounts to ensure that funds were received, maintained and used properly. The Secretary/Treasurer prepares and submits the quarterly report to the UNW. A sample quarterly report is shown below:

Local _____: Financial report for the quarterly period ending ____ 20xx

Opening balance (from line "F" of last report)		\$ ----- (A)
Revenue		
<i>(1) Dues rebates from UNW:</i>		
	<i>Amount</i>	
Cheque # -----	\$ -----	
Cheque # -----	\$ -----	
Cheque # -----	\$ -----	<i>Total</i> \$ ----- (B)
<i>(2) Other revenue:</i>		
Source -----	\$ -----	
Source -----	\$ -----	
Source -----	\$ -----	<i>Total</i> \$ ----- ©)
Total Cash on Hand and Receipts (A+B+C)		\$ -----
Disbursements		
<i>Cheque #</i>	<i>Payee</i>	<i>Amount</i>
-----	-----	\$ -----
-----	-----	\$ -----
-----	-----	\$ -----
-----	-----	\$ -----
-----	-----	\$ -----
-----	-----	\$ -----
-----	-----	\$ -----
-----	-----	\$ -----
<i>(Attach additional sheets if space provided is insufficient)</i>		
Total of cheques written		\$ ----- (D)
Add Bank charges		\$ -----
Total disbursements		\$ ----- (E)
Closing balance (line "C" minus line "E": should equal balance at end of quarter)		\$ ----- (F)
Statement prepared by: _____ (Treasurer)		Date _____
<p><i>This report must be signed by three (3) members of the Local who DO NOT hold office. Their signature indicates only that they received the cheque register and bank statement and that this report appears to accurately reflect the transactions.</i></p>		
_____ <i>Member</i>	_____ <i>Member</i>	_____ <i>Member</i>

At the end of each financial year, the Secretary/Treasurer also prepares an annual statement, which is a summary of all the monthly financial statements. A financial year is also known as a fiscal year. The UNW's fiscal year is set in the By-Laws. It is the calendar year i.e. January to December.

An example of such a statement is shown below.

Local ____: Financial statement for the year Jan - Dec., 201x

Cash Book balance, December 31, 20xx		619.03
RECEIPTS:		
Local dues	720.00	
Bank interest	13.23	
Miscellaneous	<u>64.83</u>	798.06
less		
EXPENDITURES:		
Preparing notices and bulletins	15.43	
Postage	24.91	
Courses and conferences	200.00	
Miscellaneous expenses	19.87	
Stationery	85.00	
Retirement gifts	55.28	
Telephone/fax bills	28.00	
Honorarium for Executive members	325.00	
Bank service charges	<u>11.08</u>	<u>764.57</u>
Excess of receipts over expenditure		<u>33.49</u>
Cash book balance, December 31, 20xx		652.52
BANK RECONCILIATION:		
Bank balance, December 31, 20xx		715.63
Less: Outstanding cheque, #05		<u>63.11</u>
Cash book balance, shown above		652.52
PETTY CASH		
Balance on hand, December 31, 20xx		13.17
(Approved)	<i>Maintain Order</i>	President
(Signed)	<i>Honest Guy</i>	Treasurer

UNW By-Laws provide the following financial administration guidelines:

- Each Local or Sub-Local is entitled to receive the Union's annual audited financial statements
- Union, Local and Sub-Locals' financial records should be maintained in an approved manner. The UNW Executive advises Locals and Sub-Locals how to maintain the records. External auditors advise the Union in turn
- The Union, its Locals and Sub-Locals are required to retain all financial records for the legal period prescribed by the Income Tax Act
- Locals and Sub-Locals should approve at least 3 signing officers, 2 of whom sign cheques
- No expenditure can be paid out without prior authorization of the Local or Sub-

- Local's Executive, or as directed by members at a properly convened meeting
- Locals should submit quarterly audited statements to the UNW. These statements shall be audited by any 3 non-executive members of the Local
 - No dues rebates will be remitted to a Local until such statements have been received by the UNW
 - Union dues rebates are due and payable quarterly but a Local may apply for an advance against its future dues, subject to the approval of the UNW Executive
 - Locals and Sub-Locals are prohibited from entering into any fiscal contractual understandings or agreements without prior approval by the UNW Executive.

6.2 Communication

The Union is its members. Its strength is those members; their rate of commitment, their level of participation and their perception of how involved they believe they are. The Union's successes and misfortunes will rise and fall with the manner in which the Union can mobilize and inform its members. Keeping members actively engaged in their Union's affairs is one sure way to ensure success.

Every Local should strive to keep its members informed. This means sharing information with the members as well as receiving information from them, no matter how unpalatable the feedback might be. Locals need an open communication system. Perhaps the most effective method of communicating with the Local is one where members talk to other members. This is an inexpensive, direct and personal method. And it works! It works because it stimulates discussion, debate and establishes personal contact and mutual trust. This is an example of members working together, which is what "union" is all about.

One way of achieving this is by establishing a communications network. This is simply a network of Local members talking to their Shop Steward on a regular basis, and the Steward(s) in turn keeping regular contacts with their Local Executives. Such a network becomes a vehicle through which a Local can:

- ! publicise meetings and increase members' interest and participation
- ! distribute information quickly and in a timely manner
- ! receive input and feedback from members
- ! keep members updated
- ! receive bargaining demands

In short, an effective communications network is inclusive as it ensures that every member's voice is heard. It is also a two way communication system. Once the network gets going, the work is shared between all members which frees up valuable time for Shop Stewards and Local Executives to attend to other pressing issues.

Communication is not just within the Local structure though. The effective Local also establishes an open, two-way system with the UNW Executives, particularly the Regional Vice President for the region where the Local is situated. It is good practice for a Local to communicate with its Regional Vice President regularly so that its members' issues can be addressed at UNW Executive meetings.

Lastly, a Local also communicates with its community. Because we operate as part of the communities, it is also good practice to be actively involved through making donations, hosting speakers, community clean-ups, sporting events and similar gestures.

6.3 Correspondence

The Secretary's other function is to prepare correspondence, process mail and follow up on letters requiring further action.

General correspondence includes outgoing administrative letters between the Local and the Union as well as within the Local itself. A Local's correspondence usually deals with changes of address, communicating election results, forwarding minutes of membership meetings. Sometimes, general correspondence includes letters containing decisions taken, minutes of joint management-union meetings, etc.

All these letters need to be drafted before they are sent out. They are business communications and thus need to reflect professionalism in the manner they are prepared and sent out (e.g. properly typed out, proof-read, spell checked and properly marked as "confidential", "urgent", etc as the case might be). Rushed, poorly drafted and recklessly communicated letters reflect badly on the Local, the UNW and its members.

As well, the Secretary will receive correspondence from various sources. General correspondence will also be of various types such as dues rebates cheques, minutes of UNW Executive meetings, letters from management on grievances, newsletters, community requests, and many others.

Upon receiving correspondence, the Secretary should immediately determine who will be acting upon it. Again, acting quickly on incoming mail reflects well on the Local and the Union as it shows that the Local is organised. It also saves embarrassment caused by mail going astray. Some mail should be acted upon by the Local Executive. There should be a folder, appropriately marked for this purpose, where all such mail is placed. This folder is then presented at the next executive meeting for action or recommendations. Such correspondence should have a notation indicating the date and reference to executive meeting minutes where a decision or action was taken.

If the correspondence is to be actioned by general members, then it is similarly placed in

another folder marked especially for the membership. It will then be actioned at the membership meeting as required (e.g. ratification, etc).

The advent of electronic mail (e-mail) presents exciting prospects for quick, paperless written communication (which is good on one hand) but also creates other challenges, especially concerns about confidentiality and security. As well, already there is too much information being sent out via e-mail, a fair amount of which is junk mail, which can be tedious for the Secretary to deal with. A balance needs to be struck between the conveniences of using this communication medium *versus* the need to maintain confidentiality. Clearly, sensitive documents, grievances, remittances and similar examples of correspondence may not best be sent over the world wide web! As well, correspondence sent out and received via e-mail needs to be printed out and actioned as suggested above and filed.

Note also that all correspondence flowing from the Local should be copied to the UNW.

6.4 Filing

After correspondence is received, it is recorded, actioned at the appropriate level of the Local and then stored in a manner that facilitates easy access or retrieval at a future date. All outgoing correspondence should also be stored in the same way. Actually, the By-Laws provide that subject matter files should be established and maintained by each Local and Sub-Local for periods established by the UNW Executive.

This is where an efficient filing system comes in handy. Often, all aspects of correspondence are handled well by the Locals. But the filing stage is when the system somehow breaks down or collapses. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, many of us do not enjoy filing because it is a tedious chore. Second, deciding what letter goes into what file also takes effort, since letters are hardly strictly about any one issue alone.

And yet, if these negative perceptions about filing can be overcome, a good, working filing system would also reflect well on the efficiency and organizational skills of the Secretary.

An efficient filing system does not have to be elaborate, or expensive to implement. Similarly, organizing your work methods in such a way that you avoid paperwork piling up, makes filing easier. Below are some suggestions on maintaining your Local's files:

- ! Filing should be done regularly
- ! A good starting point is to have subject headings for the files: "audit reports", "financial statements", "UNW office", "grievances", "membership meeting minutes", "education and training" are some of the more common labels you can use
- ! Next, reference each document, letter, report that is filed in the particular file.

References can include the Local number, subject heading, sequence number (1, 2, 3, etc) and the year of the document e.g. Local 003/Grievances/59/2004 would be a reference for Local 3's 59th document in their grievances file for the year 2004.

- ! Files should be maintained in a logical manner, e.g. in alphabetical order according to the subject index. Thus “audit reports” files would be first, followed by “education and training” files, then “grievances” and so on.
- ! Files should be kept together in one place, preferably in a cabinet or drawer. Ideally such a drawer or cabinet should be lockable, to restrict access to the files. Always remember that all grievance files are confidential and should be kept as such.
- ! All grievance files have to be forwarded to the UNW once grievances are completed and the files closed
- ! Remove outdated information from files on a regular basis. Remember, though that some information may not be destroyed until certain legal periods lapse e.g. financial records. Check which information can or cannot be destroyed. Verify with the UNW Executive for periods set before documents can be destroyed. Any information that needs to be stored according to any such deadlines can then be removed from current files and placed in archived records or files for storage, if it is no longer relevant or used regularly.

6.5 Public relations

The UNW uses a variety of communication tools to keep in touch with its members and to provide information to the general public, other labour organisations, elected officials at various levels of government and the media.

The Union has a daily radio advertisement on CJCD which is heard in Yellowknife and Hay River. From time to time the Union also places advertisements in various northern newspapers and magazines.

The Union makes use of a “fax tree” to send faxes to work sites throughout the NWT. This “fax tree” is set up to do a territorial fax or to do a specific locale fax. For example, the Union can fax messages just to Inuvik work sites or to work sites for a specific Local only. Locals can take advantage of this service by sending meeting notices, etc. to the UNW office for overnight faxing to their specific Local work sites.

The Union’s website www.unw.ca has a specific page for Local news. Local Executives are free to submit items of information, meeting notices, executive contact names and numbers, etc. These will then be placed on the web. In addition, the website contains a calendar that Locals may also use to advertise meetings, courses and other important events and dates. There is also a “photo gallery” icon, and Locals may submit photos to be included on that web page.

The UNW Public Relations Officer is available to assist Locals with drafting press releases, designing publicity material and the like. Public relations can be contacted via e-mail at pr@unw.ca or by calling 873-5668 ext.225 in Yellowknife or toll free 1 (877) 906 - 4447 from elsewhere within the Northwest Territories.

Suggestions for enhancing communications between the UNW Executive, Locals and the general membership are always welcome.

7. UNW Triennial Conventions

7.1 What is Convention?

The supreme governing body of the UNW is Convention. A convention is described in the Oxford dictionary as a “large meeting or conference...or a body set up by agreement to deal with a particular issue..” and “triennial” means “recurring every 3 years”. The founding Convention of the Union was held on May 15th, 1970. Since then a convention has been held every 3 years. It is during Triennial Conventions that the Union’s general policies and direction are established. UNW By-Laws can also be changed or repealed during Convention.

Convention is composed of the UNW Executive and members from Locals. Members are free to attend Convention as delegates. Any member wishing to attend Convention, however, has to be elected first. Locals elect delegates.

At least 6 months before Convention, each Local elects delegates based on the following formula:

- ! Locals with 1 - 75 signed members, 1 delegate
- ! Locals with 76 - 175 signed members, 2 delegates
- ! Locals with 176 - 325 signed members, 3 delegates
- ! Locals with more than 325 signed members, 4 delegates.

To be eligible to send delegates to Convention, a Local should be active 12 months prior to Convention call. A new Local which is established 12 months or less prior to Convention call may be given approval to send delegates by the UNW Executive according to the above formula.

The Convention call is issued at least 9 months before the date of the Convention. UNW Conventions are held in the fall, generally in September or October. However, Convention cannot be held over Labour Day, according to By-Law 14 (6) (4). Holding Convention in September or October allows Convention delegates to attend PSAC Conventions which are held 6 months after the UNW’s. PSAC Conventions are also held on a triennial basis.

7.2 Convention delegates

Selection of delegates and alternates to Convention is by secret mail ballot among the members. Candidates should:

- ! be card carrying members for at least 30 days before they are elected as delegates, and
- ! be in good standing. A member is said to be “in good standing” if their Union dues

are current and the member does not owe any money to the Union, and
! be nominated by at least 2 other card carrying members from their Local who are
in good standing.

Alternatively, selection of delegates can be done also during a membership meeting. Such a meeting should be publicly advertised for 30 days and be called for the sole purpose of electing Convention delegates and alternates. Members who miss the meeting can also be elected if they are nominated in writing by 2 other members and if they agree (also in writing) to be so elected prior to the meeting.

A member who has been found guilty of an offence defined in the By-Laws may be barred from being a candidate, delegate, or from holding office in the Union, Locals or Sub-Locals for up to 5 years.

“Alternates” fill in for accredited delegates who are unable to attend Convention.

Once selection is completed, the Local President should immediately submit names of the Local's accredited delegates and alternates to the UNW office. A credential form supplied by the Union is used for this purpose.

All members have the right to attend Conventions, at their own expense, as observers. This is subject to space being available. As well, Locals and Sub-Locals have the right to send observers to Convention at the Local or Sub-Local's expense. Observers do not have the right to vote or to participate in debates.

Locals can also send resolutions to Convention. All Local resolutions should, however, be received by the UNW no later than 4 months before the Convention.

APPENDIX 1: WHO BELONGS TO WHICH REGION?

(As of December 2014; this list is for illustrative purposes only as Units keep changing)

Local	Region	Bargaining Unit
X0001	Somba K'e	GNWT except those in X0009, 0010, 0011, 0028 and 0032 Commission Scolaire Francophone Yellowknife Housing Association Tlicho Government
X0002	Fort Smith	GNWT (Fort Smith, Lutsel K'e) Fort Smith Housing Authority, Fort Smith Health and Social Services Town of Fort Smith Uncle Gabe's Friendship Centre Thebacha Forestry BOSCO Homes Trailcross
X0003	Beaufort Delta	GNWT (Beaufort Region) Aklavik Housing Association Inuvik Housing Authority Inuvik Health and Social Services Tuktoyaktuk Housing Association Deline Housing Association
X0006	Hay River	GNWT (Hay River Region) Evergreen Forestry Management Town of Hay River Hay River Housing Authority Fort Resolution Housing Authority Nats Ejee Keh Treatment Centre Deninoo Community Council
X0009	North Great Slave	GNWT (Corrections, Young Offenders, Justice)
X0010	North Great Slave	GNWT (Airport, PWS, Transportation)
X0011	North Great Slave	GNWT - Stanton Territorial Hospital Nurses with YK Health and Social Services
X0012	Fort Smith	GNWT Aurora College - Thebacha Campus
X0013	Deh Cho	GNWT (Fort Simpson and Area) Ft Simpson Housing Authority Village of Fort Simpson Deh Cho Health and Social Services
X0016	Somba K'e	NWTPC (Yellowknife and Fort Smith)
X0019	Inuvik	NWTPC (Beaufort Delta) NWTPC (Fort Simpson)
X0021	Hay River	Hay River Health and Social Services
X0022	Hay River	NWTPC
X0025	North Great Slave	Avens Senior Centre

X0028	Somba K'e	WSCC
X0029	Beaufort Delta	Aurora College - Inuvik Campus
X0030	Somba K'e	Yellowknife Catholic School Board
X0031	Deh Cho	Ft. Providence Housing Association Hamlet of Fort Providence GNWT
X0032	Somba K'e	Aurora College - Yellowknife Campus
X0033	Somba K'e	Yellowknife Health and Social Services (includes Lutsel'ke and Ft Resolution)
X0036	Kimberlite	Nuna Logistics
X0345	North Great Slave	City of Yellowknife, includes Municipal Enforcement
X3050	Kimberlite	BHP Billiton

APPENDIX 2: SAMPLE MINUTES

Minutes of the Executive meeting of Local X0339, held in Tulita on November 13th, 201x

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm, chaired by the President.

In attendance:

Sister Amy	President
Brother Ben	Vice-President
Brother Chuck	Secretary/Treasurer
Sister Dee	Chief Shop Steward

1. Reading of Minutes of previous meeting:

Minutes of the previous meeting held on April 23 201x were distributed to all members in attendance.

Motion: That the Minutes of the previous meeting be adopted as read

(Mover)

(Seconder)

Motion: Carried/Defeated

2. Treasurer's report:

Brother Chuck reported that an amount of \$20.50 collected from a raffle last February has now been handed over to the Secretary/Treasurer. The President thanked Brother Chuck and all members who assisted in this event. Total funds received since the last meeting were \$195.95. Expenditures during this time amounted to \$244.16. Bank balance at October 30 was \$842.62.

Motion: That the Treasurer's report be adopted

(Mover)

(Seconder)

Motion: Carried/Defeated

New Business

3. Union courses:

The Secretary read a letter from UNW headquarters inviting members to a Local Executive Training course to be conducted in Inuvik between February 16th and 17th next year. This course would provide an orientation to newly elected executive members and addresses how to manage Locals more efficiently. The UNW would cover expenses for this course, including lost wages.

Motion: That the President attend the UNW course in Inuvik and the Vice-President be the alternate.

(Mover)

(Seconder)

Motion: Carried/Defeated

4. Grievances:

The Local is currently processing 5 grievances. The Chair noted that more and more members seem to be coming forward now with grievances since the UNW started conducting education courses. Of the current 5 grievances, 1 was on acting pay; another on denied leave to take care of a parent and the remainder were on disciplinary action. There was a brief discussion on the length of time it was taking to

communicate with the Regional Vice President and also with the Service Officer in Yellowknife. The President was tasked to follow up on this in order to speed up communication.

Motion: That the grievance report be carried.

(Mover)

(Secunder)

Motion: Carried/Defeated

5. Stewards report:

Sister Dee reported that all the 4 Shop Stewards had now participated in a week long advanced course in Inuvik and Yellowknife, respectively. There was a request for another Steward, Brother Zak, who was recently elected to replace Brother Kuwani who retired from his job this summer, to attend an introductory union and Steward course sometime soon. The Secretary will be communicating with the UNW Education Officer to find out when such a course will be conducted in this region. An alternative is for Brother Zak to sign up for the PSAC's union school scheduled for March next year, in Whitehorse.

Motion: That the Chief Steward's report be carried.

(Mover)

(Secunder)

Motion: Carried/Defeated

6. Any other business:

The Chair asked the meeting to consider a member's proposal to "adopt a family" during the festive season. After discussing various options, it was agreed that the Local could make a donation of food hampers, toys or winter clothing up to \$250 this year and that, perhaps, this could be split between 2 such families.

Motion: That the Chair be authorised to approach local community agencies to identify at least 2 needy families, and that the Secretary/Treasurer be authorised to disburse an amount not exceeding \$250 for the "adopt a family" campaign during this festive season, for the 2 identified families.

(Mover)

(Secunder)

Motion: Carried/Defeated

7. There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm

