

August 5, 2020

Greetings fellow Brothers & Sisters,

Below is an email I received.

To: Business Manager Rod McKay

A group of concerned Local 488 members respectfully request a meeting with the Local 488 Business Manager on Monday, August 10th, at 9:00 AM. We are requesting this meeting to get some answers to questions that are of immediate and urgent concern to the membership of the Local Union and their families.

The answers to these questions will hopefully allow the membership some insight into the Local Officers plans to reopen the Hall for access by the membership and the plan to resume the services and support provided by the Hall, which is now unavailable to the general membership.

The answers to these questions cannot wait until such time as the Administration sees fit to call a General Meeting. We also expect there to be positive and constructive dialogue and the opportunity to ask follow-up questions, based on the answers we receive.

To make sure that we meet all current safety rules, this meeting will be outside the dispatch hall, in the parking lot. We will provide sanitized microphones and a PA speaker so that all members in attendance can hear the answers to the important questions asked. We will maintain the necessary social distancing measures, and masks will also be used if we cannot maintain social distancing. Members attending this meeting will not be there to harass or intimidate, only to hear the answers to the questions. Should any member become unreasonable or unruly, we will remove that person from the area. If the Administration would prefer to have the President of the Local act as facilitator and chairperson of the meeting to 'keep order', that is also acceptable.

Please respond as soon as possible to this request for a meeting; if Monday, August 10th is unsuitable, a second date of Wednesday, August 12th at 9:00AM is proposed instead.

Questions for which we need answers include the following:

1. What is the Local's plan to fully reopen the Hall to the membership? After five months, there should be a concrete plan in place to move forward and to offer the usual level of service to the members. How is the Local preparing to meet this vitally important goal?
2. The Local's Working Rules & Bylaws, Article 1.01, states that there SHALL be five membership meeting every year. We have had only one, and the March and June meeting were skipped. What is the Local's plan to meet the requirements of the WR&BL to have these meetings? The membership requires these meetings and has a right to expect that they will happen in order to provide oversight of, and accountability for the decisions made by the Administration, and to stay informed of the Financials and Committee business. These meetings could easily and cheaply be arranged on-line/digitally, with secure member logins; Has the Local explored these options? If not, why not?

3. Committee Reports are presented at every meeting. Since we are not having meetings, what is preventing the Local from posting this information and reports on the members-only section of the website? We see Agent reports, so why are the Committee and trust fund reports not available?

4. What is the current state of the ICI negotiations? Have there been negotiating meetings, what is still on the table and what is the Local Administration doing to move this forward? What is the current state of the ISIT fund, and is it being used to provide work opportunities for the membership?

The answers to these questions are a major concern to us. Other members may have other questions, and this meeting would be a great way to help the membership give some direction to the work of the Local. If this meeting is successful as we hope, future meetings like this could be held to deal with other member concerns as they are brought up. Please share this request for information on the Local 488 Members website so that as many members as possible can attend the meeting to hear the answers. We look forward to hearing from you!

Gerry Donahue Tom Bailey Barry Pruden Dave Campbell

I would like to take the time now to respond to the above email I received, on behalf of the four above listed members.

This is the first contact that I have had from any member regarding what is taking place because of the global pandemic. If individual members have concerns or questions, I would like to remind them to please contact an elected official to cut out the middleman, erase any hearsay, and eliminate the need for a pack mentality.

Local 488 is not closed. Members can book appointments and receive the service and support they require as needed. We have had members in the building to complete their online orientation. We are dispatching members, Committees and Trustees are meeting, our welding shop and pipeline yard are opened. Therefore, anyone who states that we are closed is sending the wrong message.

As for a General Membership meeting in the parking lot on August 10 or August 12 this will not take place. We are the UA. Members do not schedule meetings in our union parking lot. Our process is, if you have questions or concerns please speak with me, the Business Manager, or any other officer first. If you do not like our answer then please speak with The Executive Board. To send an email as a first contact demanding we are having a meeting in the parking lot is disrespectful and unsafe for our Local at this time.

1. Local 488 is not closed. We are conducting business quite well under the current conditions. We have signed new contractors. Members are being dispatched. Committees and Trustees are conducting business. Staff is in the building 40 hours a week. Members needing to meet with agents, reps, or myself have been instructed to contact the office to set up an appointment. This has been listed on our webpage since July 13th. Unfortunately, due to the current situation we can not have members randomly accessing the buildings in an uncontrolled manner. Members who have made appointments are asked to sign in as well as follow Covid-19 protocol. For the members that referred to the hall being closed, it is not only false, it is sending a negative message and benefits no one.

2. Bylaw 1.01 states the month we should hold our union meetings. I do not think the members whose passed this bylaw were thinking about a global pandemic. Alberta Health Service disagrees with holding a meeting with 250 people in the room, which by the way is the average number of attendees for our meetings. In the past 6 months I have met with all the committees except benevolent. Shelley Klassen is the chair of that committee and we have been in contact regarding moving forward. The Fraternal and Building has met more often in the first 3 weeks of this administration than it did in previous 3 years. Supplementary Benevolent Trust is in good shape. Brother Ken Klassen is chairing this committee. Regarding online or digitally recorded meetings, these will not be taking place due to possible unauthorized reproduction or altering of material. I will however mention that we are possibly looking at holding an upcoming Union meeting over the course of several consecutive nights. Our dispatch hall will safely hold 50 people according to AHS guidelines. We average over 250 members at our meetings. While having the necessary people to hold a meeting (i.e.) Officers, President, Recording Secretary etc., this would leave us with room for about 35 members to attend. At that rate it would take us about 7 evenings to accomplish.

3. Thank you for pointing out that we have overlooked committee and trust reports. Though some committees have not met, for example the Entertainment Committee, the ones that have, I will request a report from each chairperson and add to that to our posts. Once again thank you for bringing it to our attention.

4. Since my last post regarding negotiations there is nothing new to report. Rodney Carlson and I have met with the negotiation committee a few times as well as the CLR-A. It is the summer months which makes it difficult to get everyone's schedule to line up. We are however trying to get a meeting sooner rather than later. Fingers crossed we will still be able to get one in August, but most likely, it may not happen until September. The ISIT fund is in a healthy state despite these uncertain times and is being utilized as needed to provide work for our members.

In closing I ask individuals who have questions or concerns to please contact myself, ABM Rodney Carlson, the Business Agents, or our Business Reps directly. While I have made an exception in addressing these concerns in this manner, going forward correspondence will be done in the above-mentioned format.

If you require our contact information, please visit our web page. Be it evenings or weekends if needed, we are here for you our members. I believe an informed membership is what makes us a strong local.

Fraternally Yours



Rod McKay
Business Manager

