

BIGWU to meet Tru Valu today



One of the Tru Valu chain of supermarkets, located at Long Circular Road, St James. PHOTO BY ROBERTO CODALLO

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The Banking, Insurance, and General Workers Union (BIGWU) will be meeting virtually with the management of the supermarket chain Tru Valu today at 10 am.

This after it was advertised in the daily newspapers last week that Tru Valu and Long Circular Mall are up for sale.

In 2020, the liquidators of CL Financial, Grant Thornton, outlined plans to ready properties for sale that were directly and indirectly owned by CL Financial. Tru Valu and Long Circular Mall are owned by one of the group's subsidiaries, Home Construction Ltd.

The representing union wrote to the Tru Valu management last Friday, requesting a meeting following the Guardian article headlined "Tru Valu has outstanding agreements."

Yesterday, the supermarket's chief executive officer Sunil Maharajh sent an email to one of BIGWU's senior labour relations officers for Tru Valu, Wesley Francis, outlining that the management has agreed to a virtual meeting.

BIGWU represents 350 employees from the five branches.

The letter from the union sent last Friday stated, “Given the potential implications of this development, particularly its possible impact on the ongoing negotiations concerning the weekly paid bargaining unit and other matters before the Industrial Court, the union considers this meeting critical.

“Additionally, the uncertainty surrounding potential retrenchment has heightened concern among the employees we represent. Considering your involvement in previous discussions, we are confident you appreciate the union’s interest in addressing these concerns comprehensively.”

The newspaper advertisement indicated that since its establishment in 1978, Tru Valu has emerged as one of the largest supermarket chains in T&T, with stores in Diego Martin, Long Circular Mall, San Juan, Trincity and Valpark.

The advertisement noted Tru Valu’s five supermarket stores have a total square footage of 138,000 square feet with the Trincity Mall branch having the distinction of being the largest supermarket in T&T.

“The prime locations are well-established properties in high-traffic areas across T&T, ensuring maximum visibility and accessibility. Each supermarket is fully equipped and maintained to a high standard and includes bakeries, cafes, delis, and pharmacies,” the ad stated.

CEO of Home Construction Ltd (HCL) group of companies, Richard Le Blanc said that liquidators are handling the entire process, and he could not say what would happen to the workers at Tru Valu or tenants at the mall.

The High Court approved the proposed sale of both Tru Valu and Long Circular Mall in September last year.