

Nebraska Blind Licensees Committee Meeting

Nebraska Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired

4600 Valley Road
Lincoln, NE 68510

June 10, 2017

Meeting Called To Order by Chair Sandy Alvarado at 10:13 AM.

Board Members in Attendance:

Chair: Sandy Alvarado

Secretary: Ross Pollpeter

Antonio Aguilar

Blind Licensees in attendance:

Andrea Chizek, Alex Curtis, Hardy Home, Dave Johnson (phone), Jason
Thompson

NCBVI Staff in attendance:

Dr. Pearl Van Zandt, Executive Director

Carlos Servan, Deputy Director

Jan Stokebrand, NBE Administrative Assistant

Mike Hansen, NCBVI Commissioner

Guests:

Oscar Alvarado

Open Meeting Act:

A copy of the Nebraska Open Meeting Act was available. The Notice of the Meeting was published in the Omaha World Herald, NCBVI Website, and NFB Newslines®. The Notice was also sent to the NCBVI List Serve.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion was made by Antonio Aguilar to approve the minutes from the meeting on December 10, 2016 as distributed. Ross Pollpeter seconded.

Motion passed.

Motion was made by Ross Pollpeter to approve the minutes from the meeting on March 11, 2017 as distributed. Antonio Aguilar seconded. Motion passed.

State Licensing Agency (SLA) REPORT:

Report from Dr. Pearl Van Zandt, Executive Director: (Secretary's Note: Below is the report given by Dr. Van Zandt. When comments or questions were made a () will enclose the additional comments/questions.

NBE Report to the Committee June 10, 2017

The new operator who took over catering and vending at the Department of Roads in February is doing well.

Our two newest operators got their license a few weeks ago, one in Omaha and the other in Lincoln.

We will be adding more vending locations with Nebraska Department of Corrections in Lincoln and Omaha as we can get new operators to run them. We are training a couple of candidates, one in Omaha and one in Lincoln to see if they will become vendors. We are looking for several more clients to begin training due to the vending opportunities we are working on.

Carrie DeFreece is working full time at Camp Ashland to fulfill our contract with the National Guard. A new blind operator should start working with Ashland by the middle of July.

Veteran's Administration contacted NBE about doing vending in Omaha and Lincoln. We were contacted by Offutt Air Force Base to meet with them in May and we had that meeting with a potential teaming partner. We told Offutt staff that we would operate the 26 breakrooms, with a total of 52 vending machines. We are still working with the teaming partner to see if they can come up with the \$1.5-2 million dollars to operate the cafeteria. There will be 3,500 employees in that new building. We will do everything we can to run this location and would start operating it by Summer or Winter 2019.

The Veterans Administration (VA) contacted us also to operate vending in Omaha and Lincoln. We sent certified letters in April and did not get answers back. Carlos called to follow-up and was told that we needed to negotiate with the Canteen operators. Carlos also contacted Susan Gashel, a national expert on Randolph-Sheppard and an advocate for blind vendors. Susan Gashel recommended that we send the VA a letter stating that we would like to visit the facility and if we did not get an

answer within 30 days, we should file for arbitration. Susan Gashel offered to represent us.

We have other opportunities coming with U. S. Department of Agriculture in North Platte and with INS (Immigration and Naturalization Service) in Grand Island.

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR, Sandy Alvarado:

I had an opportunity to meet with our new NBE manager, Carrie DeFreece. We spoke about many different topics during our meeting. I hope I educated her on our thoughts and how we have done things. I also spoke about where I felt we need more improvement. I felt very satisfied that she is a good fit for all of us.

I had an opportunity to have a potential new licensee job shadow me last month. I felt they would be a good addition to the group once they get trained. I continue to attend the meetings with the NBE team to help give us a voice in major decisions and keep informed.

I stopped in to visit with Mr. Bob Burns and spoke with him about the transition from our old retirement accounts to our new ones. As Jan sent out earlier in the week, you need to be watching for your check from the old account and endorse them. Be sure to return them to Mr. Burns ASAP. He will be contacting all of us soon. If you have any questions feel free to contact him at his office.

[Discussion held. If you must mail the check to Mr. Burns, it was recommended to send the endorsed check via certified mail. You may deduct

the cost of sending it via certified mail from your profit/loss report, as approved by Carlos Servan. According to Mr. Servan, NBE will still match using Set Aside funds, but NBE will not have to pay a significant fee since there is only one IRA account.]

Jan Stokebrand had sent an email regarding a new program that provides assistance dealing with Social Security Disability if you are having difficulty. This service is provided by the National Association of Blind Merchants. The BLAST Conference will be in September 2017 in Nashville, TN, while SAGEBRUSH will be in February each year in Las Vegas, NV. I recommend to any blind licensee to attend either conference.

I wish to extend well wishes to our Executive Director, Dr. Pearl Van Zandt on her retirement. I have enjoyed working with her over the past few years and hope she will have an opportunity to do something new. We will miss her presence at our meetings.

Update on Profit and Loss Reports

Jan will contact all appropriate vendors regarding sending their retirement check via registered mail. In April 2017, there were 7 vendors late with reports and May there were 6 vendors late. Dr. Van Zandt encouraged all to submit reports on time, especially close to the end of the fiscal year. Mike Hansen asked if there could be a financial penalty for late reports. We have a policy for promotions stating if you are late with reports this could lead to difficulty with promotional opportunities. Note: Our fiscal year ends September 30.

Update on Licensees, introduce new trainee(s)

There are two newly-licensed blind licensees, Andrea Chizek in Lincoln and Alex Curtis in Omaha. Both are doing very well. There are two potential blind licensees in training, Jim Jirak in Omaha and Ronnie Kellogg in Lincoln.

Discussion on potential new benefits

According to Title 192, these are potential benefits that may be derived from Set Aside funds:

1. Maintenance of equipment and replacement
2. Purchase of new equipment
3. Management services
4. Assuring a fair minimum return to vendors
5. Establish of retirement plan, health insurance, paid sick leave, and/or vacation time.

Most vendors are interested in paid sick leave and vacation time. We must do research on how other states have set this up and on the benefits they provide. Sandy Alvarado and Ross Pollpeter volunteered to do this research.

Annual Set Aside Discussion

The SLA recommends keeping the Set Aside percentage at 11%. In years past, we had decreased it. Antonio Aguilar made a motion to keep Set Aside at 11%. Ross Pollpeter seconded. Motion passed.

Discuss Training for next quarterly committee meeting

Antonio Aguilar suggested a training on how to maintain newer, more modern vending machines. Ross Pollpeter suggested a training on PayRange including installation, management, and promotions. The Committee will leave the decision to the discretion of the Licensee Committee Chair.

New business

Sandy Alvarado has been informed the Social Security Administration building in Omaha wishes to discuss obtaining vending machines. She passed contact information to Carrie DeFreese. As Carrie is at Ashland, Carlos will work on this.

Mike Hansen offered to answer any questions regarding the hiring process for the new executive director.

Elected to the Blind Licensee Committee were Sandy Alvarado, Andrea Chizek, Alex Curtis, Chris Nolan, and Ross Pollpeter.

Set date for next meeting

Discussion was held. Antonio Aguilar made a motion to conduct the next meeting on Saturday, September 9, 2017, at 10:00 AM in Omaha, NE at the State Office Building. Ross Pollpeter seconded. Motion passed.

Election of Officers

Sandy Alvarado, Chair

Ross Pollpeter, Vice Chair

Andrea Chizek, Secretary

Alex Curtis and Chris Nolan, Members at Large

ADJOURN:

Ross Pollpeter made a motion for the meeting to be adjourned. Andrea Chizek seconded. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 11:27 AM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Ross Pollpeter, BLC Secretary