

BLIND VENDOR COMMITTEE MEETING
4600 Valley Road
Lincoln, NE 68510
Saturday, DECEMBER 13TH 2014

ATTENDANCE:

VENDORS:

Antoinette Cervantes
Victor Ireland
Ross Pollpeter
Chris Nolan
Howard Simons
Dave Johnson (telephonically)
Jason Thompson (telephonically)

NCVBI:

Executive Director, Dr. Pearl Van Zandt
Deputy Director, Carlos Servan
BEP, Jan Stokebrand
BEP, Don Ward

BVC:

Chair: Sandy Alvarado
Vice-Chair: Todd Shumaker
Secretary: Antonio Aguilar

GUESTS:

Oscar Alvarado
Mrs. Nolan

Meeting was called to order At 10:06 am by Chair Sandy Alvarado.

Brian Tornquist talked about a new payment option “Pay Range” a device which allows customers to pay with an app on their smart phone. He spoke extensively about how the product works and operates with certain smart phones and vending machines and wi fi connections.

He also spoke briefly about micro markets.

Carlos Servan suggested if any vendor is interested in Micro markets it would be supported.

A motion was made by Antonio Aguilar to accept the minutes from the 2014 retreat and the motion was seconded by Todd Shumaker.
Motion passed.

Report from Executive Director Dr. Pearl Van Zandt
NBE Quarterly Report December 2014:

During the third week of September we held our annual retreat training in Grand Island. Some of the issues addressed were customer services, retirement plan, increasing business opportunities by networking, new technology, coin handling equipment, consumer organization etc.

In September we also opened the Joint Forces café in Lincoln.
Antoinette Cervantes is the new manager.

In October and November we opened two small offices in Omaha: Social Security building was opened by Sandy Alvarado and then transferred to Ron Davison and Voc. Rehab office for Ron Davison.

In November, the BLAST conference was held in Austin Texas. Victor Ireland, Sandy Alvarado, Ross Pollpeter, Carlos Servan and Jan Stokebrand attended.

The rest area project is under way even after many issues with the manufacturer getting machines to us. Don Is currently working on Kearney and then Cozad and working his way west as weather allows.

Looking ahead, we have two small sites at two airports on hold to be scheduled and an agriculture office in North Platte opening soon.

We are starting a new vendor, Jeremy Cash, with a couple of machines in Nebraska City. The machines were installed last week. We might be contracting with Jeremy Hill, a business person, to help us find vending opportunities with the private sector.

We are also contracting with Abilities Fund (AF), an organization with expertise in helping small business continue to grow, to work with some of our vendors. AF will provide training to some vendors and VR clients in the area of successful self-employment.

NCBVI staff will also receive training to enhance our capacity to strengthen the NBE vendors who operate cafeterias.

The contract for the Ashland cafeteria is coming for renewal, thus we are working on a proposal to keep the contract.

Dr. Pearl Van Zandt spoke on the Abilities Fund

We began working on a contract and agreement with Abilities Fund and that contract started December 1st 2014 Abilities Fund are experts on successful small business, and also experts with people with disabilities running businesses.

Chris Hess with Abilities Fund, who attended our 2014 retreat, provides workshops on how to be more successful in small business.

A portion of what they do for our VR clients statewide is to also focus on the vending program and vendors specifically for their training.

Carlos Servan added we are having a meeting with them next week with supervisors to help in finding 1 or 2 blind vendors and start from there.

Sandy Alvarado suggested that a vendor be present if not herself to listen in on these negotiations and Carlos encouraged a meeting with Sandy and (AF) so all points of view are established.

REPORT BVC CHAIR:

Sandy Alvarado stated that she attended Blast Conference. She attended the committee meeting for Texas while there. She stated that they were very organized and they have over 120 vendors statewide. She also voiced some recommendations for the program and she would further like to educate herself by attending more meetings with NCBVI so she is more in tune with the Program and can help with certain issues. Sandy suggested that maybe another addition is needed to help alleviate the work load of Carlos.

She also suggested additional training during quarterly meetings. Carlos mentioned to Sandy that she is welcome to attend meetings and a schedule would be communicated to her.

Carlos did mention that a person will be hired and that person will help in areas needed.

Retirement plan

Sandy mentioned that there was a re-wording and amendment necessary to the Vesting Portion of the plan.

There are certain aspects that were covered but will be dealt with on an individual basis with Bob Burns and Carlos Servan.

Bob Burns has contacted vendors thru e-mail and by phone.

The requirements of the retirement plan were explained by Jan Stokebrand. Motion was made by Chris Nolan to amend the vesting requirement of the retirement plan to one year and was seconded by Todd Shumaker.

Motion passed.

BREAK

Update on vendors.

Jeremy Cash of Nebraska City will begin his 90 day probation in the near future. Jan mentioned that vendors are submitting timely and accurate P&L statements, with just a few needing to get caught up.

Don Ward mentioned that a few vendors are more than a few months behind and need to get caught up before years end.

Sandy mentioned disciplinary actions for untimely reports.

Vendors were encouraged to seek help from NCBVI, NBE and Vendors themselves. It was mentioned that if any vendor needs a vending machine replaced that they should inquire to Don Ward and he will begin getting those machines to those who requested a new machine.

A discussion was raised about hourly rate for drivers due to an increase in the state minimum wage, and also to increase the amount to be deducted on P&L statements. Mileage being .575 and wage being \$8.00 per hour.

A motion was made by Antonio Aguilar to raise the amount of driver deduction on P&L statements to \$10.00 per hour beginning in January 2015 and was seconded by Todd Shumaker.

Motion passed.

Opposed by Victor Ireland.

A motion was made by Antonio Aguilar to increase the amount of deductions on P&L for phone and internet to \$200.00 per month starting in January 2015. Seconded by Chris Nolan.

Motion passed.

A discussion was raised about continued support from the agency on insurance policy requirements for DAS state buildings.

Carlos mentioned that the agency would continue to support those who need help with the extra Umbrella insurance coverage.

Carlos mentioned that the agency will require eye reports from Vendors Physicians stating the condition of blindness.

Those reports are required every 5 years.

A motion was made by Chris Nolan to accept the revised addition of the promotion policy. See below.

Seconded by Todd Shumaker.

NEBRASKA BUSINESS ENTERPRISES
NEBRASKA COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

NBE Blind Licensees Upward Mobility Policy

This policy covers all Blind Licensees, including those who currently are not managing a facility.

NCBVI has the responsibility to assure that an on-going Upward Mobility Training program is maintained in Nebraska for Blind Licensees. This training program is necessary to enhance business competence, as well as making available the upward mobility for NBE Blind Licensees. Training shall be conducted through workshops and seminars. All Blind Licensees are encouraged to attend at least one training session, every year. The Blind Licensees who complete such training will be given priority to be awarded a new facility. This will give them the opportunity to expand their business or increase their profit margin.

NCBVI is required to offer one training session annually. However, subject to an agreement with the Committee of Blind Vendors and the availability of funds, NCBVI may offer more training sessions throughout the state. If a Blind Licensee chooses to attend an Upward Mobility training session outside of the training NCBVI offers, NCBVI may pay for the expenses if funds are available and if the training is endorsed by NCBVI.

Re-Training for Established Blind Licensees

NCBVI shall provide specially designed re-training courses for Blind Licensees who request re-training; or the NBE Team may request that a Blind Licensee receive retraining, to correct specific deficiencies. Blind Licensees who refuse such training may be subject to probation and subsequent termination of their vending license if the deficiencies continue.

Annual Statewide Blind Licensees and Blind Entrepreneur Meeting

NCBVI and the Committee of Blind Vendors shall jointly develop a statewide meeting and training for all Blind Licensees which will be held annually provided funds are available.

Open Site Announcements to all Blind Licensees

Announcements for an open NBE facility shall be sent to all Blind Licensees, including those who are not currently managing a facility, within the state by regular mail or email (according to individual's preferred formats). All Blind Licensees applying for the open site shall authorize the NBE Team to release to the interviewing panel information relative to the record of performance of the Blind Licensee for the preceding twelve (12) month period. The aspects under performance should be, but are not limited to, timely submission of Profit and Loss statements and set-a-side payments, submission of receipts, returning phone calls and emails, and the success of the business, among others.

Interview Process

The open site announcement shall remain open for a period of fourteen (14) days, unless the SLA is required by the new facility to act within less time. Then the Agency shall provide to the secretary of the Committee of Blind Vendors a complete list of all Blind Licensees who have interest in the site. NCBVI will also provide to the secretary the seniority ranking and the certification possessed by each Blind Licensee who is interested. Thereafter, NCBVI shall make the facility award within no later than a period of ten (10) working days considering the determination reached by the interviewing panel.

Interviewing Panel

The members of the interviewing panel will be three Blind Licensees from the Committee of Blind vendors. If one of the members of the committee is applying for that new facility, he/she will be excluded and the other two members will select another person in good standing. The NBE team, agency staff, will be part of the interview process but as consultants. No person can serve on the selection committee who has a conflict of interest or is related to an applicant. The panel recommendation will come to the NCBVI Executive Director for the final decision.

Eligibility to Be Considered

Blind Licensees are not eligible to be considered for promotion to obtain a new or additional site if at the time:

- A. The Blind Licensee is on probation;
- B. The Blind Licensee is delinquent with respect to the filing of any reports required by the State of Nebraska or is delinquent with respect to any financial obligations owed to the State of Nebraska;
- C. The Blind Licensee does not possess the certification required by the facility that is open;
- D. The Blind Licensee has refused the award of another facility during the previous twelve (12) months after he/she went through the process and accepted a location;

E. The Blind Licensee has failed to appear for a scheduled promotion interview within the previous twelve (12) months. This provision will not apply if the Blind Licensee withdrew from consideration at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the scheduled interview;

F. The Blind Licensee has not accrued any seniority within the past five (5) years and has not completed a training session or statewide Blind Vendor Committee meeting as prescribed above.

When Blind Licensees are not interested in a new site

If there are no current Blind Licensees interested for a new site, the new facility will be open to any VR client who meets the qualifications to become a Blind Licensee. Under these circumstances, there will be no need for a formal competition given that there are no current licensees interested for the site.

Approved December 13, 2014
NBE Vendors Committee
NCBVI Administration

Next meeting to be held March 7, 2014 in Lincoln, Ne at 10 am.

Motion was made by Antonio Aguilar to Adjourn.

Seconded by Todd Shumaker.

Motion passed.
Report prepared by Antonio Aguilar
Secretary BVC.