

Nebraska Blind Licensee's

Meeting on May 30th 2015

Attendance:

Licensee's:

Ross Pollpeter
Dave Johnson (telephonically)
Jason Thompson (telephonically)
Jeremy Cash (telephonically)

Committee:
Sandy Alvarado: Chair
Antonio Aguilar: Secretary
Chris Nolan: Member at Large
Victor Ireland: Member at Large

NCBVI:
Dr. Pearl Van Zandt
Carlos Servan
Jan Stokebrand
Don Ward
Nancy Flearl

Guests:
Jim Jirak, Commissioner
Ana Alvarado
Deb Nolan

Meeting was called to order at 10:35 am

The minutes from the March 7th 2015 meeting were read. Carlos Servan stated that the minutes should be amended regarding the Joint Forces contract, as it was the intent to renew the contract, not that the contract was actually renewed. A motion was made by Chris Nolan to approve the minutes from March 7th 2015 including the change noted by Carlos regarding the intent to renew the Joint Forces contract. Motion Seconded by Antonio Aguilar. Motion passed.

Executive Director's Report:

NBE Activity Report: The vendor operating the Joint Forces Canteen has decided to give up that location. It will remain open until July 13.

Update on the I-80 rest area project: All of the new machines are in place at the rest areas. The final ADA updates to the snack machines will be complete in June. Don will notify the interstate licensees of the dates.

The Department of Roads (DOR) is updating rest areas in the next year to make sidewalks and doorways ADA compliant. Each one will be closed for 6 weeks. Don will pass along dates as we get them. This has already started with Gretna. The progress is slow and DOR is two weeks behind schedule at this point. May 29th we got word that a 3rd rest area is closing due to janitorial issues for 1 week.

We are continuing to grow and looking for new people in Grand Island and Omaha. Jason Thompson has started with one location in North Platte, and we are working on new locations for him. Jeremy Cash started the first of the year in Nebraska City. He now has three buildings and has several more in the works.

The SLA has contracted with Abilities Fund to work with the vendors on improving their businesses. They have met with several vendors and have recommended we help Antonio start a food truck business. They are also looking at ways to assist Todd Shumaker at Ashland. Our National Guard contracts have both been renewed for Ashland and Hastings.

Susan Gashel is a lawyer from Colorado who works with the National Association of Blind Merchants (NABM), advocating for the rights of blind vendors. Ms. Gashel will be visiting Lincoln June 18 and 19 and meeting with the SLA staff and a representative of the Nebraska Attorney General's Office to talk about the Randolph-Sheppard Program here in Nebraska.

One reminder, Lincoln sales tax goes up October 1, 2015. We will work with the vendors this affects, as mainly this is for vendors with cafeteria or catering services.

The NBE Team has been meeting with the district offices to provide training and information to the counselors across the state on how NBE works. We are meeting with the technology team on June 25.

We have started installing the new Pay Range Cashless System on Sandy and Ross's machines in Omaha. There will be future updates on how they are working. End of Executive Director's Report

Chair Report:

Sandy Alvarado stated that she has been working closely with NBE/NCBVI. She discussed the upcoming meeting with Susan Gashel and the assistant to the Attorney General on June 18th and 19th. Sandy stated that some of the licensees are welcome to come and meet with Susan Gashel to voice their concerns on what she can do for our program. Carlos Servan stated that our licensees will be able to meet with her on the 18th. Carlos stated that we should discuss the problems we are having with the state (D.A.S) after the loss of some contracts especially with the vending machines and the extra insurance required and the issues that go along with these requirements. A meeting was held about a year ago with the Attorney General which some of those issues were discussed and we learned we would have to go to the Governor to help resolve those issues. We will need to contact the new director of the Attorney General's office and the Lt. Governor along with DAS to accomplish this.

Carlos stated that licensees are encouraged to attend the meetings, especially all committee members. A memo will be sent out inviting all licensees to attend these meetings.

There was a brief discussion on the pay range cashless payment system. Sandy stated that they are exciting and working well in the locations where they are installed. She also stated that they are accessible with a small issue regarding the I-phone application. She also stated that the system was upgraded so that she can access all her transactions not just those using the pay range system. Don Ward stated that the pay range system is not attached to a bank account and he stated that advertising would be provided for those who wish to use it.

Profit and Loss Updates:

Jan Stokebrand stated that most licensees are timely with their statements; however, she is still working with a few licensees' that need assistance.

Updates on Licensee's: Howard Simons will be retiring. A memo will be sent out on the locations that Howard operated in the Grand Island area to see if a current vendor would be interested in acquiring the sites.

Retirement Reporting:

Bill Brown's notes stated that an email was sent out with the retirement reports. There were some accessible issues with the reports and they are working to resolve those issues, but for now licensees will have to hire a reader. A report will be issued every quarter showing employer matches and self-contributions. Carlos stated that one licensee was not counted in the initial start of disbursing the unassigned monies to retirement plan participants. To resolve this, for the next few months licensee's in the program will not get their match until the left out person is caught up. After that all participants will receive a share in the unassigned distribution. There was a brief discussion on fees for Bob Burns.

The fees are \$1,000.00 for the account and \$25.00 per participant in the plan. Those fees will be assessed to the set aside fund.

Annual Set Aside Discussion:

Carlos stated that the agency has recommended that the set aside remain at 11.5%. A motion was made by Antonio Aguilar that the set aside remain at 11.5%. Motion was seconded by Chris Nolan. Motion passed.

Vendor Training Opportunities:

Sandy stated that in order to have some upward mobility further training or meeting attendance is required for advancement. She stated that the Hadley School for the Blind has a website that offers a few training programs, one of which is free and a second that has a cost. The agency is willing to pay for this training. A motion was made by Antonio Aguilar to have a training seminar. Motion was seconded by Chris Nolan. Motion passed.

After discussion, it was decided that the training seminar is to be held September 18th and 19th in York, Nebraska. Chris Nolan will check the availability of York hotels to host the seminar with a report back as soon as possible to reserve conference and hotel rooms. A subcommittee was formed to plan sessions for the seminar. This subcommittee consists of Sandy Alvarado, Ross Pollpeter, Jeremy Cash, and Chris Nolan. It was stated that transportation will be provided for those who want to attend any meetings or training seminars. A motion was made by Antonio Aguilar to have the next committee meeting in conjunction with the retreat, starting on Friday Sept. 18th at 6:00 pm. The motion was seconded by Chris Nolan. The motion passed.

New Business:

Sandy stated that the official name of the committee will be changed from the “state committee of blind vendors” to the “state committee of blind licensee’s.” This new name is to be used in all official correspondence. A motion was made by Chris Nolan to change the interview panel from 5 to 3 persons; and to amend the by-laws to change the wording to “blind licensee’s committee.” Motion seconded by Victor Ireland. Motion passed.

Elections:

Committee Elections were held during May with ballots returned by May 19th 2015. Results are as follows:

Elected were Sandy Alvarado, Ross Pollpeter, Victor Ireland, Todd Shumaker, and Antonio Aguilar.

Break for the new committee members to elect officers:

Sandy Alvarado: Chair

Victor Ireland: Vice Chair

Ross Pollpeter: Secretary

Antonio Aguilar: Member at Large

Todd Shumaker: Member at Large

Following the break all returned to the room for the meeting to continue. There was a brief discussion on contracts and that there will be some inquiries made on new contracts and current contracts. This topic will be continued and discussed at a later date. A question was raised by Chris Nolan about attendance of committee members at meetings. A motion was made by Antonio Aguilar to amend the by-laws to require all committee members to attend all meetings allowing one absence in a two year commitment. If a second absence occurs that member will be dismissed and the vacant position will be filled according to the by-laws. This motion was seconded by Chris Nolan. The motion passed. A motion was then made by Antonio Aguilar to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Victor Ireland.

Adjourn.

Prepared by Antonio Aguilar
Secretary, Blind Licensee's Committee