

**Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NCBVI)
Nebraska Business Enterprise Program (NBE)
Blind Licensees Committee Meeting**

Omaha State Office Building
1313 Farnam St.
Omaha, NE 68102

August 1, 2019

Meeting called to order by Chairperson Sandy Alvarado at 10:02 a.m.

NBE Board members in attendance:

Chairperson Sandy Alvarado, Vice-chairperson Ross Pollpeter, Secretary Andrea Chizek, and board member Alex Curtis.

Blind Licensees in attendance:

Jim Jirak, Miguel Rocha, and Atty Svendsen

NCBVI Staff in attendance: Executive Director Carlos Servan, Deputy Director Carol Jenkins, Omaha District Supervisor Nancy Flearl, and NCBVI staff Dave Robinson

NCBVI Commissioners in Attendance:

Chairperson and ACB Designee Mark Bulger

Guests: Bob Welsh

A copy of the Nebraska Open Meeting Act was available. The Notice of the Meeting was published in the *Lincoln Journal Star*, on the NCBVI Website, and on NFB Newsline®. The notice was sent to the NCBVI.Everyone Email List.

Approval of minutes: A Motion was made by Ross to approve the minutes from the meeting on May 16, 2019 as distributed. Alex seconded it. Motion passed.

NBE Chairperson Report: Sandy is working hard on various projects. She is working hard alongside with the State Licensing Agency (SLA). She also has been in contact and working with Host Coffee. A mini BLAST is scheduled for September 25-27, 2019 in New Jersey along with a BLAST Conference to be held in 2020. There will also be a Sage Brush Conference in February 2020.

SLA Report (Presented by Carol)

Legislation Update

Governor Ricketts signed LB 220 into law at the end of May 2019.

Vending Sites Update

Department of Corrections

The Department of Corrections has informed NCBVI that they are interpreting LB 220 differently and will be putting out an RFP for the vending site. Carlos Servan and Carol Jenkins will be working with Senator Wishart and the Department of Corrections to resolve the issue.

Nebraska State Building Division

NCBVI is still in permit negotiations with the Nebraska State Building Division. Carol is still attempting to obtain a group insurance policy for the NBE program in order to lessen the cost of insurance for vendors. This is the portion of the permit still being negotiated with the State Building Division. Once a permit has been fully executed, Carol will set up a training for relevant NCBVI staff, NBE Staff, and licensees who will be responsible for carrying out the permit.

Offutt

The new Deterrence cafeteria in the USStratCom building had a catering event on Tuesday, July 2, 2019 prior to its grand opening on Monday, July 8, 2019. NCBVI staff, Carol Jenkins, Nancy Flearl, Kathy Stephens, and Larry Oleson worked this event as well as the first week Deterrence was open. Deterrence has had glowing reviews and has been off to a wonderful start! Deterrence will be fully operational by November 1, 2019. The vending machines are slowly being installed as employees move into the new USStratCom building. All vending machines will be installed by November 1, 2019 when all USStratCom employees have moved in.

Omaha Traveling Route

NCBVI was unable to find a blind vendor or a subcontractor to take on an existing traveling route of primarily post offices in Omaha due to the lack of profit. Thus, NCBVI gave notice and gave up eight locations at the end of May 2019.

Other Potential Vending Site Expansions

NCBVI has received a fully executed permit for the VA in Lincoln, which is a part of the VA permit in Omaha. These two fully signed permits fulfill the arbitration requirements filed against the VA for RSA.

NCBVI toured the existing cafeterias at the YRTC's in Kearney and Geneva at the end of July to determine if these two locations will be a possibility for the NBE program. NCBVI determined this is not a suitable undertaking for the NBE Program.

Vending Site Complaints

The categories of complaints that have come in to NCBVI this quarter have been as follows: vendors not coming often enough to stock machines and having moldy products in machines. This is a reminder that NCBVI has all of the contracts with the various owners of facilities, and licensees are representing themselves, other licensees, other blind consumers, and NCBVI statewide.

Additional Notes

DOT Interstate Project

DOT has agreed to remove the enclosures around the vending machines along I-80 by the end of August. NCBVI will then work with Coca-Cola to determine a timeline of when the soda machines to be replaced.

NBE Vendor and NCBVI Staff Training

Greater America informed NCBVI that they would no longer be able to provide training to agency staff nor blind vendors due to the cost involved. NCBVI looked internally at NBE licensed vendors who were able to provide this training to other blind vendors as well as agency staff. Sandy and Ross have agreed to provide this training.

NBE Handbook

Due to other NBE priorities at this time, this is still a continuous work in progress.

Looking Ahead

Due to the budget deficit, NCBVI has no plans to expand the NBE Program at this time. However, NCBVI will continue to work on previously agreed to projects for the NBE Program.

Update on Licensees and new trainee(s): There are no new Licensees or trainee(s) at this time.

Update on Profit and Loss Reports: Dave reported that most of the profit and loss reports are coming in on time.

New Profit and Loss Report: Dave reported that the new profit and loss report is still a work in progress. They are still working out some accessibility issues.

What food can be put in a cold food machine and at what temperatures?: Discussion was held on the topic. The temperature for the freezer should be at -9 degrees, and the temperature for the refrigerator should be at 35 degrees.

Interstate Soda machine update: See SLA report above for information on this topic.

Products in third party machines: Discussion was held on this topic. Coke machines are only designated for coke products, and Pepsi machines are only designated for Pepsi products.

NFBEI Membership: In 2012, the National Federation of the Blind and NABM wanted to raise the awareness of the Randolph-Sheppard Program and bring a focus to the issues facing blind entrepreneurs. The result was the Blind Entrepreneurs Initiative. Terry C. Smith, who had served as Director of Tennessee Services for the Blind & Visually Impaired for almost 3 decades was contracted to lead the initiative. Mr. Smith had built what was arguably the best business enterprises program in the country and was a well-respected national leader in the Randolph-Sheppard community. The NFBEI has succeeded beyond anyone's wildest imaginations and today is recognized as one of the most important Randolph-Sheppard initiatives in recent memory.

The NFBEI focuses on 3 areas:

1. Training
2. Technical Assistance
3. Advocacy

The NFBEI considers training as one of its most important services. Speakers are provided for state blind vendor meetings. Terry Smith conducts training for state agency staff and Elected Committees of Blind Vendors. The NFBEI was the impetus behind the partnership with the Hadley School for the Blind, which offers training for both current and prospective Randolph-Sheppard entrepreneurs. It has conducted seminars / workshops on relevant topics such as healthy vending.

Terry is also available to offer technical assistance to state agencies. He is frequently called upon by state agencies and blind entrepreneurs for advice and counsel on critical issues. The thing that makes the NFBEI so effective is that Terry has access to so many resources and experts that he can call on for assistance. If it is a legal issue, there are nationally recognized Randolph-Sheppard attorneys at his disposal. As an advocacy organization, the NFBEI has been effective working with federal entities and educating Congress on issues that affect blind entrepreneurs. It has sponsored fly-ins that focus strictly on Randolph-Sheppard issues and has participated in other fly-ins sponsored by NAMA.

NCBVI will renew the NFBEI membership as long as funds are available.

Discuss Training for next Quarterly Meeting: Discussion was held. We decided to try to have Social Security come and do a presentation.

New business: The Omaha licensees are all getting different prices from Pepsi. Ross was going to call and talk to them so they can get this issue resolved. We also talked about various ways of keeping your money secure as you travel to and from your various locations.

Set Date for Next Meeting: Ross made a motion to have the next meeting on Thursday, November 21, 2019 in Lincoln, Nebraska. Andrea seconded it. Motion passed.

Date: November 21, 2019
Location: Lincoln, Nebraska
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Room: TBA

Adjournment: Ross made a motion to adjourn. Alex seconded it. Motion passed.

Adjournment Time was at 11:34 a.m.

There was no training provided at this meeting.