

**Nebraska Business Enterprises Program  
Nebraska Blind Licensees Committee Meeting**

Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired  
4600 Valley Road  
Suite 100  
Lincoln, NE 68510

September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Sandy Alvarado at 10:02 a.m.

**Board Members in Attendance**

Sandy Alvarado, Chairperson; Andrea Chizek, Vice Chairperson; Atty Svendsen, Secretary; Board Members Alex Curtis and Ronnie Kellogg

**Blind Licensees and Trainees in Attendance:**

Antonio Aguilar, Jim Jirak, Jason Thompson, Jeremy Richey

**NCBVI Staff in Attendance**

Dave Robinson, NBE Staff; Eric Buckwalter, NBE Coordinator; Carol Jenkins, Deputy Director of Services

**Guest(s):**

Oscar Alvarado

**Logistics**

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, NFB Newslines<sup>©</sup> and Radio Talking Book. The notice was sent to Commission Staff and Commissioners.

**Presentation from Norland Pure**

The representative could not make it due to filling in on a delivery route, but dropped off samples before the meeting started. Eric filled Operators in on some of the main details.

Norland is a local Lincoln company that distributes bottled water. Its new product is canned coffee with nothing else added. It must remain cold during transport and in machines.

It comes in a twelve ounce can in packs of 24 with a unit price of \$1.80. The coffee has a 90-day best buy date.

The company is interested in getting into vending machines; samples of their water and canned coffee were available after the meeting.

**Approve Minutes from May Meeting**

Andrea made a motion to approve May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021 minutes. Alex seconded it and motion passed.

### **NBE Committee Chair Report (Presented by Sandy Alvarado)**

#### **Retreat**

Sandy thanked all who helped in putting together the retreat; Eric for the trivia night and presentations, Carlos for the brief history of Randolph-Sheppard, Dave for his suggestions and presentations, Carol for her input, and the NBE Committee for help in deciding on outside presentations.

Sandy also let everyone know how hard all the parties worked to put the retreat together and how hard the decision was to move it virtual.

Sandy summarized the many meetings she held with our SLA about the RFFP funds.

Sandy informed everyone how she and their committee listen and bring up concerns to our SLA. An example was provided about talking about changing the frequency of turning in meter readings.

Sandy also informed everyone about what will be happening in the future for the federal subcontracted sites and started gathering thoughts and ideas on how to make it work from an operator point of view.

### **SLA REPORT (Presented by Eric Buckwalter)**

#### **VENDING SITE UPDATES**

##### ***DHHS – Geneva***

The machine (one Crane 471, acting as a combo unit for ambient snacks and beverages) at the DHHS-Geneva location has been installed and is being operated by a Blind Licensee.

##### ***DHHS – Columbus***

The new DHHS site in Columbus is open and workers are in the building. NBE is waiting on delivery of one of a new Vendo 621 machines that goes into this building to delivery and install machines (one Vendo 621 and one Crane 186). Due to lack of bids from NBE Licensed Vendors; this site has been sub-contracted.

##### ***DEA – Omaha***

A new location with the federal Drug Enforcement Administration is in the works in the Omaha area. This site will be released for bid soon. It is scheduled to open in late November of this year.

##### **GSA – Lincoln/Omaha**

NBE is in discussion with the GSA about two additional federal sites that will be opening. One location is in Lincoln, the other is in Omaha. More information will be forthcoming as we are made aware of the opening dates of both of these sites.

## **NBE Licensee Update**

Currently there are 14 Licensed Vendors operating facilities. There are two individuals in training.

## **Vending Site Complaint**

NBE received complaints this past quarter about machines leaking water onto the floor. We also received complaints about machines only accepting correct change. The machines leaking water turned out to be a manufacturing defect brought to light because of the high heat we experienced this summer; the defect was repaired as we became aware of machines that had problems. Operators are reminded that it is not acceptable for machines to require exact change for an extended length of time. If an Operator has experience with a machine not providing change; they are to submit a work order if they cannot resolve it themselves.

Operators are also reminded that NCBVI holds all of the contracts with various facilities, and licensees are representing themselves, other blind vendors, and NCBVI statewide.

## **Cantaloupe**

NBE continues to work on setting up a Master Agreement with Cantaloupe for all of our Operators to have their credit card readers fall under one umbrella. This change would allow Operators to maintain control over their own accounts; while giving NBE more flexibility to assign and change credit card reader serial numbers among vendors; as well as allowing NBE to more quickly help Operators with issues related to their readers. This Master Agreement situation was discussed and approved by the NBE Committee in May. There has been a delay in this project as NCBVI and Cantaloupe work on agreeable language in a contract agreement.

NBE has been made aware that machine mapping through Seed Live terminals will be going away in 2022. Because of this, NBE will no longer be assisting Operators with setting up or changing machine mapping templates and machines.

NBE is going to set up a few Operators to explore Seed Cashless + after all the new vending machines have been installed this fall. These Operators will evaluate this VMS software for accessibility and viability to assist Operators in running their business.

NBE will be installing credit card readers at facilities that are eligible and do not yet have readers this fall; as new machines are installed at those facilities. A few Vendors have readers that need to be replaced due to the technology that runs them sun setting in 2022; this will also be completed this fall.

## **Looking Ahead**

The delta variant of COVID-19 has caused some changes to some building's capacity as different agencies look at and amend their work from home policies. Other sites are back at the capacity they should expect to see going forward. Operators are encouraged, if they have not already done so, to contact their building POC and find out

what agency work from home policies are; and the new anticipated number of employees in the building.

Operators are then encouraged to look at the PAR levels in their machines, and adjust as necessary to ensure selection is available; without over filling machines and causing undo losses.

NBE recently placed an order for almost 60 new vending machines. Installation of these machines is expected to start as early as next week. Operators will be informed as to when NBE will be at their facility with new machines so that they can assist with product transfer and set up.

NBE continues to work on a NBE handbook. This process has taken a bit of a backseat due some unforeseen circumstances; but work does continue.

NCBVI is in the beginning process of hiring a new employee to work exclusively with the NBE program.

The SLA is looking at how to highlight products inside machines that are sourced from local producers.

### **Update on Profit and Loss Reports (Presented by Dave Robinson)**

The profit and loss reports submitted by vendors are generally looking pretty good.

There will be small change to P&Ls for people who have both state and federal buildings. We receive 80% of funding from the federal government. For every four dollars we receive, the agency has to contribute a dollar. For this match we can only use set aside from federal sites. Dave has fixed P&Ls for vendors who have both state and federal buildings. These changes indicate the separation of federal and state sites.

### **RSA-15 Inventory**

The RSA-15 document that the SLA is required to complete indicates that Operators must complete a yearly beginning and ending inventory.

Each year Operators will do beginning and ending inventory of cost of goods sold; everything in the machines and storage. This does not include supplies like napkins, condiments, silverware, ETC.

If running a cafeteria this includes the products that you sell and the products you prepare and sell.

This goes according to the federal fiscal year. Ending inventory is on September 30<sup>th</sup>, which will be the same as the beginning inventory on October 1<sup>st</sup>.

When doing the inventory Operators use the cost of the product at purchase, not the

price of which it is sold.

Example: If the unit cost of a Snickers bar for an Operator is \$0.75, that is how it needs to be counted.

The other piece of information now required on the RSA-15 is the total price of cost of goods sold throughout the year. The SLA already has this information from the monthly P&Ls.

Operators are to remember that they are to include items that are the cost of doing business; plates, napkins, condiments, etc., on the 'Supplies' line of the P&L.

Dave has created a spreadsheet for us to do our RSA-15 inventory. It has location, the machine/storage, product, the number of units and the cost the vendor paid per unit. It will total the cost of each item for you and total it at the bottom.

This needs to be completed on or very close to September 30<sup>th</sup> of each year. The number you get from this ending inventory becomes the beginning inventory of the next year.

Operators do not have to name each individual product, but can instead count the same priced items together.

Example: If all one-ounce bags of chips cost \$0.31 you can count them as the same product.

It is all right to let levels decrease while preparing for inventory. It is good to notify the building managers it is time for inventory.

It was suggested that this is also a good time for a deep clean on the machines.

Dave needs the inventory information by October 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### **Sub-Contracting of Federal Sites:**

New guidance from the RSA (Rehabilitation Services Administration) says that the SLA can only directly sub-contract federal facilities for no more than 24 months. Most of NBE's sub-contracted facilities have now been for longer than that. An exception to this is the Omaha Main Post Office, which has been sub-contracted for less than two years.

Facilities with different sub-contractors do currently have different ending dates.

NBE currently has 18 federal facilities that fall under this guidance. A spreadsheet listing these sites will be made available to the Operators.

The SLA can put the locations up for bid by Blind Vendors; who can either operate the sites themselves, or sub-contract the servicing of the locations. Operators could hire

employees/contractors to operate the facilities. If a site(s) receive no bid(s); NBE would have to terminate the current contracts and would lose that site(s).

The SLA could post the sites individually, or they could post them by geographic region.

NBE currently has three sub-contractors; National Vending, who then sub-contracts out to other operators (they do not reveal who these individuals are); a visually impaired individual who is not part of NBE; and Canteen who holds the Omaha Post Office location. This last contract ends in February of 2022.

It was noted that the sub-contracted sites in the North Platte area do not have machines that belong to NBE.

There is no current timeline to address these changes from RSA, they did advise the SLA to not ignore it, however.

We have begun active participation to do the bidding of the sub-contracted federal facilities. This topic will be discussed again at the next meeting.

#### **Quarterly Meter Readings:**

It recently came to the SLA's attention that some Operators were interested in a change from monthly meter readings to quarterly readings. This is a task that generally requires a sighted person to do the readings.

Doing it quarterly still allows the SLA to collect the data but with less financial strain on the blind vendor.

The SLA is fine with this change, but several things must occur for us to do this.

The SLA just submitted their policies to the RSA for approval. This states they will collect monthly meter readings. The SLA would have to submit the changes to RSA for their approval. Once approved, the SLA would have to redo Operator Agreements with all Vendors to reflect this change.

A motion was made by Alex to move our monthly meter readings to quarterly meter readings. The motion was seconded by Andrea.

Motion passed.

#### **Discuss Training for Next Quarterly Meeting**

It was discussed to have hands-on training on machine repairs and care. This would take place in Lincoln.

In the event that current health concerns may make hands-on training difficult, a back-up topic of personnel management will be used.

Motion made by Ronny to have hands-on training with the machines at the next meeting, and that if hands-on training cannot be held, to discuss personnel management. The motion was seconded by Atty.

Motion passed.

**Next Quarterly Meeting**

A motion was made by Atty to hold the next meeting in Lincoln on December 17<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM. The motion was seconded by Andrea

Motion passed.

**Adjourn**

A motion to adjourn made by Atty at 11:33 AM. The motion was seconded by Andrea.

Motion passed.