

Elected Committee of Blind Vendors monthly meeting
Open session, approved minutes

Date: Tuesday, January 13, 2009 1:30pm – 4:30pm

Location: GEF #1, Room A415
201 East Washington Ave, Madison, WI 53702

Present Members: Dan Sippl Chairman, John Fritz Vice-Chairman, Theresa Miller Secretary (via telephone), Mark Papapetru Treasurer (via telephone), Sally Zenchenko, Arlene Maus (via telephone), John Foulks

Present Staff: Joseph D'Costa, Greg Feypel, Kent Walser, Jim Juran, Lorie Lange, Scott McDonald, John Bowles, Linda Rapp, Ralph Mikell (came in mid way through the meeting)

Present Guests: Tom Jeray

1:40 Meeting called to order by Chairman, Dan Sippl.

1:40 Introductions

1:45 Approval of Minutes

Minutes were approved for November

1:50 Financial Report Update

Lori gave the report, because there was no December meeting, both November and December were reported.

Dan asked why the report only indicated that \$65,000 was spent when we are 6 months into the budget year.

Kent indicated that the present report does not have all the monthly reporting in it, and November and December will be done soon. And from now on, it will be reported on a monthly basis. The SLA has now given the program a cash advance and there have been some extra projects related to the cafeterias, but the budget is working out. As of August, no funds have been used to do repairs on, or purchase new vending equipment. Though, program money has been used for some minor purchases for cafeteria equipment. Also, program funds have been used to move

equipment such as for the new site at the Horicon Marsh.

2:11 Cafeteria Update

Kent stated that the commissary model was using GEF-1 to prepare items and send them out to the City County Building and DOC. Recently, due to circumstances, the program has assumed the operation of the DOA cafeteria. The commissary items are now being prepared at the DOA site. This model is reducing costs by reducing the refrigeration units that each site needs, and also has reduced the number of employees by about a third. There have been some customer service issues due to the changes, and these are being worked on. The DOA site had the highest quality menu but the least profitability. It is felt that with this system the quality will be maintained and the profit increased. The DOA site kept recipes on all the items it served. Kent also felt that if certain items become very popular, markets could even be developed in the private sector. Once the commissary is running well, it will be offered out for bid to BEP operators.

Tom Jeray indicated that GEF-2 business is improving. He needs to gain back customers that

left while the business was closed for renovation. He felt he was open to doing commissary items but he wants to wait to see how it does before making a decision. Kent mentioned that any of the other cafeterias not involved with the commissary system could come on board any time they wish.

Dan stated that if the commissary system is saving energy due to things like less refrigeration costs, that these should be documented so they can be used in future dealings with the departments.

Kent indicated that the commissary system has also resulted in some equipment being available. Some of the refrigeration units could be used at vending sites. There are also other items like shelving that is becoming available. The program has also had to find another warehouse site. This was necessary because the former site wanted a one year contract, but since the SLA is only funding the program on a month to month basis, the program could not enter into a one year commitment. Also, the new warehouse is bigger and there are plans to part out the old or severely damaged equipment and have a system where parts can be readily sent out to operators in need.

John Foulks wanted to know what the protocol is to be eligible to get an existing surplus item.

Kent indicated that there are about six questions, to include things as where is the site, anticipated profitability, cost of installing a new machine, etc. He wants to develop a formal request form, which includes the questions. This would make the process easier. Each decision for a request is made on a case by case basis. An operator may have to pay for the delivery of a machine requested if the SLA denies using funds to do this. A stream lined process could also improve an operator request for surplus parts from the new warehouse.

2:49 Nominee Agency Report

Kent reported that 13 operators are behind in their set aside payments. Eight are behind 1 month, or a partial month payment. Five have not made any payment since July when option 6 was instituted.

Dan indicated that the circumstances of each past due payment needs to be stated. Things such as, if a partial payment was made or, if an operator submitted any explanation of payment. Dan feels that the ECBV needs to know this to determine if there is justification for non payment.

Kent indicated that any explanations received have been forwarded to the SLA. The 13 vendors with past payments due will receive separate invoices for the payments due, and it will include a 1% interest charge on the past due amount. Kent indicated that he has submitted to the SLA payment schedules and payments that are past due. Total unpaid payments are about \$65,000.

Kent stated that a \$50 fee will be charged for each late report, and an additional \$50 fee for each month the report continues to be late. The maximum amount charged will be \$600, and other action would be taken by the ECBV.

Kent said that Greg will be developing a plan for the SLA to evaluate feasibility of a site. This will be used to review operations that are not profitable, not paying bills, or not doing the required reporting, etc. Kent wasn't sure how exactly the SLA was going to use this reporting, but felt it could be used to help operators improve their operations, improve proceeds to the program, and determine profitability of an operation.

4:06 SLA Report

Linda Rapp gave a report stating that herself, Greg Feypel, Lenn Schneider, and Allsion Gordon were DVR staff assigned to a work group to come up with options for an operator to assume ownership of a vending site. Three options were developed and an outline with these options was handed out.

Dan asked what was the reason for this and why was it brought up now.

Joseph stated that it was the intent of the law and the program. The goal is for people to own their businesses.

Dan indicated that ownership has an issue of reassessing what set aside is to be paid, and the current situation isn't workable and it needs to be a set number.

Mark said that if the goal is for an operator to be self sufficient, there has to be benefit for the operator. Now it seems that only the state will be benefiting.

Scott replied that the set aside is adjusted every July, and he would like to get a start on it now for 2009. He said he would like to have a committee to work on this. A group including John Foulks, Sally, Theresa and Kent was selected. Scott will

run the group and bring back information for the March meeting.

Joseph asked if the committee wanted to deal with reports from both groups, the group studying ownership and the one working on set aside, at the March meeting. There was general discussion on options and times for groups to meet.

Scott indicated that in April there will be discussion on the set aside issue and final resolution will need to occur by July.

Linda indicated that all the grievances have been collected and responses have been drafted and sent to legal counsel for review. Once reviewed, they will be sent out. She was unable to indicate a time line when this will be done.

Dan stated that in the suit filed by Janet Dickey, the SLA lost in arbitration and \$225,000 was awarded. The Department is disputing the award and it is going to the District Court. It could eventually go to the Appellate Court and Supreme Court. The media has contacted Dan and he has referred them to the Department's legal counsel. Janet has been given Rest Area 10 as an interim site.

4:37 Meeting adjourned

**Respectfully submitted,
Theresa Miller, Secretary ECBV**