**Nebraska Business Enterprises Program**

**Nebraska Blind Licensees Committee Meeting**

Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

1313 Farnam

Omaha, Nebraska 68102

June 3rd, 2022

Meeting called to order at 10:05 AM by Chairperson Sandy Alvarado

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 Commission Staff and Commissioners.

Sandy asked Dave Robinson to give an update on a couple of items that have changed in the Nebraska Open Meeting Act. He informed us about the ability to hold half of the meetings remotely and what parameters need to be met as the SLA understands them at this time. There is also a requirement to use roll call vote and noted in the minutes.

**Board Members in Attendance**

Sandy Alvarado, Chairperson

Andrea Chizek, Vice Chairperson

Atty Svendsen, Secretary

Ronnie Kellogg

**Blind Licensees and Trainees in Attendance**

Jim Jirak

**NCBVI Staff in Attendance**

Carlos Serván, NCBVI Executive Director

Nancy Flearl, NCBVI Omaha District Supervisor

Eric Buckwalter, NBE Supervisor

Dave Robinson, NBE Staff

**Guests**

Janice McGhee

Mark Buldger, NCBVI Board of Commissioners Chairperson

**Approval of Minutes**

Sandy asked if anyone had any changes that needed to be made to the minutes from the March 11, 2022 meeting. A motion was made to approve the minutes by Andrea, seconded by Atty. Motion passed.

Atty – aye

Ronnie – aye

Andrea – aye

Sandy – aye

**Committee Chairperson Report**

**Operators Agreement**

A few minor issues to change and hopefully we will get approval (from RSA) on our agreement. The biggest change we asked for was quarterly meter readings instead of monthly.

**Emergency Placement of a Licensee**

I had a couple of discussions with the SLA on how to replace a Vendor when a Vendor leaves a site without 30 days notice. (Sandy stressed how in the agreement we all signed that unless there is an emergency, a Vendor is to give a written 30 day notice of leaving a site.)

**Other**

Continued discussions with the SLA about workman compensation insurance clarifications

Started discussions with our SLA for a single day retreat before the end of September.

**SLA Report**

**VENDING SITE UPDATE**

*GSA – Lincoln*

The SLA has been in communication with GSA about a new USDA office the Lincoln area. Currently, this site is not scheduled to open until the summer of 2023

*Nebraska Department of Agriculture*

Vending machines were added to the breakroom serving staff of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture and other commodities-based agencies. The building is in the Fallbrook area of Lincoln and a Vendor was already servicing a breakroom serving other agencies in this building.

*Federal Sites*

The SLA is still working to determine how to proceed with the buildings that fall under new RSA regulations in regards to sub-contracting that were not bid on by Vendors.

*NDCS*

NBE was recently awarded the beverage contract for the Nebraska Department of Corrections CCCL – where previously we only had the snack contract. This contract will start in late summer. The site will be served by a Blind Vendor who already has the site in relation services already provided.

**NBE LICENSEE UPDATE**

There are currently thirteen licensed Vendors in the NBE program. An individual expressed interest in the program during this past quarter and was able to do a job shadow exploration experience with a Lincoln Vendor.

**VENDING SITE COMPLAINTS**

The SLA received complaints this past quarter regarding machines not being well stocked, expired product, and unprofessional communication. NBE Vendors are reminded that they not only represent their business but also; the NBE program as a whole, other Blind Vendors, NCBVI, and blind individuals across Nebraska. The SLA takes these complaints seriously, and will move quickly to address the situation.

**CANTALOUPE**

As of this meeting almost all Vendors have made the migration to the new NCBVI Cantaloupe Master Account. The transfer, while it took longer than hoped, was almost seamless; just a few glitches that Cantaloupe worked to resolve very quickly. Vendors who need access to the information on their account previous to the transfer should contact Eric so he can arrange with Cantaloupe to access this information.

A few sites were waiting on this process to be completed so we could reassign credit card readers. The SLA has started to install credit card readers on these machines. By waiting for the Master Agreement process to be completed the SLA will save several hundred dollars and weeks of wait time.

The SLA will now be approaching Cantaloupe about their offer to let a few Vendors test Seed Cashless Plus; their vending management service (VMS). VMS allows Vendors to see the contents of their machines remotely. This, among other things, allows Vendors to pre-kit product without first visiting the machine; reducing trips to sites.

EMV compliance has been a concern for some Vendors as we approach the August cut off for all credit card readers to be in EMV compliance. The SLA has identified only five machines that do not currently meet EMV compliance. We are working on getting the appropriate upgrades done to these machines.

As a note. For those Vendors who have MEI 4-in-1+ bezels on your machine(s). These devices will be EMV compliant pending an upgrade pushed from Crane. Currently, this is expected in June.

**NEW MACHINES**

All of the machines ordered last summer have now been installed. New Vendo 621s have been ordered for the NDCS contract.

The lead time for most manufacturers is now much shorter.

**PRODUCT INSTRUCTIONS**

This past quarter the SLA has received several questions about placing frozen food items in their cold food machines to offer more variety for their customers. Thanks to the work of Chairperson Sandy, Vistar provided a list of frozen items and how long their shelf life when thawed and stored cold, or in some cases ambient temperatures. This list will be emailed to Vendors after this meeting. It is important to always follow manufacturer’s directions for storing and selling product to offer safe products for consumers.

**OTHER UPDATES**

*Presentations*

A local 4-H group that focuses on science, technology, and art asked if they could do a field trip to the NCBVI office in Lincoln to learn about how vending machines operate. On 5/24 five children ages 5 to 9 and their grandparents (the groups grandparents are super involved and take their grandkids to meetings when parents work) came for this visit. Eric briefly talked to them about what NCBVI does for individuals and why we have vending machines; brief history of Randolph-Sheppard. The participants then learned about how bill validators, coin mechanisms, and credit card readers work. They got to examine trays that were pulled from snack and glass front machines and learned about how each operates to dispense products. Participants then got to watch and learn about how BevMax, Crane 186, and Vendo 621s operate. Test vends were done on each machine with doors open so the kids could see how all of the parts moved. There were a lot of good questions asked. Each kid got leave with an SS bag of chips. It was a great learning experience for all.

*Repair Requests*

If you have a problem with a machine that you cannot fix, please submit a repair request form ASAP. The SLA will determine who is dispatched to address the issue. Vendors should not contact Advanced Breakroom Services or Greater America Distributing directly unless instructed do so by the SLA. Submitting repair requests in a timely manner also is needed to ensure machines are fixed as soon as possible.

*Professionalism of Communication*

NBE Vendors are reminded to always keep communication with customers, building contacts, suppliers, SLA staff, and each other professional at all times. This includes ensuring that emails, texts, and repair requests are well written with things appropriately spelled. If you use voice-to-text to conduct written business communication please take the time to proofread your writing to ensure the proper words were heard and understood.

**LOOKING AHEAD**

The NBE program has temporarily pulled the job listing for a third person from the State of Nebraska job posting website. After some tweaking of the position description, this position will be relisted.

RSVA will be holding their annual meeting in conjunction with the ACB National Convention in July in Omaha. The SLA was invited to be part of a panel discussion during this meeting along with several Vendors. If you would like to be a Vendor who is part of the panel, please speak with Eric.

The SLA in conjunction with the NBE Committee will be planning a training day in late summer/ early fall. After discussion with the Committee Chairperson it looks like we have so identified using promotions to drive sales at vending machines (and Cafes/Micro Markets) as part of this training day. A list of possible dates will be sent out in the near future for Vendor feedback.

The SLA and the NBE Committee are also in the beginning stages of planning a longer retreat-style event in May of 2023.

**Discussion of Set Aside Percentages**

The SLA presented two options. (1) Keep our current rate of 8% or lower it to 7%. The SLA wanted us to consider how funds could change in the future and that lean times in funding can always happen. Ronnie made a motion to keep our current rate of 8%, seconded by Atty. Motion passed.

Andrea – aye

Ronnie – aye

Atty – aye

Sandy – aye

**Workman’s Compensation Insurance**

After many back and forth calls and emails the SLA has received an answer about reader/driver coverage on the insurance policy. The licensees are covered on the policy, but reader/driver is not, unless they are an employee. Sandy explained how in the future of the NBE program will grow and change and the coverage will help current and perhaps future licensees. Atty made a motion that we keep the current insurance, Andrea seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Andrea – aye

Ronnie – aye

Atty – aye

Sandy – aye

**Discussion of Upcoming Training Opportunities**

**RSVA**

Jim Jirak reported on the training that will be held during the RSVA portion of the ACB National Convention in Omaha on July 2nd. A full list of the RSVA schedule can be found here; <https://www.randolph-sheppard.org/convention/2022-RSVA-CONVENTION.pdf>

**NABM**

Sandy reported there will be two trainings from NABM. The last weekend in September in Atlantic City, New Jersey and another one in Des Moines, Iowa, October 19th and 20th. She suggested if possible try to attend the Des Moines training since it is only a couple of hours away.

**Discuss Training For Next Quarterly Meeting**

Discussion was held and, due to a training day being planned for August or September, we would forgo the training for the meeting.

**Set Date for Next Meeting**

Ronnie made a motion for the next meeting to be held on September 16, 2022 at 10:00 AM in Lincoln, Atty seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Andrea – aye

Ronnie – aye

Atty – aye

Sandy – aye

**Meeting Adjournment**

Atty made a motion to adjourn, Andrea seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Andrea – aye

Ronnie – aye

Atty – aye

Sandy – aye

Meeting adjourned at 11:25 AM