NCBV Election Meeting

February 9, 2018

3:34 pm

1. **Roll Call and Confirmation of a Quorum, Richard Saperstein**

A quorum was present at this meeting.

Current NCBV Committee Present:

Richard Saperstein, Chair

Bert Hansen, Vice Chair

Carol Ewing, Secretary

Harold Petrofsky, Southern Representative

Bill Schley, Northern Representative

Mikie Yamada

Zippora Jones-Turner

Beth Perring

April Smith

Marjory Olaes

Nels Brown

***By Phone: (No vote)***

Frank Pezzimenti

Ben Giron

Staff:

Drazen Elez, Deputy Administrator, Rehabilitation Division/DETR

David Furse, BEO II, Rehabilitation Division/DETR/BEN

Marina Bucalo, BEO I, Rehabilitation Division/DETR/BEN

Catherine “Katie” Fletcher, BEO I, Rehabilitation Division/DETR/BEN

Janette Parish, AA IV, Rehabilitation Division/DETR/BEN

Jeanne Clark, AA II, Rehabilitation Division/DETR/BEN

Robert Whitney, Deputy Attorney General- State of Nevada- (phone)

1. **Verification of Posting, Jeanne Clark**

Jeanne Clark stated that the Agenda was posted in a timely and correct manner and was presently on file.

1. **First Public Comment, Richard Saperstein**

Richard Saperstein paused to honor the late Benita Mc Henry, long time BEN Operator who passed away January 7, 2018 in Las Vegas. He remembered Ms. McHenry with affection as a sweet, kind woman who will be missed by all.

Mr. Saperstein then asked the assembly for a moment of silence to honor Ms. McHenry.

Mr. Saperstein asked if anyone had anything they wish to say in remembrance of thisdeceased member:

Carol Ewing recalled losing her vision in 1991 transcribing Braille for the school district for 13 years and went into the Program in 2006. She expressed her pleasure then in meeting all Operators but stated that when she met Benita McHenry the two just seemed to form a bond and became friends. We both had background in regards to the military. One day Ms. Ewing asked Ms. McHenry how she lost her sight. Ms. McHenry responded that she normally does not tell anybody; however, in 1990 when she was a nurse at Valley Hospital, they were recruiting nurses for Desert Storm War, which was described to McHenry as a supposed “short war”. After two refusals, the third time they came to recruit Ms. McHenry said yes and was placed on one of two ships, the Comfort or the Mercy, which were three miles off shore. Ms. McHenry was assigned to take the body bags brought in, unzip them to find the dog tags, sign the paperwork and notify the family, then prepare the body for the next destination. One day a body bag was booby trapped and blew up, killing her doctor and over 30-40 other people. Ms. McHenry was taken to a hospital in Texas where she was to undergo rehabilitation for 2 years. Richard Saperstein noted that Ms. McHenry was an “American Hero”; Ms. Ewing agreed and remarked that Ms. McHenry was a dynamic person as are all the people in the BEN Program.

1. **For Possible Action- Vote to Accept the Agenda, Richard Saperstein** (These items were taken out oforder.)

Bert Hansen made a motion to accept the agenda while Bill Schley seconded it and it passed unanimously**.**

1. **Welcome and Introduction of Guests, Richard Saperstein**

Kimberly Helm of the Department of Motor Vehicles/E. Sahara was in the Las Vegas office acting as a third party in order to tally the paper votes. Nora Montano was present in the South office as was Susan Schley present in the North office.

1. **For Possible Action:** (These items were taken out of sequence)**,** **Carol Ewing**
2. **Approval of minutes for the Nevada Committee of Blind Vendors meeting, December 13, 2017, Carol Ewing**

Bert Hansen made a motion to approve these minutes; Harold Petrofsky seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

1. **Approval of minutes for the Special Meeting of the Nevada Committee of Blind Vendors on January 11, 2018, Carol Ewing**

Harold Petrofsky made a motion to approve these minutes; Bert Hansen seconded them and it passed unanimously.

1. **Old Business (**These items were taken out of sequence.)
2. **Discussion-Update on new, waived and in progress sites, Trainee Status & Strategic Planning, David Furse**

David Furse referred to his presentation in three parts touching on the larger tasks:

**Active Projects**:

* Hoover Dam Garage resurfacing – The evaluation committee met and concluded on a contract to be executed with the paperwork and contract to go forward and begin March 13th and mobilize the project around March 20th then actually begin work with a completion date of about two months later.

Beth Perring asked if the Program was paying for the repairs to which Drazen Elez that yes, the Program is paying for this repair- something that had been discussed in earlier Committee meetings. He reminded all that the contract has not been settled and that the Board of Examiners must still approve this. Since their next meeting is in March, Mr. Elez expressed his wish that this contract be approved and move forward after being discussed for the past 15 years. He proceeded to explain that when the building was taken over from the BOR the Program it was agreed that the responsibility for this would be the Program’s and that the budget for this has been approved about 3 years ago. The structure had been repaired once before in 2011 with a cost of approximately $150,000. He asked that all consider that the second floor on the parking garage is the ceiling of the café and the gift shop that affects our sites and the BEN Program more than the Bureau of Reclamation since they view the problem as simply a leaky garage. This item has been discussed several times and even though this project has been several years in the making, again he stated that it must go through the BOE (Board of Examiners) before it can be executed with the work itself lasting about 2 months. The project has been awarded to an engineering company, Curtain Design Consultants (DCR), which was recommended by our public works experts who have used them for various projects in the past. After their research, 3 options were given to the Program. The second option was chosen costing a half million dollars in total. Beth Perring asked if there would be a warranty/guarantee for this work to which Drazen Elez answered that it would most likely last for 20 years but guaranteed for 10 years.

* Southern Nevada Health District has been revitalized. We went back and had a follow-up inspection to verify that things had been brought back to the plan that we originally put in place.
* W. Sahara Library Snack Bar- The library had asked the BEN Program to install a snack bar to this very fascinating location. Since the first discussion, the Bureau was granted a better spot, one with running water for a hand sink. At this time, the Bureau had submitted initial plans to the library for their approval. Once received we will consult with the Health District to finalize the preparations and begin building with a projected date of completion of April 2018.

**Completed Projects**:

* Equipment items from the **BEN Storage** which are either in disrepair, in excess orunused have been transported to **TNT Auction,** a project headed by Marina Bucalo. This is better than the disposing of the units and it frees up a lot of storage space. Proceeds of the sale will be returned to the Program.
* The **Air Handler** was recently replaced at the **Hoover Dam Gift Shop** to resolve the holes in the coil giving more functionality and power to the A/C.
* At the **E. Sahara DMV, the new slat wall** project has been completed, giving the area a clean, sleek look with more display space.

**Future Projects**:

* Drazen Elez reported that recently the **Reno Airports Authority** released bids for 5 various retail shops. Before they published, the BEN Program reached to them to make sure that they understood the law. A meeting was held between the BEN Administration (Shelley Hendren, Robert Whitney, Drazen Elez and Katie Fletcher) and the Reno Airport Authority, Chief Financial Officer and the upper echelon of the Airport with a hired legal counsel there and assorted VPs. Mr. Elez touted the support on the Rehabilitation side and with Catherine Fletcher’s presentation, created by her, David Furse and Marina Bucalo stressed the value of the Program and not necessarily to enforce the law.

To recap: The Reno Airports Authority Bureau released bids for 5 various retail shops within the airport. Through our channels we found out this was being published. We reached out to them initially in order that they understood the Randolph-Sheppard law giving the Program priority rights. At this time, the Airport Authority has not responded, though no other retailers or vendor(s) has been chosen yet to take over these sites. The Administration felt that the Program has a good chance of having a site or a few at the Reno airport and hopefully be one of our larger sites in the future.

1. **Reports from Subcommittees listed below:**
2. **Finance**, Carol Ewing- *No updates to report.*
3. **Policies & Procedures**, Harold Petrofsky- *No updates to report.*
4. **Training**, William Schley- *No updates to report.*
5. **Future Planning**, Bert Hansen- *No updates to report.*
6. **New Business** (This item was discussed with action taken earlier in the meeting.)
7. **Discussion For Possible Action- Nevada Committee of Blind Vendors Elections -Time periods February 2018-February 2020, Richard Saperstein**

Prior to the vote, Richard Saperstein explained the voting procedure and recited parts of the Bylaws *(Section 5-* *Eligibility, Election and Term of Offic*e).

Beth Perring asked what happened if two members were chosen from Northern Nevada and three members from Southern Nevada was not possible. Richard Saperstein agreed with the words of the bylaws but answered that if there were not enough to serve and fill the committee slots in the North then there can be four elected from the South.

**Northern nominees: Serve?**

Carol Ewing nominated -> Bill Schley (yes)

Bill Schley nominated -> Nels Brown (yes)

Nels Brown nominated -> April Smith (yes)

**Southern nominees: Serve?**

Harold Petrofsky nominated -> Carol Ewing (yes)

Beth Perring nominated -> Bert Hansen (yes)

Carol Ewing nominated -> Harold Petrofsky (yes)

Harold Petrofsky nominated -> Beth Perring (yes)

3:40 pm At this time Ivan Delgado arrived to this meeting in time to vote.

~The top five nominees were announced by Kimberly Helms; all other attendees left the Conference Room so that the top five could decide which candidate would suit which position. A 20-minute discussion ensued before the results wereannounced, by David Furse, to the reconvened assembly using a second ballot. ~

**2018-2020 NCBV Committee Members**

**CAROL EWING-** CHAIRWOMAN

**BERT HANSEN-**  VICE CHAIRPERSON - (Federal)

**BILL SCHLEY**- SECRETARY - (Federal)

**APRIL SMITH-** NORTHERN REPRESENTATIVE

**HAROLD PETROFSKY-** SOUTHERN REPRESENTATIVE

1. **Discussion For Possible Action- Evaluation and Selection of type of Subcommittees needed and possible selection of Subcommittee chairs, Carol Ewing**- ***Tabled***. Bert Hansen made a motion to table this discussion for another time, Harold Petrofsky seconded it, and it passed unanimously.
2. **Discussion For Possible Action- Overview State Biennial Budget SFY 18/19 and BEN’s December Budget Report, Drazen Elez**

Drazen Elez reminded everyone of the process that will need to take place soon explaining that the budget for the BEN Program was in that cycle period in which a new budget should be carved out in the next committee meeting to be presented to Rehabilitation Division so that it can be presented to DETR. A Finance Committee meeting will have to take place, prior to the full Committee Meeting, which will allow the figures to be presented to decide what is needed and wanted for the coming two years.

In speaking of the Comparison Budget between 2017 & 2018 Drazen Elez stated that the Bureau was trying to ensure Operators are getting the best service with what is spent. Specifically he mentioned that the Bureau was able to reduce expenses which were unnecessary, such as register maintenance, recalling that when he first came to the Program 50K-80K was spent on register maintenance in just Southern Nevada and recently had been reduced $3,000-$4000 promising to review the details of this report in the next Finance Meeting. Mr. Elez concluded the discussion stating that the Program spent conservatively using the funds available to give the best customer service to its Operators and their sites. More details during the next meeting or Finance Meeting.

Beth Perring asked if on a Federal Level if the Randolph Sheppard was being supported. Mr. Elez clarified her meaning asking if she meant through the House and Senate then answered that he could not respond to that question as he could not guess their thinking on this subject but believed that we were. One initiative that does not support the BEP Program, he cited, was a regulation that passed regarding rest stops in which the format is being drafted which would greatly affect the BEP Programs around the country in a negative way. These concerns have Terry Smith emailing other organizations across the country asking for their support and Nicky Gacos, one of the Committee members of the National Association of the Blind Merchants, is involved. Mr. Elez reported that Mr. Gacos as well as Terry Smith would be in Las Vegas, free of charge, for the training meeting the coming week in case anyone may have a question regarding updates in these areas.

Beth Perring questioned whether someone was insisting that the Program accept Federal funds into the Program to which Drazen Elez answered that this was not something anyone insisted and that his recommendation was not to accept these funds unless necessary as it opens inquiries and restrictions into the Program. More restrictions would mean fewer opportunities and that future plans that are being proposed will allow more flexibility, entrepreneurial plans for the Program to support the Operators by opening up sites more quickly. Bert Hansen concurred with this and Beth Perring stated that her recommendation to the committee and staff should never take Federal money. Carol Ewing asked if she was correct in reporting that there was a Federal highway coming through the State of Nevada. Mr. Elez remarked that the Program will deal with it when it comes along.

1. **Discussion For Possible Action- Operator Benefits- Retirement Disbursement, Medical and Life Insurance Reimbursement, Drazen Elez**

During the budget discussion, Drazen Elez advised that there were possible changes in these benefits, which must be decided upon in order to plan for the next two years. One of which is the **healthcare cost reimbursement**; the other to consider is the **retirement amount**. At this next meeting, it must be determined whether they will stay at the same level or change reimbursement amounts. He asked all to be mindful of the necessity of keeping a reserve of 3 million or more reporting that it was currently $2.8 million. He stated that there would not be any additional changes in retirement

 ($9000) and the only decision will be whether the healthcare reimbursement will be $14,500 or if that number will change. Reviewing the numbers is the next task. In 2017, we had the lowest amount of expenditures in the last five (5) years. Our focus was to support operations’ more in terms of maintaining, cleaning, purchasing signs, better equipment and in some cases, paying utilities.

Drazen Elez reminded all that two-three years prior there were amounts in the NRS that earmarked both retirement and healthcare. Due to a large reserve, it was determined to disperse it amongst Operators. A long process ensued because there was no legal way to do this. The Program changed the laws and the amounts in the policy from taking a few years to a few months. Beth Perring asked if a Finance meeting should be scheduled prior to the next Committee meeting and Drazen Elez answered that it did.

Harold Petrofsky asked about the changes to this policy specifically how long before they receive at least $5,000. He felt that all Operators in the Program should receive the same amount but now the Operators receive their disbursements through a type of scale, punishing people to get into the Program and that when it was voted on, he was outvoted. He felt that everyone should receive at least $5,000 as it was before. Drazen Elez stated that it was not the staff who decided this but the Committee members themselves. If it is to be changed, it can be. The policy committee can change this by submitting it to RSA and within a few months, the change is done without change to the NRS. Bert Hansen advised that these issues be considered before the next meeting and have some concrete suggestions with which to go forward. Bill Schley reminded all that this scale was set up and voted on by the majority of the Committee who were present after witnessing trained Operators exit the Program after a few years taking their full benefits with them. He stated that the primary reason it was set up in this fashion was to have them stay in the Program. Drazen Elez offered his opinion regarding both Harold Petrofsky and Bill Schley’s point of view in stating that there should be a balance in that thinking. There must be understanding of who has done the work to grow the Program and look at the future Operators and how to sell the Program to them. In the beginning, not all Operators make money to run their sites and they need the incentive to stay in the Program. Mikie Yamada asked if after training a trainee gets his or her license right away to which Drazen Elez responded that depending on the learning curve it takes about 2 years before someone actually is trained. That means after one runs a site as an Interim Operator for about 6 months or more before being licensed. Ms. Yamada commented on the difference in the current organization from when she began in 2006 where she ran a stand for 2 years and worked a second job. Mr. Elez summed up the discussion by declaring that the present system may not be the best and still too long of a process at this time but better than it was.

1. **Second Public Comment, Carol Ewing**

Operators expressed congratulations to newly elected Carol Ewing for her position as Committee Chairwoman. Beth Perring offered her best wishes to Drazen Elez for his new position as Deputy Administrator of the Rehabilitation Division. Zippora Jones-Turner wished to thank Marina Bucalo, David Furse and Drazen for awarding her the new site.

1. **Discussion- Date for Next NCBV Meeting, Carol Ewing**

Drazen Elez suggested going back to having Quarterly Meetings. April 27, 2018 at 3:30pm was chosen for the next NCBV Meeting with discussions for July 27th, and October 25th-for subsequent tentativ*e* meeting dates.

1. **Adjournment, Carol Ewing**

Harold Petrofsky made a motion to adjourn this meeting and Bert Hansen seconded the motion, which passed unanimously**.**

**This meeting adjourned at 5:14pm**