NCBV Meeting Minutes

2-13-20

2:00pm

**I. Roll Call and Confirmation of a Quorum: Carol Ewing, Chair**

**A quorum was present at this meeting.**

Carol Ewing, Chairperson

Bert Hansen, Vice Chair

Beth Perring, Southern Representative

Jorge Maldonado

Vanessa Hernandez

Teressa Fax

Sweet Daughtery

Jack Rich

Ivan Delgado

Burnetta Schlecter

Elizabeth Gonzalez

Gustavo Cervantes

Marcos Hurtado

Richard Taylor

**Staff:**

Chris Mazza, Chief Enterprise Officer, Rehabilitation Division/DETR/BEN

Jessica Peters, BEO II, Rehabilitation Division/DETR/BEN

Sydney Martinez, BEO II, Rehabilitation Division/DETR/BEN

Kevin Horigan, BEO I, Rehabilitation Division/DETR/BEN

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

Melissa Castro, AA II, Rehabilitation Division/DETR/BEN

Robert Whitney, Deputy Attorney General/State of Nevada

**II. Verification of Posting: Melissa Castro**

Melissa Castro confirmed that the Agenda was posted in a timely and correct manner and was currently on file.

**III. First Public Comment Session: Carol Ewing**

There was none.

**IV. For Possible Action – Vote to Accept the Agenda: Carol Ewing**

Beth Perring made a motion to accept this agenda and Bert Hansen seconded it. This motion passed unanimously.

**V. Welcome and Introduction of Guests: Carol Ewing**

There were no guests.

**VI. For Possible Action – Carol Ewing**

**Approval of the minutes for the**

**Nevada Committee of Blind Vendors meeting,**

**September 25, 2019**

Beth Perring made a motion to accept this agenda and Bert Hansen seconded it. This motion passed unanimously.

**VII. Old Business**

**Discussion – BEN project and status update: Chris Mazza, BEN Chief**

Chris Mazza stated that he had a final meeting with the architects for Symphony Park and an RFP for the general contractor will be submitted shortly. A bid for Sunset Park will also be put out soon. The bid for Sahara West Library went out and will have a manned micro market. An RFP for the Clark County Detention Center will be going out and we are trying to obtain our priority right in that location. Mr. Mazza also stated that he had a meeting scheduled with consultant, Terry Smith as well as our Deputy Administration and Administrator, Drazen Elez and Shelley Hendren to talk about any revisions or changes we think we need to make to our current statutes or administrative codes as the legislative session starts this January.

Chris Mazza also brought up dry cleaning lockers that could potentially be a new business opportunity and could diversify the program. He explained that you could drop off your dirty clothes, somebody picks them up and they let you know that your clean clothes are there through an app on your phone. It would be a great way for us to increase our presence in government buildings without having to add more square footage or add more snack bars and more equipment.

During the last legislative session, a new BEO II position was approved. Sydney Martinez has taken that role from BEO I to BEO II, which now leaves the BEO I position available. The posting for the position will close on February 21st and we will conduct interviews for the person who’s best qualified.

**VIII. New Business**

**Discussion/For Possible Action – Chris Mazza**

**Overview State Biennial Budget SFY 20/21 and BEN’s December Budget Report**

The report does not reflect a current number. It started in Fiscal 2020 which is June of 2019. The most interesting number on the report is where the reserve was and where it is. When the year started which was in June of 2019, we were just over $3 million in reserve. Chris Mazza did some calculations and as of today, we’re at about $2.8 million.

**Discussion/For Possible Action – Chris Mazza**

**Operator Benefits – Retirement and Medical Disbursement**

The decision to be made on whether to increase it or leave it the same. It currently stands at $14,500 every year for all licensed operators and medical reimbursement.

Bert Hansen asked if there was any indication of the last time it was raised. Janette Parish stated it had been about four years. Mr. Hansen wanted to consider hearing from other operators and consider 10% for inflation. Beth Perring inquired about how many people really use this benefit.

Chris Mazza stated that everybody uses it to some extent. The number of people that use the maximum is very minimal, about 20% of all licensed operators who have this benefit utilize it to its fullest. In 2019, about three people used it to the maximum. Mr. Hansen then inquired about how many people used the maximum and didn’t have enough to cover everything. Janette Parish stated there was only two and it was only a matter of a few hundred dollars. Bert Hansen, Carol Ewing and Beth Perring all agreed there wasn’t a reason to increase.

Considering that the reserve didn’t meet the minimum balance to talk about raising retirement, Carol Ewing decided to leave the retirement as it is. Bert Hansen agreed.

**IX. Second Public Comment: Carol Ewing**

Ivan Delgado expressed his concern about actively pursuing younger blind. Chris Mazza agreed that it was a good point and to keep in mind that you must be a VR client to be able to be in the BEN program, which would make the process longer. Mr. Delgado was under the impression that VR didn’t have to be involved with the BEP work but also brought up that having to go through VR may be turning people off about joining the program. He also expressed that working with and getting a hold of the BSB counselors can be difficult at times. Ivan Delgado also stated it was a disadvantage for BEN because not a lot of people are aware of the program. Chris Mazza assured Ivan that you do have to be a VR client to be a part of the BEN program and we are attending blind orientations to inform new clients about the program. He also stated that we are more engaged with the counselors and working with them to ensure that business licenses are written in their plans and paid for as opposed to starting the program with a loan.

Richard Taylor stated he attended the School for the Blind in Louisiana and when he got to the 12th grade they had him go with one of the vendors and shadow them. Jessica Peters stated that you must have a high school diploma in order to be eligible to be a BEP operator, so although we can do outreach, we can’t necessarily do anything with them until after they receive their high school diploma.

Kevin Horigan assured all trainees and operators that the BEO staff is willing to advocate and assist to work through any issues they experience.

Beth Perring requested that all e-mails be sent in a size 14 font.

**X. Discussion – Date for Next NCBV Meeting: Carol Ewing**

The next NCBV meeting was scheduled for February 21, 2020 at 10:00am.

**XI. Adjournment: Carol Ewing**

Beth Perring made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Bert Hansen seconded it. This motion passed unanimously.

**This meeting adjourned at 2:31pm.**