South Carolina Commission for the Blind

BEP Committee

Quarterly Meeting

Location: Holiday Inn and Suites

 Two Notch Road, Columbia SC

Date: February 6, 2015

Time: 11 AM

Committee members present:

 Belinda Banks member at large,

 Ruby Bryant Florence District,

 Donald Johnson Columbia District 1,

Olivia Messer Greenville Spartanburg District,

Isaiah Nelson Columbia District 2 (Vice Chair),

Joe Urbanek Charleston District (Chairman)

Agency Staff Present:

Otis Stevens, BEP Director

Scott Fracano, Charleston District Consultant

The meeting was called to order at eleven o’clock am. Isiah Nelson gave the opening prayer.

The gallery introduced themselves, and there were 20 vendors present and 2 guests.

The Committee role was called and all members were present.

There were two agency staff members present.

The minutes from the last quarterly meeting were approved.

The first item on the agenda was a discussion of a letter from the Committee to Otis regarding paying for hotel rooms for Committee members the night before the regular quarterly BEP meeting. Otis stated that he would have a definite answer from the Commissioner soon. The Committee voted to approve the reimbursement for rooms for Committee members the night before the quarterly BEP Committee meetings with one no vote.

Next, the Committee discussed having new BEP staff members go to the Louisiana Center for the Blind for training in blindness skills. This training would help new staff members gain a true understanding of what blindness is and that blind people can do things just as others do. Also, the Committee recommended that this training also be offered to current BEP staff members. Otis asked that the Committee write a recommendation so that it could be presented to the Commissioner.

Next, Otis gave an update on Libera. Otis stated that all vendor information and site information has been input in to the system. Counselors are entering in the reports for October, November, and December. Otis asked that all vendors continue to send reports in on a timely basis. Otis stated that coming in Libera is the signature pad. This will allow vendors to sign on counselor’s computer screens, and then counselors can print out contact reports. This will also work with inventories. Otis reminded vendors that it is their responsibility to have prices for all items in their inventories. Otis stated that the module for monthly reports is being purchased this year. The phone reporting system is ready, but the online reporting system is not ready yet.

The next item was training update: Otis stated that the training class was supposed to have four students, but, only one student is currently in the class. The other three were not ready to begin the class. If vendors need to take Serve Safe tests in February they may do so on Mondays before nine and on Fridays after one. In March and April the schedule may be more flexible. Brittany must be notified two weeks in advance so that the tests can be ordered. Brittany will be sending out training updates beginning next week.

Otis asked that all vendors who have email to please let their counselor know their email address.

Joe reported that the Committee had discussed asking the agency to provide cell phones for the Counselors. The phones would be simple phones without internet capability. Joe stated that contacting Counselors is a major problem and, if Counselors had cell phones vendors would be able to reach them more easily.

Joe stated that at the election of the At Large Vendor, during the State Wide Meeting, only vendors operating locations will be in the room, and that a secret ballot system using the torn corner card process will be used. Joe named Isaiah Nelson and Ted Bryant to count the votes along with two Counselors to be named by Otis. Also, Otis will oversee the count.

Otis stated that during his report at the statewide meeting he would be reporting on RSA form 15. This form contains sales, number of vendors and a comparison of this year with last year. Also, Otis will be reporting on facility remodeling done this year and updates to equipment.

Otis also stated that the multi-state nutrition contract with the Army was given to Sodexo. The agency filed for arbitration on January 13, and we are waiting on a response from RSA.

Otis stated that in his report he will be giving some facility objectives the agency is looking in to.

The next item on the agenda was a discussion of the statewide meeting for 2016. Otis stated that there was some discussion concerning using a third party to provide better training. Otis stated that he had no problem with a third party, but, the Committee would have to get two other bids. If no other providers chose to bid then the original provider’s bid could be used. Otis stated that a third party provider should be able to provide a better quality of training for the statewide meeting.

The Committee then discussed the merits of two day statewide meetings versus a one day statewide meeting. Otis stated that some vendors felt that a one day statewide meeting would be better especially for inside vendors. The Committee discussed improving both the agenda for the statewide meeting and the notifying of vendors.

The Committee decided to hold the next regular quarterly meeting on either April 17 or May 1.

Otis read the training sessions for the statewide meeting for February 6, 2015.

Meeting adjourned.