Business Enterprise Program

Quarterly Committee Meeting Minutes

Commission For the Blind

**Date**: *July 14, 2023*

**Time**: *1:00 pm*

**Location**: *1430 Confederate Blvd Columbia SC 29201 (The Commission for the Blind)*

**Meeting called to Order** @ 1:02 pm

**Prayer**

**BEP Committee Roll Call**: *Karen Jones Chair (Vendor at Large); Tiffany Mitchell Vice Chair (Columbia District # 2); Kevin Carney (Florence District; Lonnie Hart (Columbia District #1); George Martin (Greenville District); M. Lawrence Secretary*

**Gallery Attendance**: Raymond Yandle; Harold Anderson; Olivia Anderson; Sean Roschel; Angie Roschel; Carrie Morris; Brian Greene; Jacqueline Stubbs

**Zoom Attendees**: Belinda Banks; Angela Galloway; Kurt Kean; Roger Webb; Janice Smith; Jimmy Davis; Patricia Anthony; Brandon Jenkins; Mary Peters; Brian Smart

**Approval of minutes** **for February 24, 2023:**

Motion to Approve Meeting Minutes for Feb 24, 2023; Meeting minutes Approved and Accepted.

**Financial Report**

*Carrie Morris gave the Financial Report for the 1st & 2nd quarters for the fiscal calendar year of 2023 ending June 31st.*

**Business Enterprise Program Report**

*Conflict Resolution: “A conflict resolution is a service offered through RSA that allows the Committee and the SLA, with a specialist through RSA to work with us on certain issues.”* The BEP Committee is proud to say that we have had affective communication for the past few months with the SLA with regards to “Active Participation,” and several other issues we have had, and we are moving forward within our program. At this point the Committee is happy where we are currently.

**Marine Arbitration**: *Paris Island; SLA has been in constant communication with the BEP Committee, The Department of Education, RSA, as well as Terry Smith regarding the Marine Contract*. The Arbitration panel that dealt with this solicitation from the Marines, their decision ultimately is that the Marines are required to resolicit the solicitation and that conclusion from the Arbitration panel clearly states that the Department of Education is responsible for holding the Marines accountable to the resoliciting. We have reached out to Jessie Hardle to receive guidance on whether the Department of Education has communicated with the Marines yet, whether their original East Coast Marine solicitation was legal under Randolph Sheppard. We have not yet received a response.

**Fort Jackson**

Kevin Carney, Karen Jones, and Janice Smith recused themselves from everything about Fort Jackson. Therefore, a sub-committee was appointed consisting of Tiffany Mitchell Chair, George Martin, and Lonnie Hart where we are actively participating and working together with SLA, The Commissioner, and Thomas Smith on Fort Jackson. ***Fort “Jackson will be rebid.” We are looking at a tentative date before September 1st, 2023.***

**New Equipment**

*The South Carolina State Licensing Agency (SLA) purchased approximately 152 new vending machines this fiscal year which ended June 30, 2023, for our Business Enterprise Program (BEP).* **Our goal is to purchase another 150 new machines for the BEP this new fiscal year.**

**BEP Lead**

*The posting for the position of BEP Lead is now closed, and we are getting ready to begin setting up interviews.*

**Repairs**

Sam Outen is our Supervisor for our BEP Repair Technicians. *Since May we have added a few staff members to our team of technicians. We have completed over 80 work orders since May; Our continued goals are to keep lines of communication open and focus on giving excellent customer service to each Blind Licensed Vendor.*

**Consultant’s Reports**

*Consultants do not have reports since they held District Meetings with their BLV’s very recently.*

**Committee Leadership Training**

*The BEP Committee recently held a full training session with Terry Smith in being an effective Committee to help our Blind Licensed Vendors successfully.*

**Blast:** ***September 27th thru 29th 2023 in Atlantic City, New Jersey.*** *There is a $100 registration fee; Accommodations can be purchased @ The Hard Rock Hotel & Casino for $99 a night. We have arranged for two vans for transportation, if we receive enough interest, for any BLV that would like to be a part of this wonderful opportunity.* ***Please contact your District Representative if you are interested*.**

**Atlantic Coast Expedition 2023 (ACE): *Thursday October 12th thru Saturday 14th 2023 @ Embassy Suites at Kingston Plantation, 1900 Queensway Blvd Myrtle Beach 29572;*** *Contact Michelle Thompson or Beth Bowen at (919-387-1221) Early Bird Registration is $50 per person up to August 31, after August 31st, it is $99. Also, once again, a van is available for transporting any Blind Licensed Vendor who would like to not miss out on this great opportunity for business growth and fellowship.*

**Leadership Conference: *Murfreesboro, Tennessee September 6th & 7th 2023;*** *Karen Jones Chair & Tiffany Mitchell Vice Chair*

**Electronic email & iPhone Communication:**

*Guest Speaker Steve Cook: The BEP Committee is trying to move forward with email communication between State Licensing Agency (SLA,) the BEP Committee members, District Representatives, and each Blind Licensed Vendor (BLV).* If a BLV needs training on an iPhone that pertains to their vending within the BEP, the Agency now offers this training. Please contact your Business Consultant for this opportunity. *You can contact Steve Cook @ (803-898-8788).*

**Micro Markets**

*Guest Speaker Chris Ingram & 3 Square: We would like to see the South Carolina Business Enterprise Program move forward and capitalize on the Micro Market opportunities in the near future.* **What are Micro Markets and how do they benefit the Blind Licensed Vendor?** *“A Micro Market is an unmanned retail location where a customer can purchase food or beverages.”* A Micro Market gives the customer the option of choosing not to go out and away from their work location in order to purchase food. One of the benefits for the BLV is “A Micro Market never sleeps” even when your building’s hours of operation may be 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. **How does a Micro Market work?** *The customer chooses an item, walks over to a kiosk, scans the item, and then pays for the item with their credit card, Apple Pay etc.*  Research shows, through an organization named Retail Customer Experience, that a vending machine’s profits are 1.15% on average, while a Micro Market’s profits, that is available 24/7, is at 17%. Customers are showing with the Micro Markets, that they like to be able to pick up a food item and look at information on the package for example, the nutrition facts. Training is covered and available in all aspects with a Micro Market. We are not seeing high levels of product loss, low levels of profits, or theft within Micro Markets.

**Our next BEP 2023 Quarterly Committee Meeting:** Friday, October 20th, 2023, @ 1430 Confederate Ave. Columbia, SC 29201

**Our next Business Enterprise Program 2024 Annual Meeting**: Friday February 2nd and Saturday the 3rd, location to be announced.

***Meeting Adjorns @ 3:01p.m.*** *Sec M Lawrence.*