**Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS)**

**Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB)**

**Statewide Committee of Blind Vendors**

**Minutes of the March 5th, 2024.**

**Mr. Tyrell Sampson called the meeting to order at 3:08 pm.**

**Committee Members Present: Chairman Mr. Keith Haley; Vice Chairman Mr. Rich Braccia; Mr. David Pelaggi; Mr. Angel Torres; Ms. Brandy Altergott; Ms. Shelly McDermott; Mr. Karan Punjabi; Ms. Sovey Ramirez**

**Agency Staff Present: Mr. David Walsh, Mr. Nick Faenza, Mr. Joel Garcia, Ms. Jessie Towle, and Ms. Tracy Morin; Ms. Carol Jenkins, Program Director; Mr. Tyrell Sampson, Program Supervisor; Ms. Lisa Drew, Administrative Assistant.**

**Operators present: Mr. Adam Fairbanks, Mr. Frank Roberts; Ms. Yolanda Doak**

**Old Business**

**Minutes of the Last Meetings – December 5th, 2023, January 30, 2024, February 20, 2024**

**Motion: Mr. David Pelaggi moved to approve the minutes for the last three meetings, December 5th, 2023, January 3rd, 2024, and February 20th, 2024. Mr. Karan Punjabi seconded.**

**Vote: Yes – 8, No – 0, Abstained – 0**

**Budget Update**

**Mr. Tyrell Sampson shared an update and confirmed that revenue has remained stable at $2.8 million. Despite operating differently since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, our expenditures have been consistent over the past few years. Mr. Tyrell Sampson stated he has no concerns regarding the budget, as everything seems stable. In general, the situation is looking good.**

**Business Reports, Schedule C, Retirement Contribution reminder**

**Chairman Haley requested operators to please submit their Schedule Cs if they have not been done already.**

**Chairman Haley reminded operators to make sure to pay their retirement contributions timely.**

**New Business**

**South Benson Marina Facility update**

**Mr. Tyrell Sampson shared that the operation is off to a good start with future BEP operator Kevin's primary concession named Foam and Fuel offering coffee. He stated Kevin is highly engaged in this, and he will be a valuable addition to the program.**

**He also added the Marina is set to start operations on April 15th,2024 with May being the month when things ramp up. The early opening is a strategic move to allow operators to acquaint themselves with the operation, responsibilities, and duties involved.**

**Mini-Randolph Sheppard state regulations amendment vote**

**Tabled**

**Pilot Vending route update**

**A discussion took place regarding the pilot vending program as it will mark one year as of July 1st. As we are 3/4 through the pilot period, we are identifying that some operators are looking to earn more in commissions than originally agreed upon at the program's onset. The committee discussed potentially capping the amount of commissions a vendor could earn on a vending route to level the playing field for each vendor and to hopefully expand program opportunities moving forward. Implementing such a cap may have to be revisited annually as the dynamics of the vending routes could change from year to year.**

**Micro-Market Teaming - Transfer and Promotion Process**

**A discussion took place for which the process of selecting a vendor for a micro market utilizing a teaming partner may need to be adjusted. Currently, the promote and transfer list is being used based on seniority. Using this process, the vendor at the top of the list could essentially take every upcoming opportunity which in turn would not leave any new opportunities for other vendors or expansion of the program. The committee was challenged to think of ideas to make the process fair for all vendors as the concept of micro markets and micro market opportunities continue to grow. The topic will be revisited at a future meeting.**

**BESB Micro-Market resumption**

**The Agency has received inquiries from multiple staff regarding the revival of the micro market at BESB. Based on the observed demand, there is enough interest to support the reintroduction of the micro market at BESB. In summary the resuming the micro market at BESB.**

**Motion: Ms. Shelley McDermott made a motion to accept this opportunity to resume the Micro market shared with BESB and DSS, which was seconded by Mr. David Pelaggi.**

**Vote: Yes – 8, No – 0, Abstained – 0**

**No further discussions**

**CTECH Schools -Vending Machine’s update**

**Mr. Tyrell Sampson presented an update from our attorney Lara Stalling. He shared CTECH vending machine placement violation in which unfortunately has not yet been in favor of our offering or have grasp the respect of our statutory right despite her having a follow up meeting with the school's attorney regarding the agency and committees offering of utilizing of their vending machines. With that said Commissioner Porter will be furthering this discussion with their school director in hopes mutual agreement is established. If not, an AG opinion will be forthcoming. To date Servomation has made us aware the snack vending machines have been identified in place filled at several schools and we anticipate all remaining machines will likely follow suit.**

**Danbury Federal Correction vending machine update**

**Mr. Tyrell Sampson shared he has been in communication with the prison and has requested a meeting with them in the coming weeks to inquire about how the program establishes access to allow those operators who may have an interest in having this location as a site. He stated It is his intent to gather all appropriate information to share.**

**Benefit Ownership Reporting Requirements**

**Mr. Tyrell Sampson stated there are new reporting requirements for the primary business owner. He advised to seek legal professional help and submit the forms in a timely manner.**

**Chair Haley advised the dates for filing for operators are January 1, 2024, through December 31st, 2024.**

**Agency Matters**

**Agency update**

**Mr. Tyrell Sampson stated that the agency remains Teleworking.**

**Open Forum**

**Mr. Frank Roberts asked if the new promote and transfer list had been approved and questioned the date applications needed to be submitted as he referenced an email that stated January 8th,2024.**

**Chairman Haley answered that the list had not been finalized yet and although the regulations do not say that applications need to be submitted by January 8th, 2024 specifically, the regulations do read "during the month of January".**

**Adjournment**

**Motion to adjourned Mr. David Pelaggi and seconded by Ms. Brandi Altergott at 4:41 pm**