

**COMMITTEE OF BLIND VENDORS
QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES
October 28, 2023**

Members Present

Larry Hall, Chair, Lynn Florence, Vice Chair, Charles Dorsey, Todd Freeman, Katherine Gore, Brad Holland, Chris Miller, Cramer Schneider, Todd Stephens, and Buster Mayne

Members Absent

Jerry Grimes

Staff Present

Corey Marcum, KBE Director, Jennifer Wright and Jason Wathen, Assistant Directors, Janice Jackson, Administrative Assistant, Stuart Boggs, Vending Coordinator, Steve Connell, Food Service Coordinator, Shelby Glisson & Liam Goforth, Repair Technicians.

Vendors Present

Sean Dorsey and Angela Stevens

Guests

LaTanya Anderson, George Bouquet, Sumi Coleman, Chara Dorsey, Lora Stevens, and Melba Taylor

Call to Order

Attendance was taken, a quorum determined, and the meeting called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chair Larry Hall.

Cramer Schneider gave the invocation.

Approval of Minutes

Todd Stephens made a motion to accept the July 27th meeting minutes, as previously distributed. Brad Holland seconded it. Motion passed.

Minutes from the August 10th Special Called meeting were also voted on. Cramer Schneider made a motion to accept the minutes, with a second by Vice Chair Lynn Florence. The motion passed.

Todd Stephens made a motion to postpone discussion of all New Business agenda items until the January 25th meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Holland. A vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Director's Report - Corey Marcum

Mr. Marcum reported that KBE was awarded the troop dining contract for Ft. Campbell for another five years. He said he hopes to hear something about the Fort Knox award by the first of the year.

He reported that many vendors income has come back to pre-covid levels, showing things are going in the right direction.

Five bids were awarded this quarter, four of which were to award permanently, previous emergency assignments. The awards went to Buster Mayne for the two Woodford County rest areas, Darrell Keathley for the First City building in Frankfort, Chris Miller for the Shelby County rest area, Todd Stephens was awarded the East Kentucky route, and Sean Dorsey received Dosker Manor.

Mr. Marcum announced that Jason Wathen has been promoted to Assistant Director and would handle all things in the food service area. His position will be backfilled as soon as possible to keep continuity of service to the food service vendors.

He reported that this quarter, KBE worked with Parlevel to install a micro market at the American Printing House for the Blind for Lynn Florence. She has done a great job setting up everything there and interfacing with Parlevel and the other contractors as necessary.

We also added a micro market at the Jefferson County Public Schools' Stober Building, which brings us to a total of 10 micro markets.

Two vendors, Buster Mayne and Angela Stevens, attended the National Association of Blind Merchants BLAST on the Boardwalk training conference this quarter, along with Mr. Marcum and Mr. Wathen.

Mr. Marcum commented that he was glad to have some of the McDowell Center students attending General Assembly this year. He said the KBE program is gaining

more interest. Stephen Miller, a blind vendor candidate in the training program, just completed his Lighthouse online training course and will be beginning his on-the-job training in the next two weeks, to become a licensed vendor.

Ms. Wright will be attending the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) next week. Mr. Marcum and Mr. Wathen will be attending virtually.

Mr. Marcum asked for questions. Todd Stephens had a question about the presentation earlier in the day regarding unincurred business expenses. He asked if KBE should send out those letters automatically for every vendor, every year. Mr. Marcum said the letter was only necessary if a vendor gets notified by Social Security that their income exceeds the limit. At that time, the agency will provide a letter to send to Social Security showing the unincurred expenses.

Chair Report – Larry Hall

Chair Hall said that micro markets may be the coming thing but will not work everywhere. He said some buildings may need, and want, a manned operation from 7 am to 3 pm each day, such as food service. He said, the Committee needs to be aware that cafeterias are losing money, and as long as the program keeps adding micro markets, vendors won't want to bid on the necessary all-day operations. Vice Chair Florence commented that there will still be vendors, like herself, who want to serve

customers face to face. There was a discussion on the future of micro markets as well as in-person locations.

The Chair said the agency needs to do a better job on encouraging active participation by the Committee. The Vice Chair said Mr. Marcum has been very proactive in bringing new opportunities to the table and including the Committee in the decisions on new locations and ideas. Mr. Stephens said it was incumbent on all Committee members to bring ideas and suggestions, not just the same few members. The Vice Chair suggested that vendors not wait on the agency to do everything. She said they need to network with each other and work together, sharing experience and expertise. Brad Holland interjected that vendors need to police themselves and not lean on the agency for everything. He said the agency had stepped up for him many times in establishing his new businesses. He said it was incumbent on the vendor, when they are in training, to pay attention and learn so they can be responsible for themselves.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

As indicated earlier in these minutes, a motion was made and carried, to postpone discussion of any new business until the January 2024 meeting.

Public Comments

George Bouquet asked how many active vendors were currently in the program. Mr. Marcum said covid reduced the number but there are 24 active vendors, and a recruitment effort is underway. He commented that hopefully the McDowell students who were in attendance today will be interested in our program. We are working with the director of Blind Services to get an information packet done to give to McDowell students and to send to the rehab counselors for the blind. He said Ms. Wright sent out a letter and program information to the listserv of all teachers of the visually impaired and never got a single response. RSA will not allow for federal dollars to be used to pay for any marketing of the program.

It was announced that the next meeting of the Committee would be held at 4 pm on January 25th at the Mayo-Underwood Building in Frankfort. It will be a hybrid meeting with a Zoom option.

Adjournment

Todd Stephens made a motion to adjourn. A second was made by Buster Mayne. The meeting was adjourned at 6 pm.