**Minutes of Meeting**

**Georgia Committee of Blind Vendors**

**Wednesday, January 24, 2024**

**Atlanta, GA**

**Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Michael Armstrong.**

**Committee Members Present:**

Michael Armstrong, Chair

Valerie Hester, CBV Vice-Chair

Kathy Morris, CBV Secretary

Carl Lee, Vending

Tim Stephens, Vending

Phyllis Davis, Vending

Jerome Davis, Snack Bar

Miranda Stewart, Snack Bar

Regina Scott-Jones, Alternate Snack Bar

Robert Matuszak, Contracts

Wesley Vaughn, Contracts

Dale King, At-Large

Zach Snow, At-Large

George Vickers, Alternate At-Large

**GVRA Staff Present:**

Teresa Eggleston, BEP Director

Bobby Goodman, BEP Program Manager

Tara Woodford, BEP Contracts

Will Graham, BEP Training

Salem Murr, Equipment Coordinator

Bethany Whetzel, Deputy Executive Director of Programs

Mamta Patel, Deputy Executive Director/CFO

Andrea Waddy-Willis, Fiscal Services & Compliance Director

Amy Casey, Legal.

Ed Ash, Manager Customer Support

**Guests Present:**

Jerry Bensman, Director Georgia Cooperative Services for the Blind

Phyllis Campbell

Dee Butler

Zach Thomas

Michael McMinn

Keith Morris

Christine Grassman, RSA Program Representative

**Chair’s Welcome**

- Michael Armstrong welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introduced Christine Grassman from RSA.

-Christine Grassman, RSA Program Rep attending to answer questions from the Vendor community. Discussion of Technical Assistance Circulars (TACs) on RSA website to assist with clarification of regulations. Further, when the SLA revises rules, the entire package must be submitted to RSA for review and approval. RSA has started posting rules by State of other SLA's; GVRA/BEP rules are on the agency website. Christine informed that the CBV can reach out to other SLA's for approved rules. Smallware are under $1,000 and any further clarification the CBV can contact RSA Fiscal.

**CBV Sub-Committee Reports**

* **Finance Committee w/Nominee**, Robert Matuszak, Chair – no proposals presented; Retirement Plan is doing well and able to fulfill all obligations, current balance is $18.9; Jerry stated W-2's have been mailed, credit card advances are to be approved by SLA Program Manager, Vendors will have to pay all business expenses for their location (s).
* **Policy Committee w/SLA,** Jerome Davis, Chair – requested an accessible form of policies, Teresa informed that the policies are in electronic format and can be requested.
* **Legislative Committee,** Zach Snow, Chair – Announced that Seminar on the Hill will be next week, and non-medical communication and medical devices will be discussed; for Georgia the commercialization of rest areas will also be discussed.
* **Equipment Committee w/SLA**, Michael McMinn, Chair – Discussion of equipment assessment. Danny informed preparing for prior approval and all needs to be submitted to his office; current fiscal year 2024 prior approval is being addressed.
* **Training Committee w/SLA,** Valerie Hester, Chair – Has been working with William as to training topics needed moving forward. Annual conference will be held at Calloway Gardens and are looking for sponsors. The conference theme for this year is "Everything Seems Impossible Until It Is Done," by Nelson Mandela, Conference colors are Black and Gold, Transportation is being explored, Dale is working on awards for presentation.

William, SLA, informed program currently has 7 Licensee Candidates. As for recruitment, VR currently has twenty-three (23) on their listing for BEP. Training class has been postponed until August. There will be a ServSafe class coming up in March. GVRA/SLA is exploring relocating training component to Roosevelt Warm Springs (RWS). Preparing a curriculum for class in March for Telemetry training.

* **Interview Review Task Force,** Zach Thomas, Chair – Brief discussion of correcting CBV By-Laws.
* **Business Development, w/SLA** Carl Lee, Chair – Currently networking with Bobby for new opportunities. Robert Matuszak spoke about the military still wanting franchises, micro markets, food trucks as well a troop dining. Major Jones is a franchise facilitator and has reached out to Randolph-Sheppard.
* **Social Media & Public Relations,** Phyllis Campbell, Chair – There is a Linked-In and Facebook pages so far. Ultimate goal is to setup a YouTube Channel.

**Assessibility & Technology Committee, W/SLA** George Vickers, Chair -- Presented a motion yesterday – A blind vendor or trainee upon initial onboarding to a facility are given O&M training by a certified mobility instructor.

Bethany stated it would best be done through GVRA as they already have instructors and the money would not have to come from BEP funds.They are exploring electronic versions of the visitation reports so they can be digital and accessible.

* **Conflict Resolution Committee, Michael Armstrong,** Chair – will discuss at a future date.

**SLA Reports**

* **Teresa –** Informed the CBV the Financial Administrator for BEP will be starting February 1st. Also, hiring a Consultant. Informed GVRA/SLA still working on third-party contracts.
* **Bobby –** Post Offices are still transitioning.
* **Amy –** Informed she isworking on revised policies and starting contract work with Tara.
* **Andrea & Mamta –** Both are working on analysis concerning reducing Set Aside.
* **Bethany –** succeeding and following guidelines for all

Zach Snow motion to adjourn and was seconded by Wesley Vaughn.

Meeting adjourned!