**BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM OF OREGON BECC Special Meeting**

**Wednesday, April 3rd, 2024**

**3:30 PM – 5:00PM**

OREGON COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

This meeting will be held by videoconference. Attend the meeting using the Zoom.com platform or by telephone.

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER- Chairman Hauth.

A. Roll call.

1. PUBLIC COMMENTS.
2. NEW BUSINESS.

A.  Identify and prioritize program goals forward relevant to the Strategic Planning scheduled for April 5th.

B.  Discuss and develop a more user friendly and meaningful time tracker form.

C. Facility development and committee recommendations.

D. Route creation and assistance

E. Salem Vending Facility out to bid.

F. Script Vending debacle

G. response to service requests for repairs

H. Board Member BLAST attendance and funding.

I. 2024 Spring In-service.

4. CHAIRMAN/DIRECTOR CLOSING COMMENTS.

5. ADJOURNMENT- Chairman Hauth

**Transcript**

Hauth: Good afternoon. Good afternoon, everybody.

Stewart: Good afternoon.

Webber: Good afternoon.

Hauth: Good afternoon, everyone, let's go ahead and get the meeting started and please try and mute yourself unless you're a part of the board or if you're talking. Then of course, you can unmute yourself, but try and keep away the background noise, if at all possible. Anyway, thanks for all joining us and I'll go ahead and take roll, start with the board. So, Lewanda Miranda, I heard you're on here.

Miranda: Present.

Hauth: Hey, Carole Kinney?

Webber: Yes, I'm on here.

Hauth: Hi Carole.

A Stevenson: Randell?

Hauth: Harold Young?

Young: Here.

Hauth: Derrick Stevenson?

D Stevenson: Here.

Hauth: Hey, Derrick. And how about Steve Jackson?

Jackson: Yep, I'm here everybody. How's it going?

Hauth: Hey Steve! How are you doing buddy? Good.

Jackson: Good.

Hauth: And I'm here as well, so we have a, we have a full board. So, then we'll go to the managers. Art Stevenson, I did hear you on here. And I did hear Char Hawkins on here?

Hawkins: Yes.

Hauth: Charlotta. Hi Char. And who else is on here as a VFM?

Bird: Jerry Bird.

Hauth: Hey, Jerry!

Bird: Hey.

Hauth: Who, who else?

Van Rooy: Skylar's here.

Hauth: Anyone else? Hey Skylar. Nice to hear you, man. Anyone else? Okay, and any members of the public that want to identify themselves? Okay, and Ron, I know you're here. I heard your voice earlier and is there anybody else with you or joining you?

Stewart: Nope, just me. And just to let and let you know, I started the recording as well.

Hauth: Alright, thank you. Yeah, I heard that, it identified it, but thank you. So, Carole, if you would do the honors and help me through this meeting, I'd sure appreciate it with the agenda.

Webber: Okay. Yeah, I just, I'm running just a little bit late, so, I just now got this pulled up on the computer.

Hauth: Okay.

Webber: We did the roll call, so there’s, number two is public comment.

Hauth: Alright, public comment. Anybody want to make a comment? Please identify yourself and the floor will be yours.

Miranda: Lewanda.

Hauth: Hey, Lewanda.

Miranda: So. Harold called me this week and his wife. And they're a little bit frustrated with the way things are playing out with their new vending route. And they're, they’ve lost income for the month of March. They took over, well, they left DMV on February 29th, I believe, Harold told me. And, so, then they started their route, but the dates kept getting changed and changed and changed and changed. And so, the machines didn't get up and running until the 19th. So, he's, you know, two thirds of the month was gone with no revenues or anything. And, so, he's asking for help. Harold, do you want to speak on that?

Young: Sure. Yeah, I was, excuse me, I took over March 1st, and originally the machines were supposed to go into the rest area on the 4th, then it got changed to the 6th. Then it got changed to the 11th, 12th. They finally got put in there on the 12th and 14th. But then we had issues with the e-ports, anyway. They didn't get up and running until the 19th. So, I was pretty much without income from the 1st of March until the 19th of March. But I just wonder if I could be compensated for that at all, that period of time at least? You know, I'm not asking for the whole month of March's commissions or February commissions for that location. I'm just asking for a portion of it. Anyway, it would be greatly appreciated. Thanks.

Stewart: Hey, Harold, will you do me a favor and give me a call or, or put all that into an email and send it to me and we can, we can talk about that.

Young: Sure. Yep. I can do that.

Stewart: Thank you.

A Stevenson: Mr. Chair?

Hauth: Anything else, Lewanda? Art, hold on, just checking, you bet.

Miranda: No.

Hauth: You're gonna, okay, okay. Well, thank you for sharing, both of you. Art, the floor is yours.

A Stevenson: Well, thank you, Mr. Chair. I do appreciate it. It's probably very likely going to be my last public comment, cause as you all have heard, I'm retiring in the very, very near future. First of all, I want to say that the vending program has been really good to me. And, without it, I definitely could, couldn't have raised my family, paid my bills, etc., etc. I've, tried to be very active in the program, contribute as much as I could. And my ultimate goal was always to make our program what it should be. It definitely still has a long way to go, however, I have seen some real progress, for a change, which is really nice. Obviously, this program was created for people who are blind to provide renumerative, renumerative employment. And by golly, despite everything, it really has done that for me. I hope that continues and I hope that the current managers and the new managers experience what, not all of what, but part of what I've experienced, since 1986. I want to tell everybody on the line today, that I consider all of you my friends. Always will. And you guys have my contact information. So, if you ever want to drop by and I'm not too busy fishing or any of that kind of stuff, we most definitely can talk. So, God bless all of you. I wish you all the success that you all deserve. This program, you get out of it what you put into it. Hard work, you definitely get to make some money and experience some things that I never would have experienced if I hadn’t-a gone blind. That's for sure. So, anyways, God bless all of you. You guys will always be in my thoughts and prayers. And like I said, don't make strangers of yourself. But I, like I said, if I'm not really super busy enjoying my retirement, my grandkids, etc. I will definitely reach back out to you, if you don't get to connect with me right away. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Hauth: Thank you, Art, for the eloquent farewell speech. And again, hopefully, won't be the last we hear of you. You've been an amazing advocate for the program, even though there's been times where you and I haven't always seen blind eye to blind eye, yeah, excuse the pun. We've always found a way to kind of get through it and do what's best for the program and try and do what was best for the program. So, I appreciate that. I am going to make a public comment as well, but I want to yield the floor to anybody else that would like to make a comment.

Brown: This is Celyn, and I just wanted to let you know that I'm here.

Hauth: Alright, Celyn, welcome, thank you. Okay, anyone else? Okay, so, I just want to make a brief comment, kind of on the heels of what Art has said. I, too, in the last three months since the hiring of Ron Stewart in the directorship and the farewell to Eric have seen a real mind shift, a direction change. There's going to be a lot of learning hurdles, my perspective, under Eric's tenure, tutelage, his history with the agency as Director, it seemed to me and many of you who I've spoken to, that the agency seemed to want to try and find a way how not to do things or how to thwart things or how to stop things or how to prevent things. And it looks to me like in the last three months, we're trying to find a way how to do things and how to find a way to do things and how to increase profitability, increase opportunities, increase active participation, increase all those things and those dynamics that will make a program flourish, healthy, wealthy and wise, right? So, I'm happy again. There's some things that I've heard that are concerning to me and there's some interactions I've had still with agency staff that are a little concerning. However, there is always that, like Ron just said, Harold, call me and let's talk about it, right? So, at this point in time, and the newness of Mr. Stewart as our director and knowing that there's still staff member from, you know, previous years. And also, there is a much-needed mind shift going on, everybody let's, let’s bear with Director Stewart and reach out if you have any concerns like Harold did to Lewanda, so that we can discuss these issues and try and resolve them. But I'm, I'm happy so far, and so good, and in my discussions with Ron it looks like we have the same, same thought process to make this program the best it can be. So. Okay, anyone else? Okay, what do, what do we have next?

Webber: We have new business, is to identify and prioritize program goals. Forward relevant to the strategic planning scheduled on April 5th.

Hauth: Okay. Well, thank you, Carole. So, yeah, I had a conversation with, so, I was invited, I think the entire BECC was invited if I go back and look at the Elected Committee, but I received, or the emails, but I received the invitation to participate in the strategic planning being held on April 5th. And as you know, Art and many other of you who have participated previous in strategic plannings, there's a lot, right? There's a, there’s a whole day event of, you know, how to plan goals, missions and objectives, and not only for the BEP, but for the entire agency and all the programs within the agency. Now, as far as BEP, the strategic planning identifies goals, objectives, and also is used to drive the budgets, and you know, requests for budgets, and expenditures and you know, how do we as an agency use the monies to get the end goal and the results and the benefits to these persons that we're selecting and serving. So, on Friday, I was invited, and Ron, maybe you can clarify, I don't know if, if I'm the only person that has been invited to speak to the Commissioners, or if the entire board has a chance to do that, but, you know, I was asked that question today and I said, I don't really know. So.

Stewart: I'd have to, I'd have to double, I'd have to double check that, too.

Hauth: Sure, sure, but I can tell you, in talking with Ron, I think the presentation, I'm, I'm going to be there to support the, the direction that we are working to go in and that's, with Ron's leadership to this point, that's the idea about growing the program. That's the idea about taking the unassigned vending and helping direct the unassigned vending to stimulate income opportunities for blind vendors. That's the direction that building new facilities, that's the direction about growing the program with new managers, that's the direction about active participation, talking through things, working through things, and trying to be on the same page. And so, with that said, I'll turn this over to Ron, so he can share with you his points of view or his perspective or what's going to unfold on Friday. So, Ron, it's yours.

Stewart: Sure, thank you. Yeah, you pretty much touched on, on, our big picture goals. Like you said, we'd like to, we'd like to get that unassigned vending assigned to people to bolster their income. You know, I've got, I, I don't know if I've mentioned this to everybody, but I've kind of a goal, to within two years, to get our program up to 20 vending facility managers with facilities. So, that's something that we're going to be working towards. I think another goal is to really keep improving the communication with the active participation on, on every, on decisions that we make. I think that's been going well.

Hauth: Excuse. Hey, Ron, Ron, excuse me, just a second. I do hear some breathing in the background, not that we shouldn't all be breathing, but if everybody could mute their phone, please, I'd appreciate that. Go ahead, Ron.

Stewart: Sure. Yeah, improving the active participation and then also,

really, I'd really like to think outside of the box to start creating new revenue generating opportunities. You know, maybe food trucks, maybe corporate box lunches. You know, I'm open to all ideas, but we really want to start thinking outside of the box and see if we can come up with ways to, to start, you know, just keep that, keep that revenue growing and keep the program growing.

Hauth: Alright, and let me ask the board at this point in time, do you have anything that you've heard there that is being missed or do you have any comments or suggestions?

Miranda: Chairman Hauth, Lewanda.

Hauth: Hey, Lewanda.

Miranda: Hey, I didn't hear, you know, I could have missed it, but I didn't hear improving the income for the current managers that we have, the managers that worked very hard and they worked, they worked through the pandemic and you know, my heart really goes out to them. I know they need help too. Especially the ones that are running the micro-markets.

Stewart: Yes. Yep. What we'd like to do is start looking at, basically looking at, at the, the average income and anybody below the average yearly income for all of our managers will be, we'd like to start looking at them first. And, and, and basically, add unassigned vending to the routes to get their income up, up to par.

Miranda: Oh, okay. Sounds good. Thank you.

Stewart: Yeah, you're welcome.

Webber: Mr. Chair, it's Carole.

Stewart: Yes. Oh, whoops, sorry.

Miranda: Randy there?

Stewart: Was that directed towards me or towards Randy?

Webber: Toward, yeah, I was just wanting to say something. So, it was directed towards you.

Hauth: I'm sorry. Go, go ahead, Carole. Sometimes I have to…

Webber: That's okay, that's okay. I was wondering if we are going to be considering the commissaries as one way to really boost our program like they did in Tennessee with, with that particular program. So, if Ron maybe can answer that or, or Randy, if you're going to be talking about that at the strategic planning meeting, just, I would like to know.

Stewart: Yes, so, so, we did start a conversation about how we can look into that and make that happen. And I think that's, that's something that we'll definitely take a look at, and see if that's something we could do here in Oregon.

Webber: Okay. Good, thank you.

Stewart: Welcome.

Hauth: Hey, Carole, Carole, I missed…

Webber: I'm here.

Hauth: I'm sorry, I missed that. I missed that. I dropped off and I'm back on, but just real quickly, what was that?

Webber: I just wanted to find out if we were considering going to the commissary to really boost our program.

Hauth: Okay. Great. Great. Great. Great. So, I will share with you, I don't know if Ron did, but when we were at Sagebrush, we had a breakout call with VendEngine, who is now Tyler Technology. So, Silas Deane, who many of you have heard from before. He's presented on behalf of VendEngine, he actually sold his company to Tyler Technology. Tyler Technologies is one of the largest, I guess, government contracting, you know, companies in the United States and so, we did have a quick breakout call to try and get Ron understanding of the commissaries and the great opportunities that exist and how to actually navigate the system, right? And how that can be a benefit for everybody. And I know that Silas is engaged and has said, you know, you guys can come out here, I can come there, but let's have further conversations about it. At the end of the day, the reality is that sheriff's offices need to see some kind of compensation from the programs. That's what they're doing. You know, either if it's through the kiosk, where somebody dona--, you know, puts money on for their, you know, their mom, their dad, their child whoever's incarcerated, they put money on their books, there's a excess [sic] charge so, there are ways to make it happen, but going in just straight, all saying we're not gonna be flexible to negotiate in anything with you is a, is a dead, is a dead end street. So, anyway, yeah that's a, that's a good thing to look at going forward. So.

A Stevenson: Mr. Chair?

Hauth: Yes, Art?

A Stevenson: Yeah, I had a couple of questions, cause we all got notification that we were all going to receive a vacation check here this month. I'm excited about that. But I kinda wanted to know, is that check going to include all the vending machine income that's coming into the program? Or is it just going to be federal vending machine income?

Hauth: Ron, I don't know if you know that or not?

Stewart: I do not. I'm writing this question down so I can find out for you, Art, Arthur.

A Stevenson: Well. Thanks, I appreciate it. And then. One more thing I wanted to mention. I know I'm leaving, but there's a lot of vending at the, the Marion County Sheriff, vending machines in there that are not a part of our program, and they should be. Obviously, we have a priority. And I just wanted to bring this up one more time. I brought it up several times and it has been ignored. But that money, because we do have the priority, should be coming into the program either through having a subcontractor do it or a blind licensed manager doing it. And I really don't know how much money is getting generated there, but I have the two outside machines in the lobby and, you know, I sell quite a few snacks and beverages and therefore, I know darn well, that on the inside there's a lot of purchases there and a lot of money that isn't going into our program, so, that's all I had to say, Randy. But you know, it should have been ours a long time ago, and as you know, it's a thing that should not be ignored any longer. Thanks, Randy.

Bird: Jerry? Hello? Jerry? Can you hear me?

Jackson: I'd say go ahead and talk, Jerry. Go ahead. [inaudible] good to me.

Bird: Yeah, I, I just had a quick comment about vending machine income and vacation pay. And the question asked is it just federal or state? I don't think there should be, they're both in our program. The vending machine income is vending machine income. We don't care where it comes from. It's federal or state. That is supposed to go to us to help us with vacation and sick pay and all that stuff, seems like Eric wanted to just give us the lowest one which is federal which we don't have a lot of here in Oregon, and keep the state. Which is wrong, you know, vending machine income coming into our program, like I just said, should not matter if it's state or federal. It's all added together and then given out that way. Thank you.

A Stevenson: Randy?

Jackson: Randy, did you fall off?

A Stevenson: I think he did.

Unidentifiable: I think you're off mute, you're off mute.

Jackson: What do you recommend, Lewanda?

Miranda: Go ahead, Art.

A Stevenson: What?

Hauth: Hello?

Jackson: Go ahead, Art, maybe. Oh, there he is.

Hauth: Hey, hey, yeah, here I am. Sorry about that. And one of the, one of the things that we haven't done is we have not put, we have not put on to, to select a new vice chair either. So, since Art has left, so, we’ll need to figure that out as well but it looks like I have better connectivity now I moved to a different area. I do apologize for that. So what's up, what's going on right now, where are we at on the agenda?

Bird: Randy?

Hauth: Yes, Jerry?

Bird: Did, did you hear my, my comment?

Hauth: No, I did not, sir.

Bird: I'll just repeat it real quick. My concern is when they talked about, Ron talked about vending machine income and, and sending out vacation pay. And someone asked, I think it was Art, you know, is that just federal or is it state? My comment was, vending machine income is vending machine income. We don't care if it's federal or state. It comes into our program. Therefore, it lies in our jurisdiction, or whatever you want to say. So, once again, that should not be separated like Eric does. Because we don't have very many federal places here in Oregon, so, it needs to be put together as going to satisfy that and as everything else does. So, that's just my comment. Thanks.

A Stevenson: Randy, did you hear my comment?

Hauth: Thank you, Jerry. Yes, I did.

A Stevenson: About Marion County Jail?

Hauth: Yep, I sure did.

A Stevenson: Okay. Okay, just checking.

Hauth: Thank you. Yep. Okay, what else do we have? Carole?

Webber: Okay, next, next is discuss and develop a more friend--, a more user friendly and meaningful time tracker form.

Hauth: Okay, well, so. You know, in the, in the simplest of forms, I think the, you know, in some discussions and good preliminary discussions with Ron and with many of you, the time tracker is, was created and it's not really a benefit or useful for the vendors, is not beneficial or useful for the agency. If it's intended to document the 30 hours and justify those, you know, that we dedicate toward our businesses, well, let's find a different way to do it. Let's find a simpler way to do it. You, you know and I know that, that form has some challenges, accessibility wise, you know, some of you can't do it. Some of you have to hire people to do it and some of you spend hours doing it and really for what? It doesn't help anybody so, you know, I know I talked to Art Stevenson earlier this month and he made a suggestion about just tracking the hours. I know I've talked with Jerry about this previously and he thinks there needs to be more categories on it and in talking with Lewanda, Lewanda and I are at the mind and talking with Ron, let's make this simple. Let's make it easy to use and let's document the 30 hours, if that's what it's all about documenting to 30 hours, let's keep the key components and elements of what we do as managers and identify that in a simple, easy to use form and present it to the agency for their consideration. And Ron, if you want to weigh in on that, did I capture kind of what our discussions have been, as well?

Stewart: You did. That's exactly my thoughts as well. You know, let’s, we can simplify it. Get rid of some of the fluff and make, make it a lot easier on everybody to fill out and to read and make it a little more useful than, than it is. Yeah, I'm all for it.

Hauth: Okay. Thank you, and I did talk with Lewanda and asked Lewanda if she would be interested in putting together like a simple draft form that she finds accessible for screen readers and partials as well. And then we can run it through, run it by all the vendors and ask for any kind of input and possibly make changes or not, and then, we can bring it up to the agency and discuss it in a meeting if we need to or just make the changes that need to be.

Stewart: That sounds great.

Hauth: Okay. If you guys are okay with that, we'll move on.

Bird: Jerry.

Hauth: Jerry, go ahead.

Bird: Yeah, so you wanna just keep it how it, how it stands? That what you're saying?

Hauth: What's that, Jerry?

Bird: Are you saying we'll just keep this time tracker as it is and not make any changes?

Hauth: No, I'm, I’m saying the time, the time tracker as it is, in my opinion, is junk. It puts a real burden on managers and the information that managers give to the agency is really useless. So, what I'm saying if, what I'm suggesting, is if the agency wants us to document our 30 hours per week, there needs to be a simpler way to do it. And there needs to be an easier form to use. So, that's what I'm suggesting and that's what Ron is saying that they would support and we're going to work on trying to do that. So.

Bird: When, when would we be working on it? Not at a meeting?

Hauth: Well, didn't you just hear me? I said Lewanda was going to put a draft idea together, then she was going to send it out to all the vendors and the board and ask for input, then we were going to get that, send it to the agency for their thoughts and then bring it back to a meeting.

Bird: Okay. Thanks.

Hauth: You're welcome.

D Stevenson: This is Derrick.

Hauth: Okay, what’s next? Derrick, go ahead, go ahead, Derrick.

D Stevenson: Yeah, I gotta say, I gotta say the main problem is, is, is Excel. We need to get away from Excel, it's not really blind, you know, friendly and, and if we keep using it, we're still going to have the problems.

Hauth: Well, that's one of the reasons that I've asked Lewanda to work on this to start with, because she's very, as a screen reader user, she's very technology oriented as well, and she might have a good grasp of how that can not only be addressed by partial sighted but also total. You know, so anyway, that's at least what I thought would be the start. So. But you're right, it's, it's not user friendly at all. So. Okay, what do we have next?

Webber: Facility development and committee recommendations.

Hauth: Who would like to take this over?

Miranda: I think it’s been covered, hasn’t it.

Hauth: I think pretty much. Yeah, so, you know, we did talk about it, earlier, but just trying to work on, you know, again, the agency for the most part has, in my opinion, try, been using how to not work together and using how to use the operating agreement in an adversarial way, right? And how we, how to deny things, and we're, we're back on a situation where now we're looking like we're working together or trying to find the way to do that. And so, the initial conversations that have occurred is the facility development committee did request a copy of the unassigned vending. There were some sites on there, I think, that need to be, I think there were some sites on there that were assigned to a VFM or two that we weren't aware of. So, we have to get that spreadsheet updated, so it's accurate. But Lewanda, Carole, and Mr. Art Stevenson... Now, I know Art is the chair of the vending facility committee. And so, we may be holding a meeting that will be announced if that occurs, but the, in the simplest of forms, we're trying to identify something that the agency will support and that will benefit the managers. And like Ron talked about earlier, if we can identify median income that goes out to RSA, and we can start trying to support and bolster and push up some of those lower earners’ incomes, that's probably going to be the most palatable way to get the agency to work with us and support us. And then if we can identify how the operating agreement can be used to include locations instead of saying no, we can't do that because that means you have to change the operated [sic] agreement. So, we're trying to find ways to work with the agency, because as you all know, it's not just Director Stewart that has the ultimate calling decision here. He's our voice and our advocate. And, but there's other moving pieces, as you all know. And so, we're trying to figure that out for the benefit of everybody, and we're not completely there yet, but we are heading in the right direction with discussion. So.

A Stevenson: Randy?

Hauth: Yes, Art?

A Stevenson: Okay, it's very important, okay, that we work as a team now and forever more. I know I asked Ron to let us know what Teresa was doing currently as far as vending facility development. Haven't, haven't seen anything yet. However, I am going to talk about Camp Rilea in several ways. Number one, Camp Rilea has military dining. And as long as the agency is in the competitive range of that, then the law specifically states that, you know, our program gets the bid. That isn't occurring at Camp Rilea, and it needs to do that. Now, Ron's all new to this. And obviously, he'll get educated as we go along, but we have very few military dining possibilities in the state of Oregon. However, if they are there, then we need to go after them. Also, my understanding is that, you know, they wanted a cafeteria, and because they didn't get a cafeteria, they just said, well, you don't have, you don't get anything. And obviously, that's incorrect, because we still have the priority with vending. We still have other priorities that, I'm not going to go into a lot of detail. However, to make a long story short, I very rarely do this, the Elected Committee needs, in my opinion, needs to par--, be a part of every survey that's done on any facility. It absolutely should not be a forethought, and if anybody, just like I talked about Marion County Jail, we don't have the vending there. Well, how many vending machines, did they go ahead and install at Camp Rilea. We still have the priority. How many of the video machines have they put in there? We still have the priority on that. And these doggone agencies must comply with the law no matter what. And the managers, Elected Committee, need to be an active part on any location that is being developed for really anything. Cafeteria…

Hauth: Hey, Arthur, if you could, if you, if you can wrap it up, if you could make your recommendation, if you can make your recommendation.

A Stevenson: Okay, alright, I'm wrapping it up right now, Randy. Yeah…

Hauth: Okay, you bet, thank you.

A Stevenson: So, anyways, that, you know, that's something that in my opinion would help. That, get a lot of things that we don't have. I'm, I'm out, Randy.

Hauth: Alright, thank you, Art. Okay, what do we have next?

Webber: Next is route creation and assistance.

Hauth: What is that, Carole?

Webber: Route creation and assistance. I think we might have already discussed that.

Hauth: I think we did.

Webber: Okay, go to the next one?

Hauth: Yeah.

Webber: Salem vending facility out to bid.

Hauth: Okay, Ron, this is, this is for you.

Stewart: Sure, yeah, that route’s going out to bid. It looks like it'll be out tomorrow. So, everybody can, you should all see that, you should all see that very soon.

Hauth: Well, that's good news.

Stewart: Yep.

Bird: Randy?

Hauth: Yes, Jerry?

Bird: Yeah, I'm not going to say much about that, but. Other than, that's been my, Salem Vending's been my route, per se. So now it’s for putting that out for bid, what am I going to be? The outs--, outskirts vending? Or? Out of area vending? You know what I'm saying?

Hauth: Yes, yes, I hear you. Yeah, so I don't, I mean, I don't know, this, I think what they're talking about, Jerry and maybe, maybe it's not, maybe we didn't call it the right name, but this was Art’s location that he's leaving that's going to go out for bid. And Art, what is the name of your route? I don't even actually know.

A Stevenson: I think it actually hasn't had a clarified name, as far as that goes, and all I could say about what Jerry said, and, and I think I heard him say that all of Salem was his? Is that what I heard you say, Jerry?

Hauth: No, I think it’s, said the name, the name of his, the name of his facility.

A Stevenson: Oh, okay, okay.

Bird: No.

A Stevenson: Well.

Bird: Let me make it clear.

Hauth: Go ahead, Jerry.

Bird: I didn't know it was Harold's, thought it was my old one going out for bid.

A Stevenson: No, that's mine, Jerry.

Bird: Okay.

Hauth: Okay, so, let’s everybody, everybody look for that tomorrow. You know, it's a bittersweet thing, but it's an exciting opportunity for not only current vendors... But you know, I know Skylar is on the line and I know I've met Skylar and he's a person that has a lot of energy and desire to get in and be part of this program not only as a licensee but as a vendor having a facility. So.

Van Rooy: Yes, sir. Thank you.

Hauth: You bet. What do we have? What do we have next?

Webber: Script vending debacle.

Hauth: Well. The debacle, the debacle turned into a little bit of less of a debacle. We finally, you know, I can't understand why a year and a half has gone by and really nothing or very little had occurred. And I know, I'll give credit to Ron for digging in and trying to get that agreement in front of us and working with the Oregon Department of Corrections, and maybe they weren't the most responsive, and maybe they weren't the most easiest to work with, but trying to navigate that, I think Ron's done more in three months than Eric's done in 12 years or however long that torturous time was. But anyway, so now we are, now we're at a point where we need to try and determine as a board with the input of the managers who are impacted, too, what do we want to do? I mean, we set a year and a half without asking for any kind of raise. And also prices have gone through the roof. We have to pay 5% of our net proceeds to the inmate fund. So, 2.20 in my opinion, is not even a market price, right? It's not even a, you can't get a product for 2.20. So, is there availability in, in asking for 2.30? Or, you know, how does, how does that work? I mean, that's not an unreasonable request, I don't think. So, anyway, I wanted to hear from the board members, any of the board members want to weigh in on that and also any of the vendors on the line that,

you know, are impacted as well? So.

Young: Chair Hauth? It's Harold.

Hauth: Yes, Harold?

Young: Well, I no longer have that prison anymore, so, it's not going to affect me, cause it's all settled, but it would have been nice if it had been settled a couple of years ago. But anyhow, that doesn't, that doesn't even really, when you think about it, you know, the prices as well as anybody else in the program like the other managers, that's not even hardly scratching the surface. You know, I got a, you know, give kudos to, to Ron for putting out a good effort, but I have to say, that I don't think that's very fair still. And I have to kind of agree with what Jerry Bird said, probably a year or two ago, that why do the prisoners get such a good price when they're bad people and they're incarcerated in the first place, why should they get a way cheaper cost than the average person. I don't, I don't understand that either. I think there's some work to be done still there and I don't think 2.30 is unreasonable at all. So, that's my, that’s my two cents worth.

Hauth: Yeah, in talking, and just so you know, Harold, thank you. And so, in talking with Canteen who does my script vending, they said 2.50 actually.

Young: Yeah.

Hauth: Cause I told them what was going on and they said really, 2.50, it should be 2.50. That's kind of the going rate. But you know, whatever the best you guys can get is what we're going to have to end up living with, right? So, I don't know if anybody else has any, I did mention this to Ron earlier today when I spoke with him just briefly. And I don't know if Ron, you've had a chance to digest it or understand what the options would be, but is there anybody else on here that wanted to make a comment? I know Lewanda, you have some prisons. I know Jerry, you do.

Bird: Yeah, I have a comment when the board members are done.

Hauth: Okay.

Jackson: Steve Jackson. Can I say something?

Hauth: Steve, go ahead.

Jackson: I think it's not a big ask to ask for 10 cents and maybe we can, maybe we can ask Ron and everybody can get together and call the state reps, legislators, and try to persuade the, the prison or something because it's not fair I don't think at all. You know, we should be able to at least…

Hauth: Thanks, Steve.

Jackson: We should at least be able to go back and forth and haggle.

Hauth: Yeah, thank you, Steve. Anybody else? Any other board members before Jerry has the floor? Okay, Jerry, go ahead.

Bird: Thank you. I've done quite a little bit of research on this and to me it's fairly simple. Although I know the prisons are making it hard because they don't, the longer we, they just tell us to go away, the longer they get half that much, so kind of playing the, the game that, you know, look under the hat or something. But my opinion, my opinion is we, in our rules state, I think it does in their contract, that the blind vendors can charge the average price of C-stores and that around your area. Now that's pretty simple and clear. So, what we, all we need to do is say, well, take the 7/11 in Salem or, or, you know, them type of store. Course even the grocery stores are up there quite a bit. And that's because everybody, they have to cost overheads so much. And we're all trying to make a living. Well, I think they need to know that that's the rule. Do they have to pay the average, like I just said, price of them type areas in your area. And they give a push back. I think it's time to get Brady in there. He seems to like getting all of us and spending all kinds of commission money on his services to fight against the blind person. Now, this is pretty simple. If it was us doing it wrong they'd be right on our butt. But they need to use them rules what we can charge. And many years ago, when I got in the program, 38 years ago, it was, it was cost plus 40% or something like that. But we always knew about what we could do instead of… And that protects us from them wanting to say, oh, we, we'll get it from Joe Blow, he'll do it for a quarter cheaper. Well, no, we have the right and we have a rule that states this and is to peck-, to protect us blind people, so you must do that. I think the only way for them out of it, I hate to say, is say we don't want any more vending. I really don't think they can do that, will do that, because inmates won't like it. I mean, script, that means everything. You know, so, I believe we just need to explain that to him and, and say that, you know, they can go check if they want, but I believe you'll, you'll see it close to 2.50. And, and you got to keep in mind whatever price we set includes the deposit, 10 cents, that adds up. And they get to keep them bottles or cans and they turn them in for their 10 cents. So, we got to realize that in our price on vending machines, you've got to account for deposit just like when you buy your product from Pepsi, they got the cost and then down on the bottom they got, they got the deposit. You know, two dollars and 40 cents per case. That adds up. A few hundred cases or something, you know, we're talking big money, so. They just got, I think need to be explained to. And I think if we can get our attorney a little bit involved, which you should, that they will be more persuaded and follow the law instead of just telling us to go away, what you going to to do about it? Thank you.

A Stevenson: Randy! Randy!

Hauth: Yes, Art?

A Stevenson: I agree with everything Jerry said. But also, these people need to take into account, and I don't think they really do because it's not coming out of their pockets. And that's the servicing to keep these vending machines up and running. We all know that compressors, the compressor goes out. That's a whole heck of a lot of money to replace that compressor. You know, these machines have become more and more expensive to maintain. Not only that, you have to have, you know, a service person go in and do all of that work and all they're thinking about is, you know, how can we get it the cheapest? What they need to understand is that everything's gone up. The price of the product, the price of the equipment to maintain, and the law says that things have to properly and satisfactorily operate. And quite frankly, we ought to make a profit. The program needs to make a profit and they just gotta understand that times have changed and to have the convenience of a vending machine in that prison, it isn't cheap. And we deserve, we all deserve, okay, a, a profit and to be able to, like I said, maintain the dang equipment that we put into these prisons. Thanks, Randy.

Hauth: You're welcome, Art. Thank you for the comment. Hey, Ron. So, I mean, I don't know if you've had a chance to think about this or talk about this, but I mean, this is kind of where the rubber meets the road. And this is like, I think where we're calling on you to advocate on our behalf to the Department of Corrections and not simply go along with, you know, what they're proposing, and I don't think it has to be done in a adversarial way, but I mean the truth is like Jerry said, and like Art said, and like Harold said, and like I’ve said, prices keep going up on everything, everything and the price isn't even market, and they're wanting us to pay them a commission. So, anyway, with that said again, what's your, what's your take on this?

Stewart: Yeah, I think everybody made some real good points. And what I can say is I'll find out what our options are on this.

A Stevenson: Randy?

Hauth: Okay, well, thank. Thank you, Ron. And just remember when you share these things with them, it's been a year and a half that people, you know, prices have gone up. It's been a year and a half that this has existed, right? So.

Stewart: Sure, yes.

Hauth: Yeah, Art, just make it quick please, sir.

A Stevenson: I will. We, we, also need to maybe get, because the prison people are, maybe we need to get some legislators involved at, if possible, so that we can really crack this nut. Because blind people shouldn't have to work for free and blind people should be able to make, and, and that's what program’s all about, so, maybe we should contact some legislators that might be able to assist us, because they oversee the prisons too, Randy. And I'm sure they wouldn't like to hear that our program's being taken advantage of. Thanks.

Hauth: Thank you. Okay, yeah, Ron, so, whatever you can do to help us if you, you know, I know you heard us identify our bulleted point concerns. I don't know if you want that together in some kind of little, you know, format for you, or if you just want to, you know, kind of replay back and recite what we've shared. So.

Stewart: Sure. I've got the transcript from this, from this meeting. And I...

Hauth: Okay, sure, okay.

Stewart: Thank you.

Hauth: You, you bet. Okay, let's go ahead and move on. What do we have next?

Webber: Response to service requests for repairs.

Hauth: Okay. Hey, can somebody give me a time check on this? I can't quite get into my... What time is it?

Webber: I have 4:35.

Hauth: 4:35, okay.

Webber: 4:35.

Hauth: Good, good, okay. So, service order requests. Well, so, let me just share with you my perspective and then you guys can, you guys can weigh in on this. So, back when the self-service, I mean, you know, over the last 40 years I've been in the program, there's been a lot of different ways that they've done things, the agency has done things, right? But going back to couple of three years ago when the self-service initiative became the front runner of the agency, they not only purchased the machines through Smitty's Vending, but they also engaged with Smitty's Vending in servicing the machines and fixing the machines, right? Some of them were under warranty at the time and it was a whole convoluted thing but bottom line, Smitty’s is the preferred service provider and as well, when that all occurred, I think what, what happened is that Smitty's kind of, and Smitty's took control of it, maybe if this is right or wrong, they told the agency, look it, we're not just going to run around and do coin jams and we're not going to run around and unstick dollar bill validators and we only want repairs of substance, if that's right or wrong, I think I recall that conversation occurring, so I think then it kind of dictated or directed then director Eric Morris to create some kind of internal policy, directive that sent out to all the managers who were doing self-services. Okay, if you guys have a repair, Smitty's will repair it, however, you guys need to go out and you guys need to identify it and you guys need to do this and you guys need to do that. So, not only did we become vending facility managers but then we became repairperson of state-owned equipment right, and so, I think like in Lewanda's situation, I mean, she lives in Eastern Oregon, right? And I mean, luckily enough, she has two qualified employees that know how to repair machines and they're authorized to be able to do that, because there's really no other option. I mean, she'd be sitting for weeks without it, talk about Derrick down in Southern Oregon. I'm not sure now that he's doing self-service. I'm not sure how that whole thing unfolds and even me, here in Portland, what I can tell you is that there's been times where I've sat…

Miranda: He just cut off.

Webber: Yeah.

Hauth: Yep.

[unidentified]: Oh, okay.

Bird: While we're waiting for Randy…

A Stevenson: Well, Randy [inaudible]

Bird: Can I make a comment?

A Stevenson: Randy'll be back soon.

Bird: Can…

A Stevenson: I'll, I’ll kinda talk about repairs and the difficulties of all that kind of stuff, ‘cause I experience it all the time, and it is definitely a hassle. When you got locations that run 24 hours a day, seven days a week, you know, time is money. And, you know, but it is definitely a lot of work, and luckily, my lovely wife, you know, works with me and so, when we have problems, we get on it right away. And hopefully, get the machines up and running as quickly as possible. And I think it was Randy was trying to say, we need to streamline things in order to definitely get them done efficiently and effectively. Right now, I have a dryer that's been down for three weeks, and we still don't know what is wrong with it. Guy that we have doing the repair basically can't do what a dryer repair person should be able to do and that's diagnose it and fix the problem. Not just guess at it and hopefully get it repaired. Just hopefully get it repaired. Those are the problems, are you back yet, Randy? That, that we're experiencing out there and some of our contracts say that we're supposed to get the machines fixed and up and running within 24 or 48 hours, and in a lot of cases, that just ain't happening. So, we most definitely need a better way and I, and I know that managers have gotten some training on repairing, and it helps. And in our case, we call up Smitty's and get their repair guy on the, on the phone and sometimes we could diagnose it and get it up and running. But other times, we can't and then we have to rely on whenever the heck they could get down and fix the machine. And sometimes their scheduling is messed up.

Hauth: Yeah, hey, Art, Art, I am back. I just want to hear some, go ahead. Who is that?

Stevenson, A: Okay, so, I'm done, take it back over.

Hauth: Yeah, thank you, Jerry, thank you, Art, very much. Who was that in the background?

Bird: Jerry.

Hauth: Jerry, go ahead.

Bird: Yeah, I just want to. As far as I know, that Smitty's only has one repair guy. Jonas. Now, I don't know how you can expect… I don't even know how you can have them be your repair people, unless they made the agreement on these new machines. But these people can't wait that long. They only have one, one repair guy to do Oregon. Thank you.

Hauth: Okay. And just, you know, with all that said, when managers’ machines are down and out, they're not making money, right? So, a faster, efficient, effective way to do it, and get that machine up and going is important, extremely important. I know in conversations with Ron, he is supportive of finding the streamline, effective, efficient system and trying to get that to occur, so, I know there'll be more discussion around this. Smitty's does have now two repair men, Jerry, just FYI. They have Yonas who does a wonderful job, and then they have Josh who's a newer tech, but again you know, when you get, like, when the agency has to get purchase orders, and you have to send the request to one staff member and then it goes to Smitty's, and Smitty's is asking questions back and forth. I mean, again, I, my machines have been down at times for a week or three or four days, but with all that said, it's going to be… Ron has made a commitment to working on it and making it better, so, I don't know, Ron, if you have anything to add in onto that, but…

Stewart: Yeah, like you say, if there's a better way. I'd, I'd really like to explore that. I'm all for making things more streamlined. You know, if there's a better way to save, save the program money and to get it done quicker. Let's put our heads together and come up with a solution.

Hauth: Thanks, Ron.

Bird: Randy, I got a delivery here that I'm going to have to…

Hauth: Okay, Jerry. Good to, good to hear you, Jerry. Take care.

Bird: Thank you.

Miranda: Yes.

Hauth: Okay. What else do we have?

Webber: Board member, BLAST attendance and funding.

Hauth: Okay. So, I know in talking with a few board members and a few managers, well, long story short, there's a BLAST being held in Nashville, Tennessee in November. Blind Leadership and Superior Training, and those trainings are wonderful. I know many of you have been to them. So, I do know that the agency has committed to sending and supporting vendors to go forward and pay for their travel, registration, lodging, and ground transportation. And so, I don't know, Ron, what you need from us, if you need us to actually do an official motion, or if you just need the vendors who are interested in going to reach out and ask for that assistance from the agency, which would in, be inclusive of travel, registration, lodging, and ground transportation.

Stewart: Sure, yeah, if, if anybody, anybody's interested in that, just, just send me an email or give me a call and let me know.

Hauth: Okay, are you guys, you guys are good with that, right?

Van Rooy: When is that again?

Webber: Yes.

Miranda: Yep.

Hauth: You guys are good with that, anybody interested reach out to Director Stewart and I mean, I think sooner is better. We probably need to put a, you know, we probably should put some kind of, well, just sooner is better if you're interested in going to BLAST and having the agency provide funding for those travels, reach out and let Director Stewart know.

Van Rooy: Mr. Chairman?

Hauth: Yes.

Van Rooy: Skylar here. I was just wondering when is that BLAST happening?

Hauth: It's in November. The agenda isn't quite all the way out yet, but it should be out shortly. It's in November, prior to Thanksgiving.

Van Rooy: Thank you very much.

Young: I think it's the 19th through the 22nd.

Hauth: Okay, thank you, Harold. And you know, another, another thing, did mention this to Vinnie Gwosh [sic] who most of you know, and he works directly with BEP, right, through VR, and I think it would be a good opportunity for Vinnie to also attend, if that's possible, not through the BEP but through the agency as far as sending him to be involved. There's one day, I know I reached out to Terry Smith, and there's going to be a [sic] all-day agency staff training which I think could also assist Vinnie, but my thoughts are, if he's there, he already knows the program here in Oregon or dynamics of that, but being involved, bigger and broader, would be helpful just in my thought. So, I'm also going to send that agenda along to him, so. Okay, what do we have next?

Webber: 2024 Spring In-Service.

Hauth: Okay, so, you know, we've had for a number of years, we've had two In-Services, right? Prior to COVID we had them in person. During COVID we had them virtually, and following we've had them virtually. It is the duty responsibility of the Elected Committee to sponsor with the assistance of the agency these trainings, right. So, sometimes, there's only a few managers that work on coming up with the ideas, you know, working with Kathy on trying to put this together. And I know we're all busy, but sometimes that responsibility falls on Lewanda a lot. I know Art's been involved and Carole, and I've been involved, and others, if I forgotten to mention that, I apologize. However, I don't know personally if we need two trainings a year, sometimes it's hard to come up with ideas, and I don't think it's just our duty to force a training and to create a training just because. If there's interest in a training, if there's widespread interest in a training, then that's one thing, but... Lewanda, I don't know of your conversations with Kathy, what you've heard or what you've seen, but… I mean.

Miranda: Yeah, so, I told Kathy that I talked to you, Randy, and that, that we didn't really feel like we had to have a Spring In-Service. I know the Fall is mandatory because we have elections. But the Spring isn't. And I am out of ideas on this one. So, I asked her to send out a survey to all of the VFMS, so they could get their input as well.

Hauth: Alright, okay, well, I mean. You know, I'd like to, I'd like to hear obviously, what the VFMs have to say but. Chances are, that we're not going to have a Spring In-Service, no need for it. And if the VFMs do want to have a Spring In-Service, then I'm going to call on them to help put the agenda together. So, you know, that's how that goes.

Young: Hey, Chair Hauth?

Hauth: Yes, Harold?

Young: You know, I think it's, it’d fine to skip the Spring one. Why don't we just try to work on a bigger, better Fall one?

Hauth: Sure.

Webber: Good idea.

Hauth: Okay, and what, what else do we have? There, Le--, Carole?

Webber: That's the end. Next is the chairman, director, closing comments.

Hauth: Okay. Hey, Ron, so, is there anything that we left off? Is there anything that we put in?

Brown: Randy, it's Celyn.

Hauth: Yes, hi, Celyn.

Brown: My only question is if we don't do the Spring In-Service, is there other opportunities for education credits? Cause we do have three continuing education credits that we need to do every year. And so, Spring and Fall In-Service were just kind of a given. So, is there other opportunities for us to…?

Hauth: Yeah, that's a good... That's a very good question, Celyn. I'm sure there are. I don't know what they are right off the, right off hand but, you know…

Miranda: Chairman Hauth?

Hauth: Yes?

Miranda: So. The Northwest Food Show is coming up. That's a credit. Also, the podcast that we received from NABM.

Brown: Oh, okay.

Miranda: Those are considered trainings, as well. Yeah.

Brown: Very good. Thank you.

Miranda: You're welcome.

Hauth: Okay, back to Ron, do you have anything, Ron, that you wanted to close the show out with because?

Stewart: I just want to thank everybody for all the great feedback today. I'll get to work on everything that I said I would find out and catch up on, and I'll let everybody know. And I also just wanted to say, you know, I'm about three months in here, really starting to get to know everybody, and I just wanted to let everybody know that I'm really enjoying working with everybody. I'm really enjoying the direction that we're going with the program. And, and I just wanted to thank everybody for, for working so hard, and, and for everybody's passion in making us the best program in the nation.

Miranda: Yeah.

Hauth: Well thanks, Ron, and hopefully, we're going to, we're going to go from being one of the worst to one of the best. So.

Jackson: Sweet, I like the sound of it, yeah. Good. Cheers.

Hauth: Alright, guys, anything else? Okay, well not hearing anything else. Thanks everybody for joining in.

Stewart: Thank you.

Young: Thank you.

Miranda: Bye everybody.

Hauth: See you guys later, let's close this meeting out. Bye.