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

**Thursday, January 11th, 2024**

**3:00 PM – 5:00PM**

**OREGON COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND**

• Any agenda item may become an action item.

• Any of these items may be a conflict of interest.

AGENDA

1.       CALL TO ORDER- Chairman Hauth.

a.      Roll Call.

b.      Adoption of past meeting minutes.

2.       PUBLIC COMMENTS.

3.       TRAINING & EDUCATION.

a.      Upward mobility training.

4.       NEW BUSINESS.

a.      Corporate Transparency Act.

b.      Locations returned to agency from facility #2447 making around 200,000.00 a year in sales and the need for those machines to be made a facility for bid to a VFM.

c. Complete update on Camp Rilea including set aside minutes spent so far?

d. RSA 15 Report.

e. Third quarter financials.

f. Denouncement of self service initiative.

5.       OLD BUSINESS.

a.      Script vending and where we stand currently?

b. Answers to the following questions below;

VFM’s operating agreements, why they are not created uniformly?

What rules, regs and/or statutes, does the agency rely upon, when stating they are going to reassign Southern Oregon vending facility?

It has been made known to the BECC, that the agency is considering reassignment of unassigned vending machines. If this is accurate, please provide the intended agency action here, and why this programmatic matter is not under active participation for discussion?

6.       CHAIRMAN/DIRECTOR REPORTS.

7.       ADJOURNMENT

**Transcript**

Hauth: Hey, you guys, [inaudible] we’re talking about all this uplifting positive stuff. I mean, let's start the meeting of this convalescent, let's start the meeting of this convalescent, convalescent care facility meeting to order. So.

Miranda: Yeah.

Hauth: Anyway.

A Stevenson: Go for it, Randy! Go...

Hauth: Yeah, hey, good afternoon, good afternoon, everybody. Don't get me started on my ailments, we'll be here for a week and a half. But anyway, let's go ahead and start the meeting to order. Thanks everybody for joining. And we'll go ahead and take roll of the board and then the managers and confirm the agency's participation and go on down the road. So, Art Stevenson?

A Stevenson: I'm here, Randy.

Hawkins: Arthur.

Hauth: Oh, Lewanda Miranda?

A Stevenson: Arthur.

Miranda: Here.

Hauth: Carole Webber?

Webber: Here.

Hauth: Steve Jackson? Derrick Stevenson?

D Stevenson: Here.

Hauth: Hey, Derrick, and Randy Hauth is here, so we're only missing Steve Jackson at this point in time. And with the managers, I think I heard Charlotta Hawkins on the line?

Hawkins: Yes, sir.

Hauth: Hey, Char. And who else is on the line? Jerry Bird, I think I heard Jerry.

Bird: Yeah.

Hawkins: Yep.

Hauth: Alright, alright, alright. Who else?

Garcia: Trevor here.

Hauth: Anybody, hey, Trevor! Welcome.

Miranda: Hey, Trevor!

Hauth: It's been a while. Nice, nice to join us. Anyone else?

Van Rooy: Skylar here.

Hawkins: Oooh. Skylar.

Hauth: Hey, Skylar, nice, nice to hear you on the phone call.

Garcia: Hey, Skylar.

Hauth: Anyone else? Alright, is there any members of the public that would like to be identified?

Bird: Jerry Bird.

Hauth: Yeah, yeah, okay.

Bird: No, I, I was, I was just trying to check if I was on mute, apparently not.

Hauth: No, you're good. You're good. And so, anyway, Ron Stewart, I assume you're on the line, please acknowledge that and just let us know who else is with you, if anyone?

Stewart: Oh sure, yeah, this, I'm on the line. Just want to say this is my first meeting.

I'm, I’m the new guy. I'm really excited to be working with everybody. I'm here, and I'm sitting here with Michael Wolff, as well.

Wolff: Hey there!

Hauth: Well, hello!

Miranda: Hi Michael.

Hauth: Hello to both of you. Hello to both of you. You know, Ron, I don't know, it's a little bit hard to hear you. I'm not sure if you're sitting far, far away, maybe that's just me, I'm not sure, but just FYI, it's a little bit hard to hear you, for me at least.

Stewart: Sure.

Hauth: So, anyway, Carole?

Webber: Yes.

Hauth: As you do most, as you do most every meeting, would you mind guiding me through the agenda, I'd sure appreciate that.

Webber: Absolutely. The first one that I have is training and education.

Hauth: Well, Carole, Carole, your voice, your voice has changed, Carole, it sounds like.

Webber: Okay, let me move my phone. Can you hear me better now?

Hauth: No, no, no. That little dog barking in the background. Somebody has a dog barking in the background.

Webber: Oh yeah, it's not mine. I don't have one.

Hauth: Hey, whoever has a dog barking in the back, if you could please mute your phone, I'd appreciate that.

Bird: Hey, Cindy, quit barking.

Webber: Okay. Alright, under training and education, we have upward mobility training.

A Stevenson: Does that take care of it, Randy?

Hauth: Well.

Miranda: Yes.

Hauth: Yeah, I, I don't hear anything. So, we open the meeting. Do we have public comment, Carole?

Webber: Oh yes, I'm sorry, we do have public comment.

Hauth: That's alright. That's alright. No worries. So, anyway, thank you. And so, public comment, if there's anybody that would like to have the floor, please acknowledge yourself and I'll open the floor up to you.

Jackson: Steve Jackson's here.

Hauth: Hey, Steve.

A Stevenson: Hey, hey, hey!

Hauth: Welcome, welcome.

Jackson: Hi, I don't have a comment. I just want to say Happy New Year, I hope this New Year is ludicrous for everybody. Lucrative.

Hauth: Hey, thanks for joining, Steve. Hey, Art?

A Stevenson: So good.

Hauth: I don't know if that's your little dog, but I do hear a, a tiny little yipping yapper in the background.

A Stevenson: Okay, so I hit star six, Randy. I don't know what the problem is there. I hit…

Miranda: Try it again.

A Stevenson: Okay, I'm going to try it again.

Jackson: It's quiet now.

Miranda: Yeah.

Bird: So, it’s star six, not star 69?

Unidentifiable: [inaudible]

Hauth: Okay, so. Going to move on…

Bird: No, I'm serious. I was.

Jackson: Just star six, Randy.

Bird: Oh, okay, thanks.

Miranda: Just star six.

Hauth: Okay, anybody…

Bird: Can you hear me now?

Stewart: Hey, Randy?

Hauth: Yes?

Stewart: Uh, yeah, this is Ron. Hey, I just wanted to let you know I started recording the meeting.

Hauth: Thank you, sir. Anybody else like to make a comment? So, not hearing anybody, I'll go ahead and make a comment. I would just like to say on behalf of myself, and behalf of all the vending facility managers here in Oregon, welcome to you, Mr. Ron Stewart. Nice to have some, nice to have a new fresh perspective and energy and effort on you, you know, on board. I know it's going to take a little while and we all know it's going to take a little while for you to, you know, jump in and adapt, but you know, so far, so good. I've appreciated your, frankly, I've appreciated your communication back and forth and your responsiveness and it sounds and seems like your willingness to, you know, help out as needed, so, you know, it'll be a long road, but we hope, hope and pray that things will go much better than they had in the past. And good riddance, good riddance to old garbage, actually, and welcome aboard. So, thank you. And Michael, that's not meant for you.

Miranda: Good.

Hauth: Yeah.

Wolff: Thanks, thanks for clarifying [inaudible].

Hauth: Yeah, yeah...

A Stevenson: Hey, Randy?

Hauth: Okay, so, let's.

A Stevenson: Randy?

Hauth: Yes, yes, Art?

A Stevenson: Rand--, I finally got back off mute.

Hauth: Okay.

A Stevenson: So, I do want to, I do want to make a quick public comment.

Hauth: Sure, please do.

A Stevenson: Before we move on. First of all, I want to say welcome, Ron. You and I have had a couple of conversations. I have been very pleased with your receptiveness and your respect for me as a blind licensed manager and I'm looking forward to working with you in all my different capacities, which is the chair of several committees, also as a blind licensed manager and also as the Vice Chair of the Elected Committee. And so, please know that I am a resource. I’ve been in the program since 1986. And, and so, I am a resource. I do know that you and I were talking about a couple of things like the Commissary program, that you are going to be talking with Terry Smith, I don't know if that's occurred yet or not. But I, I do know that Randy is very optimistic in working with you intricately at making this program what we all know it should be. Okay, thanks, Randy. I'm going back on mute.

Hauth: Thank you, Art.

Stewart: Yeah, thank you, Arthur.

Hauth: Anybody else before?

Stewart: Thank you, Arthur, I really do appreciate that. I’m, I’m really …

Garcia: This is Trevor, just…

Hauth: Trevor, go ahead, yes.

Garcia: Just wanted to say welcome.

Garcia: Yeah, just wanted to say welcome, Ron. It was a pleasure to meet you last week and you know, congratulations, and we're looking forward to working with you, excited to, that you're in the program with us. And thank you, Michael Wolff, for running the show before and really appreciated you, as well.

Stewart: Thank you, Trevor.

Wolff: Thanks, Trevor.

Hauth: Anyone else before we move on? Okay, not hearing anymore, we'll go ahead and move on, and I believe, Carole, you identified that training, upward mobility training is on the agenda.

Webber: Yes. Yes.

Hauth: So, Lewanda, I don't know if you wanted to dive in on that or, you know, have me take the lead on it and then you fill in, but the floor is yours.

A Stevenson: Randy! Point of order.

Hauth: Yes, yes?

A Stevenson: Okay, we need to, we need to take care of approving the last meeting’s minutes. That's always the appropriate protocol during these meetings.

Hauth: Sure, sure, you bet.

A Stevenson: So, we need to do that right now. Before we begin.

Hauth: Alright, so, let's take. Let's, let's have a motion to...

A Stevenson: I make a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting.

Hauth: Okay, do we have a second on it?

Webber: I second it.

Hauth: Okay. Any discussion around that? Hearing no discussion, yea or nay, Art?

A Stevenson: Yea!

Hauth: Derrick?

D Stevenson: Yea.

Hauth: Lewanda?

Miranda: Hi, I just got back on, I dropped off. Are you there?

Hauth: Okay, so, we are, we're approving the minutes right now. Motion's been made by Art Stevenson.

Miranda: Okay.

Hauth: Seconded by Carole. Votes being taken, would you like vote yea or nay?

Miranda: Yea.

Hauth: Okay, Carole Webber?

Webber: Yes.

Hauth: Steve Jackson?

Jackson: Yes.

Hauth: And I'll vote yea, as well, motion passes. So, Lewanda, glad you joined back in, perfect timing.

Miranda: Thank you.

Hauth: We are opening up the upward mobility portion of the agenda and I was asking if you'd like to take that and dive right in or if you want me to pre--, preface it?

Miranda: I'll go ahead.

Hauth: With anything? Okay. The floor is yours.

Miranda: The upward mobility? Oh, why don't you just go ahead and take it.

Hauth: So, upward mobility training. I believe, obviously, we all know that part of the OAR requirements for vendors to be able to bid on facilities, is to keep current with their upward mobility training. I guess people didn't believe that managers would take the initiative to self-educate themselves as most of us all do or take the initiative to be current and frequent as businesspeople. So, whoever and whatever had to codify those in rules to require that the managers would go out and seek training. Kind of silly to me, but that's what it was, and so, upward mobility training, there's a certain, through the agency and OARs, there's a certain allowance and identified allowance of what qualifies for that. But what I can tell you over the number of years that I've been in the program and many of you have, as well, the upward mobility trainings are offered not only by the National Federation of the Blind, the American Council of the Blind, RSVA, Randolph Sheppard Vendors of America, NFB, NABM, National Associated Blind Merchants. And so, there's national trainings that occur and honestly they’re, they're wonderful. They bring experts from across the land and so, I'll just touch base with you right now, I can tell you that, I mean, Covid obviously, threw a monkey wrench in that, and there's been a couple of years of lapses in the training, but looks like we're back full speed ahead. In Las Vegas at the Golden Nugget, the RSVA, Randolph Sheppard Vendors of America, are sponsoring the Sagebrush convention, which I will be attending. I don't know if anybody from the agency has attended or not, but it'd be nice to have somebody from the agency attend. They actually break, break it up as most of you know, into different sections for BEP staff and directors and you know, committee chairs and so, they work to collaborate together on the trainings, and they work to have side bars so people can discuss and understand what other states are doing and bring that back. So, also, National Association of Blind Merchants is sponsoring, they're back hitting the deck a running. They have a couple of different trainings going on. They have a training in Florida upcoming, that's, you know, innovation about the program. Like the Randolph Shepard Vending program, been here since 1936. It started as an archaic program. And it stayed that way, actually in many states, because in my opinion, states don't have the vision, excuse the pun, but they don't have the vision to allow and to drive forward what this program should be and give autonomy to us as businesspeople to help drive and work with the agency to make this a win-win situation for everybody, profitability and image and you know, the whole ball of wax, but in some states that happens, in some states it doesn't, but so, they're going to work and try and be innovative and how to get Randolph, how to get RSA, Rehabilitation Services Administration, to do their job, RSA administers and governs the program here. Doesn't do a very good job by all accounts, I can tell you that. Bureaucracy is not a good friend of business, right? And so, anyways, they're bringing the leaders from across the land together to try and figure out, you know, how we can get some traction here. I can tell you, back in na--, in 2000 and 24 in November, I believe it is, in Nashville, Tennessee, one of the fun…

Garcia: I think Randy cut off.

Miranda: Oh, I got him back.

A Stevenson: You there, Randy?

[Background playing of TV or radio]

Miranda: Arthur?

Jackson: Hey, Art, maybe you should take over, yeah.

A Stevenson: Randy? Okay, he's not here. Okay. Anyways, on, as Randy was saying, up, upward mobility is definitely something that needs to happen in our program. And the Elected Committee is looking forward to working with our new director in making this program, you know, exactly what it should be. So, I think we'll have an offline discussion with Ron about that and then, you know, maybe be able to come back with positive things like assistance from the agency like we used to do and you know, definitely get the upward mobility part of our program back, back in line, and also looking forward to having great In-Services in person or on the telephone like we used to have, because it's very important to develop good relationships with everybody and especially with you, Director Stewart, because we definitely want to have positive communications and, you know, hopefully eliminate some of the problems in the past. Okay, so now, Carole, we skipped a part of the agenda and I'm sorry about that. Today, you know, I let, let Ryan know that we didn't have committee reports on the agenda like we were supposed to, and you may not have seen that, Carole, so, that might be why.

Webber: No, I did not.

A Stevenson: Yeah, we had a number of agendas, so, right now we're going to flip back and do committee reports.

Webber: Well, Art. Arthur...

A Stevenson: Just so you know...

Webber: Who was supposed to send me that?

A Stevenson: What?

Webber: Who was supposed to send me that?

A Stevenson: You should have gotten, you should have gotten it from Ryan McBee. Today.

Webber: Alright. Yep, I did not get that one. Okay.

A Stevenson: Oh, okay, but you did get the one where I sent to, oh, you may not have gotten that, because I only sent...

Webber: I haven't gotten any from you in months.

A Stevenson: Right, okay. Well, I, I copied Ryan, and you should have received, you should have received an update that we didn't have committee reports on the agenda. So. Hopefully if you check your emails, I don't know if you checked them today recently.

Webber: I have.

A Stevenson: But, but. Yeah, but I do believe he sent it out. And if you didn't receive it, then that's, yeah, because I called him this morning and reminded him, reminded him and he said, and he admitted to me that he forgot. Because he did get the email.

Miranda: Well, let's move on from...

A Stevenson: Yeah, so, let's go on. Anyways, we're going to do committee reports. And just so you know, Ron, the Elected Committee has several committees which work, of the Elected Committee, that hopefully work with the agency in, you know, doing positive things for the program. One of our committees, and I'll just, I'll just start it, well, anyways, Lewanda, do you have anything to report on training and education, I mean, on the training, and that In-Service training, or any of that kind of stuff?

Miranda: No, not really. I'll be working, I'll be looking, towards the Spring In-Service, but that's a little ways off, so nothing right now.

A Stevenson: Okay, okay. That's good. And, we also have the vending facility development committee, which I'm the chair of.

Miranda: Okay.

A Stevenson: And, and, also, Lewanda Miranda used to be on the committee. And resigned because she was a little bit disappointed in, you know...

Miranda: Just burn out.

A Stevenson: The agency not doing, you know, not working with that committee, and so she actually resigned about it, but I talked with her yesterday and she is willing to rejoin the vending facility development committee, and because we now have a new director and hopefully, we will have positive things happen as we move forward because it's intricate for the Elected Committee by law, work with the agency in making our program a great thing. And, Ron, I know I talked, when I talked to you on the phone, we talked about the commissary program a little bit. I don't know if you talked with Terry Smith yet concerning that. Have you got to do that yet or you still, when is that meeting going to occur? Or did it?

Stewart: Oh, Terry and I, Terry and I are meeting next week.

A Stevenson: Oh, it's next week?

Stewart: Yes.

A Stevenson: Okay. Okay, well, and, and, and I'm excited about that because one of the things that the Elected Committee and the vending facility development committee has been trying to get the Commission to do, is adopt a commissary program. Because in the, the state of Tennessee has a really fantastic, a fantastic commissary program and several managers, because they have commissaries, you know, have income in the four di--, I mean the six digit range, which is very lucrative. And I as the vending facility development committee chair, would like to make a motion because we made this, we've been trying to get this going for a long time. And that is, to develop the commissary program. And there is a company, it's called VendEngine, Ron, who works with Tennessee in, in their commissary program and they do the technology work and stuff in the commissary program. And so, as the chair of the vending facility development committee, I want to, because you don't, you don't know this about this Ron. I want to make a recommendation, no, I want to make a motion that we proceed with teaming with VendEngine and you can talk to Terry about this next week, Ron. I want to make a motion that we adopt, or we develop, a teaming partner relationship with VendEngine and finally get a commissary program up and running, which should have happened two or three years ago. But I'm really optimistic, Ron, Mr. Stewart, that once you learn about the commissary program, you will accept that. But anyways, I need a second for, for developing a teaming partner relationship with VendEngine to get our commissary program up and running. Do I have a second?

Miranda: I'll second that, I'll second that.

A Stevenson: Thank you, Lewanda! I appreciate it. It's been moved and seconded. Is there any questions? Comments? Okay, let's take a roll call vote. Lewanda Miranda?

Miranda: Yes.

A Stevenson: Derrick Stevenson?

D Stevenson: Yes.

A Stevenson: Carole Webber?

Webber: Yes.

A Stevenson: Randy, are you back? No. Steve Jackson?

Jackson: I vote yes.

A Stevenson: Okay. That motion carries, and Ron, I look forward to working with you as the vending facility development committee in adopting and moving forward with the commissary program because it's going to create a lot of lucrative jobs for blind licensed managers and that's what this program is all about. Okay, so, anyway, I hope, okay, that we have a very good relationship with Ron, concerning our commit, our committee, committees, and you know that we do a lot of positive things, and just talking to you Ron, I really feel...

Hauth: Hey, everybody!

A Stevenson: I really feel that...

Hauth: Hey, everybody, sorry, sorry for, hey Art, sorry for, bur--, butting in, I just got back in, I, sincerely apologize for the lapse in service through this. Anyway.

A Stevenson: Okay so, so, Randy, Randy, Randy, okay. We, we're doing committee reports. I just gave a vending facility development committee report and just so you know, Lewanda has agreed to, you know, rejoin that committee. I told Ron that we look forward to working intricately with the agency in committees and then just so you know, Randy, we moved, seconded, and passed using VendEngine as our teaming partner to develop the commissary program and it passed unanimously. So, if you want to go ahead and throw your vote in there on that, I will accept your vote and we could add it to the record. Do you agree with teaming with VendEngine to get our commissary program up and running?

Hauth: Yeah, I most certainly do. I've done that in the past for quite a while.

A Stevenson: No, no, I know.

Hauth: But I do want to.

A Stevenson: I wanted to make it, yeah, part of the record.

Hauth: Yeah, yeah. Part of the record.

A Stevenson: Any, anyways, you know, I, I, I, I stated to Director Stewart, I look forward and talked about committees and stuff. We have, you know, I told him the, the committees that we have. The training and education, the vending facility development committee and also we have the compliance committee, but at this time, I'll make, being the compliance chair, I'll make a brief report and say, that as the compliance chair, after talking with Mr. Stewart, I do believe that he is definitely dedicated to the agency complying with the laws and rules and regulations of our program. And, and I'm looking forward to working with him as the compliance chair and the only, the only thing I will also report, I learned today, that certain BE staff, there's kind of been a new policy developed where we can't call up and talk to people like Ben Lane. We got to put everything in writing, and that they are no longer going to converse with us on the phone. And, and so, is that a new, Ron, is that a new policy of the agency?

Stewart: That's not something I'm aware of. You can call me anytime.

A Stevenson: Okay, and, and, and basically, we’ll, we'll get this straightened around. I'll call you tomorrow, cause I don't want to pound about it, okay, but I got, I got informed about that today, by Ben Lane and it kind of, it kind of threw me back, okay, because…

Stewart: Hey, you know, do me a favor. If you could give me a call, like you said, give me a call tomorrow we can chat and I can get some more details from you, and I'll, I'll, I’ll look into it.

A Stevenson: Well, that's fantastic. Because…

Hauth: Yeah, hey, hey, you guys, hey, hey, you guys, listen, it's, it's 3:35. We got to move on with the meeting. I'm sorry, I was gone. And Art...

A Stevenson: No, I know, I know. So…

Hauth: Thank you for the recap, but I'm going to take the meeting back over, and we're going to move forward. Thank you for fill, filling in. I do appr...

A Stevenson: All right. We're done with committee reports, Randy. We're done with committee reports.

Hauth: Okay, well, then hurry up, bud. Let's move it on.

A Stevenson: No! No! We're done with committee reports.

Hauth: Oh, you're done? Okay! Okay, thank you. Thank you.

A Stevenson: We CAN move on.

Hauth: Okay, so we're going to move on. Thank, thank you for the update. I do want to say something about the commissaries, again, for the record. What I can tell you, is there's two states in the United States that have relationships with commissaries. Thanks to Terry Smith under his directorship in Tennessee, they were able to develop a strong, like Art was saying, a really strong lucrative relationship with the county jails and, you know, city jails, and I don't believe there's any state prisons, but they're all that, and through VendEngine, who's also located in Tennessee and does a remarkable job at not only supporting the blind vendor but providing the offerings to the Department of Corrections. Or not Department of Corrections, but the jails and commissaries that they need. So, what I can tell you though here in Oregon, we've tried for a number of years to try and get our foot in the door, and unfortunately, I think the agency is being a little bit, had a little bit of tendency about doing that because of the political bailiwick. Most of these jails receive funding off of either the commissaries or the telephone services or whatever it would be, but a year, two years ago when VendEngine came and presented at one of our training conference, they said, look it, this is a tough, this is a tough thing to get in. But there are ways that you can not only support a blind vendor and make a wonderfully lucrative facility for that vendor, but you can also find a way to compensate the jail, so, you're not just coming in and saying look it, we're going to take all the commissary and you guys aren't getting anything where you've already depended and relied on this money. So, there are ways, as I understand, through VendEngine's presentation, that this could be, like Art's suggesting, not only a very lucrative opportunity, but we can also politically, you know, keep those waters calm and also provide some compensation somehow. Is through surcharges of the ATMs or you know, however it would work and so, it's definitely worth looking at and talking to, but I guess my concern, just frankly, my concern is that there was a complaint filed on this matter a few years back. I think Jerry Bird was the petitioner of the complaint. He was trying to get into one of the jails or one of the commissaries and Executive Director Johnson through her report which I read said, no, we're not going to do that because that's gonna cause us a lot of problem. So, maybe she is a little bit worried or scared about entering into that. But obvi--, obviously we’ll need her support going forward. So, Art, I'm going to move on, but thank you for bringing that back to the table. Let's try and make it a reality this time and find a way to, you know, get her done. So, thank you. What do we have next?

Webber: Okay, we have new business, and the first one is Corporate Transparency Act.

Hauth: Oh, okay, so, you know, this is not necessarily my bailiwick, but I can tell you that to train from… When I found out about this... I guess I understand, you know, I found out about it. Linda does most of my, you know, consulting on these type of things. She brings these things to my attention and she's the brains of my operation, right? But she brings it to my attention. And so, I know Carole, when the agency sent out a notice of what was going on with the Transparency Act, I think, it raised the question of, well, there's obviously a lot of confusion around this and maybe there's managers that don't know and not only is there this Transparency Act, but there's also the unclaimed property reporting that people have to do and report on annually. It's not just, you know, corporations and limited liability corporations and sole proprietors. It's, you know, all of us from what I understand. So, when this came to our attention, I had some conversation with Lewanda about how do we best address this. So, I reached out to my accountant, and I invited my accountant to come and participate in this meeting and to kind of overview and share what's going on. He's, he told me, Randy, save your money, look it. He said, we really don't know yet. The only thing we do know is, we know as much as what was provided through the website, right, of the Secretary of State's office, which I think Kathy Ewing sent out. So, he said we know as much as that. He said, what I can tell you is the government is trying to ensure that businesses are, you know, legitimate, there's no money laundering and there's more regulations and governances over these businesses. And so, it was his belief that this is what was going on. He said there really aren't even any kind of rules and regulations and governance about it. Really there's a notice of what's going to be expected. Anybody in business prior to 2024, I think we have, like, a year before we have to, I think they have a year to kind of figure this out, right? They sent this out to us and now they're trying to figure it out on their end, but you know, I, I'm, trust that the agency will keep us abreast and we as sole proprietors and independent business people and corporations will do our due diligence, as well. But that's all I know. I tried to get some additional training and information, but you know, that, that was it. And so, also, just so you all know, there is also unclaimed property reporting. I don't know if any of you do that, but I think we're all subject to do that annual report. I think as, you know, just, you know, that's, I mean. That's all I know. So, anybody else has any information, please, please weigh in. But…

A Stevenson: Randy?

Hauth: Yes, Art?

A Stevenson: I, I, I think it's very, very important, you know, that we do get on top of this, and we knew, know all our rights and responsibilities. And so, I would like to volunteer to do a little more research. Lot of crazy things going on in Oregon right now. There is no doubt about it. However, as you know, I have several contacts in the state legislature in the House and Senate. And so, I would like to. Please send me the information that, any of the information, or have Linda do it. And in this upcoming session, we could definitely meet and get to the bottom of it, but also, we most definitely want to make sure that we're in complete compliance. Cause there's a lot of crazy rules and laws anymore, you know, and, and, so, we definitely need to do that. So, I would like to volunteer, please have Linda, you know, send me some more information on it and, you know, we definitely need to discuss these things with our legislators so that we understand our rights and our responsibilities, so, that we conduct our businesses in accordance with the law, so.

Hauth: Yeah. I sure will, I sure will, Art and I accept your volunteerism. I appreciate that. You know, it kinda looks to me like the state has the cart in front of the horse. They know what they're wanting to do and so they threw it out there, but they don't really have it designed yet properly, so I think that's another reason that they kind of gave the year almost grace period or whatever it would be identified as but… If there's nobody else, we’ll go ahead and move on. Alright, Carole, what do we have next?

Webber: Locations return to agency from facility number 2447, which makes around 200,000 a year in sales, and the need for those machines to be made a facility for bid to a VFM.

Hauth: Okay, without kind of, divulging or, breaking any kind of confidentiality, I mean, I don't think there's any issues for confident--, confidentiality right now because the facts of the matter are is that unit number that Carole identified is managed, and, by VFM Jerry Bird and there were machines from that, from that facility that the agency, as I understand, the agency took back or accepted return of and so the particulars behind it are, you know, not mine to discuss, but the facts of the matter are is that it sounds to me like it's about $200,000 in gross sales that, that facility relinquished back to the agency and so I think that certainly warrants discussion about how do we make that a benefit to the blind vendors, right, as intended in the state's statute and Code of Federal Regulations, right? These monies are supposed to benefit the vendors. And so, I think we, you know, we need to have this discussion and figure out what are we going to do? And again, Ron, I know you're, you know, you're new, but… And what do you know about this, if anything? And if not, please find out about, about this and you know...

Stewart: Yeah, that's what I was saying. I do know a little bit about it. I would like to educate myself some more, but I totally agree with you that, that we could continue a conversation about this. If you just allow me to look into it more and, and, and educate myself. And, but, but I agree with you totally.

A Stevenson: Chair Hauth?

Hauth: I, I, think that's only, that's only, that’s only fair to grant that allowance, certainly understand that, Art, go ahead.

A Stevenson: Yeah, and, and I, being the compliance chair, have brought this subject up many times. That all this money that the agency is collecting and putting in set-aside is actually a violation of the law. Number one, okay, the Elected Committee is supposed to be consulted and active participation, anything to do with set-aside, okay, and we were never consulted, there was never a vote on, hey, you can put all this money into set-aside and, and therefore it was a violation of the law. And as you know, Randy, we made a couple of motions that this spending money be spent appropriately, and we actually tried to assign some of it to blind licensed managers. And we were sometimes successful, sometimes not successful, but also, you know, the state statute says, okay, that the revenues, you know, that come in from vending is supposed to be blind licensed manager money, given to the blind licensed managers. I will remind you that we made a motion on how that money should be spent, several times. One, one thing, one of the motions we made was that all of that vending machine income be distributed equally amongst the managers. And of course, that was rejected. But to make a long story short, this money is being spent inappropriately and it, and it needs to stop. And I look forward to working with Ron and I know you do too, Randy. And finally getting compliance concerning all this money that is supposed to, according to state statutes, belong to the blind licensed managers and then they pay set-aside mon-- set-aside on, on, you know, the net profits and stuff. So, I'll just leave it at that and Ron, I look forward to working with you, being the compliance chair and also the vending facility development committee, and finally resolving the vending, the vending machine income situation. Okay, thanks, Randy, I'm going back on mute. Bye bye.

Stewart: Thank you so much, Arthur. Arthur, I have one request. What, could you please send me those, the statutes that you had mentioned? I, I would just like to educate myself on that as well so I can be up to speed so we can get this conversation started.

A Stevenson: Hey, Ron, I would be glad to have a meeting with you. I have super problems with negotiating the website. And so, we'll get together on the phone. And I'll, I’ll tell you where it's at and stuff. But, you know, at this point in time, until our website gets fully accessible for me, which it should be, and I've been working on it, then I could, I could actually do that. But right at this point in time, I cannot. Okay?

Stewart: That's fine. Thank you. Thank you. I appreciate that.

A Stevenson: Okay, you bet, my friend.

Hauth: Yeah, just, just real quick, real quick before we move on. It's my understanding also that the vendor of that facility, upon relinquishment of that also identified that for, just for the record, that, that was that manager's desire that these vending returned to the agency go to a blind vendor, as intended in 346.520. The priority does not belong to the agency, the priority belongs to the blind. I can tell you across the land, there are states, you know, in way or another, that somehow find a way to use that money that comes in and build it into their budget to pay for additional staff or however that works. But again, if you look through the Code of Federal Regulations and you look through the Oregon Revised Statute, the priority is for a person who is blind, not for an agency who governs the blind and also, you know, regardless of historically how the agency has gone through the legislators and said, oh no, well we want to build this into our budget, these other funds that are coming in and legislators, you know, somehow…

Miranda: Hello?

Webber: We lost him again.

Bird: Hey, this, this is Jerry.

Miranda: Go ahead, Jerry.

Bird: Waiting for Randy to get back. I just want to explain that a little bit. I don't want to get too deep and the reason I returned this money, which we all need is money, was actually because of the 50-machine mandate issue. And...

Hauth: Anyways, anyway, guys, I am back, I apologize for that. So. I have to stand on the other leg.

Miranda: Chairman Hauth, Chairman Hauth, Jerry Bird wants to explain a little bit about why he turned that back in.

Hauth: Sure, Jerry. Sure.

Bird: Thanks. Like I said, it wasn't that I'm just kindhearted and wanted to give you guys a piece of my income. Although, you know, I like y'all, but not that much. No. But anyway, it stems from the 50-machine mandate issue. And first, if I didn't do my 50 machines, I'd lose my license. Even though I was in compliance with the 30-hour work week. They said they don't think I really was because of when I had my pacemaker in and other stuff. I, I, I shouldn't have been able to claim them hours. I guess I should have been out there working even when I was in the hospital bed. But anyway, the issue is, is I claim an ADA. A case claim because of my heart condition as a secondary disability and my heart doctor sent, gave me, sent some recommendations and that I can't lift over 20 pounds, bend up or bend down with, with it and there's a lot of stress doing other types of stuff on my heart. I want you to know a lot of it, my stress, and I blame a lot of my stress on OCB. But, so we tried to come to some agreements on, on, they give me some options. And the option I wanted to take was, was that I would continue with the, the state hospital and the Santiam prison. But they wanted, Eric put in there, or the attorney general, that I have to, have to be with when, they go to fill my machines, when Canteen fills my machines, they want me on site and follow Canteen's guy around each machine and make sure he's filling them. You know? So, I couldn't believe that. I mean, that's the stupidest thing I ever heard. The follow him around, in fact Canteen, they didn't, you know, that's kind of, who wants a blind guy stumbling around while you're trying to do your work? But, and it's a, you know, risk, insurance risk. Anyway, it ended up, had a lawsuit filed on it. I had obtained my own attorney because you know they, they got the law changed to where you don't get no attorney fees not even in taking ‘em to court, if, even if you win. One of their ways to tell you, you can't do nothing about it because you can't afford it. Anyway, it ended up going on and on. And, and I, the only way I told him that I would, I would, I would give him back all the machines I had on full, full service except for the state hospital and Santiam. And I would fill like these 25 other machines myself. Rest areas, all of them and different ones. Well, they kind of refused that and said they’d do it as long as I give them back the state hospital, along with them. And I kinda wished I wouldn't have, but I agreed to that. So, just so you know, that's how they come back, that they wanted the income to come back to them instead of me, which I, like, I've been in program 36, 8 years. Or [inaudible] room. But anyway, so that's kind of where I am. I'm close to retirement. But I kind of was hoping to go out under my terms. But anyway. Just wanted to explain that to you, that that's, that's the gist of it, you know, and how it had ended up and I did tell I'm in a letter when I agreed that I wanted that income to go to the other blind vendors. Not basically for it to go to them and they keep it. It’s, you know, and anyway, so. That's where I'm at. And, and thank you for the time.

Hauth: Yeah, thank you, Jerry, thanks for sharing.

Miranda: Thank you, Jerry.

Hauth: So, yeah, so Ron, Ron had offered to look into this a little more and so obviously, we're going to circle back to this and also ask for some documents and information and you know, Art, I know you're going to speak with Ron all the, also try and provide some information to help and support what the program’s intent is. So, what do we have, what do we have next?

Webber: Complete update on Camp Rilea, including set-aside monies spent so far.

Brown: Mr. Chair?

Hauth: Okay I know. Yes, yes, Char?

Brown: This is, this is Celyn, actually.

Hauth: Or Celyn.

Brown: Finally figured out how to unmute my phone so, I am here in the meeting.

Hauth: Well, thank you for joining, Celyn.

Brown: I just went, I've been here since the beginning.

Hauth: Hey, well, so, Celyn, what I can tell you is, I'm glad you didn't decide to move to, down by Camp Rilea, that would have been a bad mistake. Anyway…

Brown: Yeah.

Hauth: I know, I know you weren't ready to move, but you had interest in it. I know that.

Brown: Oh, my goodness, I was there. Yeah.

Hauth: Anyway. Yeah, so, hopefully, Robert Levick [sic] didn't move down there. I'm Not sure. Maybe he's down there on the crab boat, or something right now. But anyway, so, you know, I, I can just say for the record, there's a lot of frustration around this. I think the frustration is about the Elected Committee not being informed and brought into the loop. I mean, obviously, we were brought into the loop and consulted when this opportunity came up, but I'm sure, you know, from what I've heard, there was a ton of time that was spent, staff time, that was spent down there. I don't know what kind of set-aside monies were spent down there, but then it looks to me like the Army National Guard decided to take another direction. And, so we'd like as cordially as we can, to have discussion about why we weren't informed, why the committee wasn't brought into this, and also, you know, what, what kind of efforts and monies were spent down in that facility and, you know, where do we go from here? Is that like just, okay, well, you don't qualify so… Now that you guys, now that we told you qualified and you spent all this money and time and effort, now we tell you you don't, so, you know, pack your bags and go on down the road, so… Whatever, whatever Michael, whatever Ron, you can share with the committee that addresses some of those things I brought, I'm sure we'd be of interest. I know Lewanda was very upset. I know Carole was very upset. I'm pretty sure Char was concerned, and I was, as well, as the other managers that… So, with that said, the floor is the agency's for now.

Wolff: Yeah, Randy, this is Michael. You know, throughout that process, I had felt like it was Robert's story to tell, and I was trying to be sensitive to Robert. And that was, that was sort of my perspective in it and again, you know, the, that was just sort of where I was coming from. So, you know, I, I felt bad for Robert. I was frustrated with the response from OMD. And yeah, that was, that was where I was coming from. So, if that explains at least part of that process, I hope that, I hope you understand that.

Hauth: Yeah.

A Stevenson: Randy?

Hauth: I appreciate… Hold on, Art. I appreciate you sharing that. I guess from our perspective, when something, you know, we were brought in on the front end and when something drastically changes like that, and you know, it would have been in good faith, it would have been nice to understand that. And I know, you know, you don't want to breach confidentiality in that. However, I think it was well warranted to have conversation around that, but I do appreciate you sharing that. I don't know if you can share or anybody else can share like, you know, were there set-aside monies spent on that? And if so, does anybody know, you know, what the amount was or where do we go from here? But those are the things that you can mull over if you would please why I opened the floor to Mr. Art who is asked for the floor.

Stewart: Sure.

A Stevenson: Thanks, Randy. Yeah. Let me tell you, I've been involved in this Camp Rilea thing ever since the bid came out. To our surprise, we had no knowledge of anything that was going on, which is definitely a violation of the law, okay, it had nothing to do with confidentiality. The law clearly states that the Elected Committee shall actively participate in major administrative program, policy, and development decision making. We did not want any confidential information at all and to say, oh, I can't talk about it, because of confidentiality, okay, is absolutely false. And Ron, I like you a lot, man. I really do, and I am very, very, very optimistic that the violations of the law are going to cease. And, and I know, I know you feel the same way. Because you were very open to our conversation about the commissary program and everything else. But, but the law specifically states the role of the Elected Committee and when you're making a major administrative decision of developing anything like Camp Rilea, we should be giving input. And I'll tell you right now, I asked the question of Michael. A very simple question. It was not confidential information. I just asked, have you had any discussions with Camp Rilea on the military dining? The military dining, and he refused to answer which is also a violation of the law, okay?

Hauth: Hey, Arthur?

A Stevenson: Because we're supposed to know what's going on. Anyways, I, I, I just wanted to put that on the record. Okay, because quite frankly, I'm getting tired of the Elected Committee being treated like second-class citizens, and we are not respected and entitled to what clearly is stated in the law. Okay, Randy, I'm done. Bye.

Garcia: I think we lost him.

Miranda: Chairman Hauth? Arthur?

Jackson: Yeah, they're both gone. Gone with the wind.

Bird: Maybe we should put out an APB.

Jackson: I wanted him to be quiet a little while ago, but not to leave the room. Not to leave.

Miranda: Do we still have the agency with us?

Jackson: I was just wondering if Art ever thought about the military people just changed their mind and it wasn't even up to, you know, the Commission? It could have been someone else.

Miranda: That is what happened.

Jackson: Yeah, it did seem like Art was kind of barking a lot.

Brown: Well, I wanted to let everyone know that I am on the call now. I've been here since the beginning; my phone would not unmute and then it finally… I figured out how to, I had to click some okay button or whatever. So.

Garcia: I had to do that too. It was something. Some question. There was some little thing on there that I had to agree to and just say okay, yeah, but once you get past that, it's fine.

Brown: Well, and I texted you, Trevor, and said, I can’t get, I can't unmute, so let him know I'm here, but I was able to figure it out, so, I'm glad I figured it out.

Garcia: Sorry.

Brown: The thing is that I had a Zoom call the other day and that same okay button was there and I was able to talk no problem without clicking anything.

A Stevenson: Is Randy back?

Hauth: I am back.

Brown: Not here.

A Stevenson: Okay, I'm back, I'm back, too. Got kicked off by this stupid line and evidently Randy did too. Okay, Randy, you can go on.

Hauth: Okay, thank you. Hey, so, I guess up, what one thing I do want to say is that, you know, I mean, obviously, laws are important. Don't get me wrong, rules are important. But at the end of the day, it's going to come down to working together in good faith, trying to understand and navigate, right? Everybody has a different perspective or a different take on, you know, their needs and maybe the rules and the regulations and the laws. Obviously, we've seen it for a number of years. You know, the agency maybe sometimes takes one position, and we take a different position, but we're going to need for progress, to find a way to work together. So, I'm hoping that that can happen. So, you know, I anyway, so I did, does anybody, I know we're waiting for I think the third quarter financials, and I mean, the agency changes accountants like gosh, a baby does a diaper, excuse my language, but man, there's been more accountants and CFOs there and come and gone then I can count on at least one hand, but, and I know that when Eric left and Michael came in, really wasn't necessarily fair to, you know, put everything on Michael, while he was just a placeholder in that position, but that being said, I would like to know and the committee deserves to know, what's going on with the financials? Cause it really wasn't the BEP director that did the financials anyway. It was the accounting department as I understand so, Michael, or I'm sorry, Ron, I don't know if you've had a chance to look into, I think it's the, it’s the third quarter? Yeah, I think the third quarter.

Stewart: Third quarter financials and I'll get together with, with accounting and see what's going on there. And I'll get back to you.

Hauth: Okay, well I appreciate that. Thank you. Thank you very much. So. Okay. And does anybody know, Michael, you might be better at knowing this or not, did. Were there any like expenditures in Camp Rilea, I mean, was there equipment purchased or was there? Other than staff, other than staff time, you know, going back and forth?

Wolff: I don't, Randy, I don't think so. We can double check, but I don't think any purchases were made in that process. I don't believe. I'd have to have Ron double check, but. We can go back and confirm that.

Hauth: Okay, yeah, okay, yeah, well, and I think when the quarterlies come out, maybe, you know, we'll be able to kind of, I was just, wanted to make sure the agency, you know, didn't end up buying a $10,000, you know, freezer, refrigerator, before we got kicked out. So, anyway, okay, so, what else do we have next on the agenda?

Webber: The one before the third quarter financials is RSA 15 report.

Hauth: Okay, well Ron did send that RSA 15 report. I don't know if anybody has looked at that or not, but I do appreciate that. You know, the RSA 15, as most of you know, is required to be submitted by December 31st to RSA, not that every state across the land does it, and not that RSA really does anything about it, but the RSA 15 captures a pretty good overview of how many vendors there are in the program, what the sales are, how many opportunities were accepted or turned away. And so, I know next on the, on the radar is a legislative report that the agency creates and sends to the legislators. So, we'll be look forward, we'll be looking forward to seeing that as well. I know Ron said he'll be sending it ASAP. So. Is that, is that in the next couple of days, Ron, do you know, or I mean?

Stewart: Yes, definitely. I may have that, I may have that out today, but if not, it'll be out tomorrow for sure.

Hauth: Sure. Okay, sounds good. Thank you. Okay, what do we have next?

Webber: Denouncement of self-service initiative.

Hauth: Sure, well, so. You know, I mean, this self-service initiative debacle, I'll be kind and I'll just call it simply a debacle, has been a bone of contention at these meetings for a number of years, right? I think in 2019 before COVID, the whole initiative started if you guys remember, the agency touted how managers were basically getting fleeced by our subcontractors, like we didn't know enough. We didn't know how to manage our subcontractors and we didn't know enough about business on what was going to be the best practice. So, they decided for us to give us, give the vendors, vending facility managers, 50 machines and really give them all the support they needed and really, you know, help them be better businesspeople. Well. So, 2019 that all came in, millions of dollars were spent federal and state. And so, I can tell you, since then, there's been a number of things that I believe awards denouncing this again. I know there's been motions passed and denied by the agency, and there's been, like you heard Jerry. There's been threats, you know, by the agency of Jerry losing his facility, well, I, just give us back some machines and you'll be fine. I mean, how crazy is that, right? So, I can tell you, Lin Jaynes will testify that she was bullied, she was told, and I was on a meeting with her. She was told to get out there and start self-servicing even though she was only bringing in $400 a month and she asked so, how am I supposed to do that? How am I supposed to hire somebody? How am I supposed to go out and make any kind of profit? Oh, just, you know, you'll do it. Don't worry about it. Well, once, once Lin ended up leaving the program because she identified, her words, not mine, that she was bullied out of it because she was pushed into the self-service, then the agency comes full circle and says, well, you know, that might be right, that facility might not be warranted, but what I can tell you is… Gordon Smith left the program because of the self-service initiative. He feared being pushed out to try and do the 50 machines, either by himself or by an employee. I can tell you that Sean Bever left the program for the same reason. Those are facts, not fiction. I can tell you that Steve Gordon also was forced to retire because of the same situation. Kenny Gerlitz, who's long passed, didn't live long enough to end up, luckily for him, I guess, didn't live long enough to actually end up facing all that. But what I can tell you is when the agency misrepresented that the managers are going to increase their profits and make 40%, that was a misnomer, that was not accurate information. The agency has created hardships upon managers who are suffering physical impairments. Bottom line, managers don't drive, right? Blind managers here in Oregon don't drive. And so, if you're getting set up to go do 50 machines out of your 200 vending machines and they're saying you need to be responsible for that or you need to hire somebody, that's, that's a loser. That's a loser because it just doesn't work that way. Blind people don't drive, so you, first off the bat, you have to hire a driver. Not everybody has a son, daughter, spouse. And that actually should never ever be a requirement that or an expectation that the agency just expects, well, your, have your, have your husband or your wife do it. But you know, all in all, the data shows that anybody who has gone into self-servicing as a mandate other than a choice, right? Business should be about choice. A blind person needs to understand their business and determine their business and what's going to be more profitable, right? So, and actually just because you're blind doesn't mean you don't know how to do that. So, we don't need somebody telling us how to do it, especially when that puts a financial hardship on people. So, what I can, what can, I can tell you, is the data shows, even though I've been the only one forced out in the last two years through discipline and threats of my license, two years. I don't know how important this is to the agency, but two years, so anyway, but when I look through the data, I can tell you that it's a loser. It's a not a profitable situation to be forced into this self-service initiative. Puts hardships on people and also let's talk about the agency. How much money do you anticipate the agency is spending on staff to support this, on repairs on equipment, on, you know the whole bailiwick? So, I think my most important, my most concern, is that we've lost managers based on this initiative and why? I mean, what is the answer here? Why is the agency so dead fast set on this? Why isn't the agency more thoughtful and intelligent in saying, guys, look it, let's all work together and figure out how we can provide a great image, get over the contention, make you guys more money, make us more money, you know, wouldn't you think somebody would be smart enough to figure that out instead of just head down and rear end up and let's go, go, go even though it's a broken system? So, with all that said, I did want to make a motion just to denounce the continued implementation of this self-service initiative.

A Stevenson: I second that motion! And, but, and as soon as we take a vote, Randy, I want to make a comment.

Hauth: Second. Okay, and now you're open for discussion.

Webber: Mr. Chair?

A Stevenson: Okay. No, well, I’m...

Hauth: Yes, yes?

A Stevenson: I’m, I'm ready.

Hauth: Carole?

Webber: I just wanted to kind of make a comment before we voted. I have never been one that was for the mandate as it was called to begin with, now it's an initiative of 50 machines for all the VFMs and because, my reason why is because no size fits all. We had managers that had other needs and, you know, they're not really looked at. So, I am in agreement really, that it should be denounced, because I think it's done some of our managers some harm. That's all I have to say.

Hauth: Thank you, Carole. Art, thank you yie--, Art, thank you for yielding the floor to the lady, Carole. Thank you very much. Go ahead, Art.

A Stevenson: I'm always a gentleman, Randy. I'm always a gentleman. Okay.

I want to say, okay. The agency at this point in time can't even do an efficient and effective job of, of repairing and handling problems on existing facilities, let alone taking on the responsibility of this 50-machine mandate and I'm going to give you a perfect example of this. Derrick has the Manzanita rest areas down in Grants Pass, which in all actuality, he is self-servicing. And he's looking forward to receiving new machines there with credit card capabilities. However, I informed Mr. Wolff of a problem that was at that rest area that people were unplugging Derrick's machines on a regular basis, and he was losing money. And you know what, Randy, that was at least a month ago. I talked again to Mr. Lane about it and there should be somebody down there tomorrow, taking care of that that situation, because not only is the blind licensed manager losing money, the program’s losing money. And when there is a repair problem that needs to be taken care of, it needs to be taken care of immediately. So, how in the heck is the agency going to take on added responsibility from this mandate when they can't even, they can't even take care of problems that exist now in a timely manner. It's disgraceful. And it's hurtful and it's harmful and it really, I mean I've had this problem on several occasions concerning repairs on, on my machines. And you know, I lose lots of money. And you're absolutely right, Randy, that it should be a blind licensed manager’s decision as a small businessperson on how to run their facility in the most efficient and effective way that's going to maximize the profitability of their facility. And I service some of my machines, okay, and, and I subcontract some like the state prison. And let me tell you, at times it's very difficult to conduct my business because the agency is not doing their job. Now, I will say, and thank you, Mr. Stewart, Stewart, if you're responsible for this. We don't have to go through the ridiculous process that we were going to on repairs. I have been informed, we can now contact Mr. Lane and he's authorized to do repairs up to $5,000, which is a good thing. And I'm, I’m cautiously optimistic that we are now going to be, have a better process. Of course, Randy, you and I both know that we rejected the agency's repair process wholeheartedly because it was really detrimental to the manager because it took days, sometimes even a couple weeks to get a repair done. But I'm happy to report that this week I had a problem, and it was repaired in two days where normally it took up to two or three weeks. So, I am cautiously optimistic. You're absolutely right, Randy, our facilities... I mean, I've been trained and educated. I know what's best for my business and that's what the agency should respect because this program is for blind people, and we're not stupid. We know what is going to maximize our vocational potential and our bottom line. And that should be respected. It definitely should be respected. So, Randy, did you make a motion on this or are we just discussing?

Miranda: Yep.

A Stevenson: Because… But vote yes on this, I am going to vote yes, because it's about dang time that the agency, and this is no amusement tour…

Hauth: Yeah, yeah, Art.

A Stevenson: Let's vote.

D Stevenson: I'd like to speak.

Hauth: Yeah, Art.

Miranda: Chairman Hauth, I…

Hauth: So, go ahead, Derrick. Lewanda, go ahead, and then Derrick.

Miranda: Okay. I just want to say that, you know, originally, I wanted to fill my own machines. And I'm glad that I did. And the machines that I had were old dinosaurs, I couldn't get parts for them anymore. So, you know, I was happy to get new machines that worked and telemetry where I could actually, you know, move into the, the times. And, so anyway, it works for me over here. But it is not, Carole said it's not a one size fits all. I have seen a lot of the, my fellow managers hurt from, so, I don't think it should be a 50-machine initiative.

Hauth: Thank you. Derrick?

Miranda: Derrick?

D Stevenson: Sorry, I was on mute. You hear me now?

Miranda: Yeah.

A Stevenson: Yep!

D Stevenson: I just wanted to say that the 50-machine mandate definitely is not a positive thing for me or a positive thing for set-aside or, or any of that. And I, I would I could say I was being forced to do it but I and I feel threatened, but they said they didn't really threaten me. That that there'd be consequences if I didn't. And that right there is sort of, gave me the feeling that if I didn't do my operating agreement the way they wanted to, that there would be consequences and that would be my locations taken away from me, the way I understood it. And that's, to me it's completely wrong. It's, it adds all kinds of stress that I don't need at 66 years old. So.

A Stevenson: Amen.

Hauth: Thank you, thank you everybody. I mean, hey, think about this, guys, wouldn't it, wouldn't people be flocking and running to this opportunity if it were a good thing? I mean, wouldn't people be saying, I want in, give it to me, you know, if they were gonna make more money and if it wasn't the hardship and you know, it just doesn't work that way. I'm sorry. You can't administer when you don't have all the facts, you can't administer properly when you don't have all the facts. So anyway, we've had enough discussion. We're going to move on with the denouncement vote, to denounce the...

D Stevenson: I'd just like...

Hauth: Self-service initiative. Go ahead, Derrick.

D Stevenson: Yeah, I lost it. Go ahead.

Hauth: Okay, sorry, take the vote. Art?

A Stevenson: Absolutely yes.

Hauth: Derrick?

D Stevenson: Yea.

Hauth: Lewanda? Lewanda? Might be on mute.

Miranda: Yes.

Hauth: Carole? Oh, there she is. Carole?

Webber: Yes. Yes.

Hauth: Steve Jackson?

Jackson: Yes.

Hauth: And I'll vote yes, as well, so that motion passes. Thank you everyone for sharing your heartfelt impacts and concerns. What do we have next, Carole?

Webber: We have answers to the following questions, and the first one is VFMs’ operating agreements. Why they are not created uniformly?

Hauth: Sure. Michael, you might be best to ask of this or, you know, however you want me to do this. But, or however you want us to do this, but it's my understanding that, like, operating agreements are all over the board as far as timelines. Like some are ending in 2024, some are ending in 2023. So, is that true and if so, can you give me the reasoning behind that?

Wolff: I guess. Is the question the length of time of an operating agreement? Or?

Hauth: Hello?

Stewart: Hello, can you hear us?

Hauth: Yes, yes, we can.

A Stevenson: We hear you.

Wolff: So, is the question, is there a variation in the length of an operating agreement?

Hauth: Yes. The question is, I mean, it's known to me that there are, Ron, so, why is that? You know, first of all, I guess, you know, are there and if so, why? Because that's never been the case in the past.

Stewart: Okay, you know… I'm writing this down right now so I can find out for you, Randy, okay?

Hauth: You know, that would be, that would be fine. I don't know if Michael's there and he can share. Maybe he knows, maybe he doesn't. I don't know, but, you know, I'll… So, just so you know, Ron. I submitted those, I submitted those questions probably, when was the first time we submitted those questions, Lewanda?

Miranda: The first time?

Hauth: Yeah.

Miranda: I don't know.

Hauth: I mean, it's been a while, right?

Miranda: Yeah, it's been, you know, over a month ago.

Hauth: Yeah. So, I guess, Ron, just so you know, these questions, these questions for our understanding were asked… And again, I mean, I get where, I get where Michael was just a placeholder and he was doing two jobs and you know, I appreciate it, Michael, in that position. Some of the things though that came through that directorship we have questions with. And you know, so you have the questions now. I'm sure the AG will want to respond to those because that's how it unfortunately works. But we did want to know why, you know, why and how can the agency threaten Derrick that they're going to remove some of his vending without due process. You know, so if you look down that list, if you'll make a commitment as soon as you can, to get us some answers to those so we can understand that, that would be appreciated.

Stewart: Yeah, of course. And, well, specifically, it's just variations in lengths of the operating agreements, or did you have other questions that… If you just want to email?

Hauth: No, there’s, there's some other. Yeah, there's other questions, Ron. I believe, Lewanda, did you put those on the agenda?

Miranda: Yes.

Stewart: Oh, I see.

Hauth: So, Ron. Yeah.

Stewart: Gotcha. Yeah, I see these questions. Yes, I, I will get you a prompt answer for all these questions.

Hauth: Yeah, thank you, thank you very much, Ron.

A Stevenson: Randy? Randy?

Hauth: Yeah, Art, go ahead. Go ahead, Art.

A Stevenson: Okay. I'm going to put this on the record because it needs to be put on the record, so Ron hears this. Because I really want to work with him. I want to cooperate with the agency. I want this program to be like other programs throughout the country because I know how really successful programs work, which is very, very important. And I think you're a guy, Ron, that, that is going to, you know, try to solve problems instead of create problems. And I can tell you for a fact, okay, the Elected Committee voted unanimously to reject the current rules and regulations, because they were forced down our throat. And there are problems in it, not your fault. But we've made recommendations, the Elected Committee has, that we really need, okay. Rules and regulations that are, are a benefit to the blind licensed managers and also get, you know, makes this program run smoothly. And so, if, if, okay, we work together and we made this recommend, we made this motion. It passed unanimously before, if you want to, you know, create a positive relationship, you will work with the Elected Committee on revising the rules, so that the Elected Committee could unanimously vote to accept them because it's a big problem. And we need to, we need to have rules and regulations and there are states across the country that have good rules and regulations and there isn't controversy. The Elected Committee and the agency work well together. Not that there isn't going to be, you know, a little contention here and a little contention there, because there always is. However, things will run more smoothly, okay, if our rules are, like the state statute says, they ensure the proper and satisfactory operation of a vending facility and for the benefit of the blind licensed managers. This operating agreement is also something that we wanted to be not a two-year thing. We wanted it to be in perpetuity as long as, for, the particular vending facility that is, that is there, or any vending facility. And trust me, trust me in this. If we develop rules that the Elected Committee could vote unanimously to accept, we're not going to have as many problems as this program has had for years and years and years. Okay, Randy, I'm, you know, I'm done with that but the simple fact of the matter is, an operating agreement between a blind licensed manager and the agency should not have a timeline on it if the manager and the agency agree on doing, doing, you know, putting something in there that is going to enhance the operation of that facility, that's fantastic. But an operating agreement should be in perpetuity with a blind licensed manager. There shouldn't be, you know, any, as long as the manager is there, it should be in perpetuity. And, and you know, because then things happen, like the agency says, oh, hey, we're going to make you do this and this and this, even if it is a violation of the law.

D Stevenson: Okay.

A Stevenson: Cause of it. So, anyways, I'm done with that, Randy, but I had to say that because operating agreements...

D Stevenson: This is Derrick.

Hauth: Derrick, go ahead. Thank you, Art. Derrick, go ahead.

D Stevenson: Yeah, I think one thing that we need to really push is almost all the, the states that really work together, active participation is key to a successful program. Right now, we don't have any active participation, and they make it into a joke and sit back behind the scenes and laugh because, because of it. But we, until we get to work, to work and act together, nothing's going to change. Sorry.

Hauth: Yeah, I would, I would agree with you.

A Stevenson: Amen.

Hauth: If you look at the amount of, if you look at the amount of AG’s costs that are spent on this small program, then you could conclude that it's not being administered properly. Now listen, I'll be the first to say we're not always right. But the agency is not always right either. So, let's find that common ground. Let's find what's going to make us all look good and not just a dogmatic leadership. If we can find a way to do that, that'd be, that'd be wonderful. So, and to the, to the operating agreements, every state that I know of across the land has indefinite operating agreements, right? And so, when we were going through the rules, the RSA asked the agency, well why do you want to limit those to two years? Is it to kind of use them as a tool against managers? Oh no, no, we just want to help these people make sure that they get all their documents in. Oh, come on. What have they done, right? So, anyway, you know, Art, that's, that's, that's a nice, that's a nice request. I think that's, in my mind, that's a little bit down the line. You know, let's, let's get together and find a way to start working together and tackling the boots on the ground kind of thing and, and go from there. But that's just my thought. So, what do we have, what do we have next?

Webber: Are we continuing, Mr. Chair with the questions that we have on here or was Mr. Stewart sending [inaudible]...

Hauth: Ron is going to, yeah, Ron is going to, he's made a commitment that he's going to look into these and get back with us. And you know, nothing against you, Ron, but I'm sure that the, everything I've seen is the agency will have those answered by the assistant attorney general. The only thing I would ask you is if that occurs, just to make sure and kind of also consider where we're coming from, and you know, how to maybe, you know, going forward how to work through some of these bones of contention. So.

Stewart: Sure.

Hauth: And hopefully you can have, hopefully you can have some autonomy and hopefully you can have some input in that, as well, going forward. So, Carole, what do we, what do we have following the questions?

Webber: Well, I let one get past me here. So, that would be the only one left. It was script vending and where we stand currently.

Hauth: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. Hey, Michael, I can tell you, you were very diligent in trying to support this script vending and actually made some suggestions of like, this might not be enough, which comes to point is true because I just got another increase this year from Coke, and Pepsi is going to go up again like we all are. So, we've been losing money. I don't know why the agency hasn't taken more of initiative. Present company excluded, but hasn't taken more of an initiative to make this happen because the agreement was that the script was going to go up and it hasn't gone up and not only are blind vendors suffering, but the subcontractors are suffering as well. So, has there been anything decided or if there are any, been any discussions around this or what can you tell us?

Wolff: I think the last, we submitted, we submitted the increase request to DOC before the holidays, and they were going to get back to us after the holidays. So, I don't know. And again, I've not been, not been looking. Just given where I am now in my role. But I don't so, whether I don't think they'd respond yet, but I don't know for sure.

Stewart: They, they have not responded yet.

Hauth: Okay. And Ron?

A Stevenson: Hey, Randy?

Hauth: I'm not sure if you're familiar, hold on just a second, Art, I'll turn it over to you in just a second. Ron, I'm not sure if you're familiar with the script issue, but, you know, whatever you can do to help, I mean, if you need, if you want to talk about this offline or if you have a good comprehension of it, that's fine too. We just need to have the Department of Corrections support our need in increasing that price because people are, you know, come on, have, anybody been to a grocery store lately, you know? It's, it's still the fact of the matter, so.

Stewart: Yeah, yeah, as soon as they get back to me, I will, I'll let you know. So, we can take it from there.

Hauth: And if they don't get back to you, please reach out to them when, you know, I mean, maybe not on a daily basis, but...

Stewart: Sure.

Hauth: But anyway, Art, go ahead.

A Stevenson: Well, Ron, I, I, I, Ron, golly sakes, man, I’m really enjoying this meeting, let me, let me tell you. And, when, we get offline, I, you know, I do want to have a discussion with you on the best way to work with the prisons concerning that, obviously, there is kind of a conflict of interest. You know, they definitely want to get the cheapest price that they can for the script vending, and so, they're a little bit difficult to work with. However, we do know a way to put political pressure upon them. Obviously, and you don't know this, but we do have some champions in the state legislature, and it often times, takes the prison way too long, and they procrastinate. Uh oh, somebody's beating eggs. It is almost dinner time, but anyways, Ron, if you don't mind, we can work on diplomatically getting answers given back in a timely fashion. So, anyways, that's the comment I wanted to make, Randy. Thank you.

Bird: Randy?

Hauth: Yeah, thank you, everybody. Yes, Jerry, go ahead.

Bird: Yeah, [inaudible] on the script vending, I have a, a concern because that's the only bigger facility I have left. And I've looked into this, researched it many, many years. And first off, the inmates do not have preference over the blind. There is, they do have a law that if basically if they don't have the blind in there more or less, then they can kinda get a kick back. We have the rights on there and we are, we are given a kick back out of our family’s income. Not right. They're not acknowledging that the blind are blind and handicapped. They, and I don't know what you want to call the inmates, but there are people that are there that done stuff on their own, and what really gripes me is, like Randy said, I get it, increases every year, sometimes last year it might have been two times, where I'm up to close to a buck 50, my cost. Now, they say that... And then our contract, which we should look at and our rules, we are, we are to provide pricing in, we should price in a coordinates [sic] with the local venient [sic] stores. It says that. So, we've done that in the past with some, because sometimes in Portland they're a little different than say Salem or what, but they're all pretty close. And they also have to go to that grocery store, 7/11, buy the product and gas and that. So, my, my thing is, and they've always says, well, we're trying to... They want it cheap, well, why do inmates, they're criminals, get to have pop cheaper than Americans that are not? There's no one in my public that Oregon citizen that get pop that cheap. And I just can't believe that the Blind Commission turns and runs away. It's like, okay, well, we'll, we’ll let our vendors suffer and our, our subcontractors because we want to do a favor for the criminal? What they going to do when they get out and they go to a 7/11 and it's 2.50, three bucks and they gonna say hey, wait a minute I'm an ex-convict, I get it for a buck 75. They’ll be, don’t here! So, it just don't make sense. It seems like the blind is always being taken advantage of and put in the corner. And you take, take whatever you get and shut the heck up. So, I ask that they write a letter and explain to them, show them what the convenience store prices are. And we, we might be obligated to charge that, but I'll tell you, they're up to 2.50, some places $3.00. It probably going to go up because they just took an increase for everybody.

Miranda: 3:09, Jerry.

Bird: But once again, this, this prison the people have, have done this to us for years and years. Oh, we'll let you have a 25-cent increase. We'll let you have this and, and it’s never catches up to the economy. You know, cost of living, just gas, I mean just expenses.

Hauth: Hey, Jerry. Jerry, you've made your point.

Bird: Bet you those convicts get a break.

Hauth: You've made a great point.

Bird: So, thank you.

Hauth: Yep. Thank you, Jerry. We have like five minutes left. So, I'm not sure what we have left on the agenda or if we want to…

Webber: Oh, just well, you only have the chairman and director report. That's all that's left.

Hauth: Well, hey, perfect timing, so you know what, I've spoken enough. I don't know if Ron has, I mean I'd give the last five minutes to Ron to kind of give us an update. And you know, let us know what his, what his mission is, what his plan is, what his thoughts are, restraints on him, if not, you know, what, whatever you'd like to share, Ron, we're all ears.

Stewart: Sure. Yeah, you know, my mission is really to, well, right now, as you can probably tell, my, my mission is to do a lot of listening and learning, and gain some understanding and then of course, gain, gain knowledge and everything so that I can make good decisions. But my ultimate goal is to create relationships with, with, with all of the, all the managers, with everyone. And to move forward and kind of, kind of form one team moving towards the same goal, so that we can kind of get past some of the things that are slowing us down and, and achieve our goals, create new ones and achieve those. And so, at this point that's, that's, that’s really what I'm going to be working towards. I can, I can say that, you kind of touched on it before, I come from small business ownership, in the private sector. I'm a restaurant food service guy. I've been a chef for a long time. I owned a restaurant. So, I really, I'm hoping that, you know, I see things through your eyes, as small business owners. I know how tough it is. And, you know, my goal is, is as a businessman to, to, for everyone to make more money and to be working as a, a well-oiled machine together to, like I say, to, to move past issues and achieve our goals.

Hauth: Well, I appreciate that, Ron, you know, I've always believed in working smarter, not harder, and that includes the agency having a mindset to do that. It doesn't work so well for me, I usually work harder, not smarter, but you know… One of the things that, one of the things, you know, that really I was appalled at is during the interview process one of the questions that was asked by this agency, which just showed me how, in my opinion, how far behind the times they are. I think one of the questions was asked of you and the other two candidates, is you walk into a cafeteria and you are, let's say you're, you're told that there's dirty tables and dirty floors and I mean, it was all about, like, this whole regressive, oh, you can't do anything other than leave a dirty table or a dirty floor. I mean, how about if that was, you know, in trying to find out how a director was going to respond, how about saying you're informed that there is a problem at one of your facilities. How would you address that? Instead of dumbing it down to the incapabilities or the perceived… I think that's prejudice. You know, perceived mindset of how a blind person would do. So, I mean, it was just so appalling to me, just for the record. So, hopefully the agency can grow past that, and hope--, I don't think that's what you believe and that's certainly what not one, none of us believe, so hopefully we can get to the next generation of, look it, we're businesspeople here, you know? We're all different, but we're all businesspeople. And we need to find a way to work with the state and help support the state's needs and them do us, as well. So. Thanks, that's my comments as the, the chairperson. So. Anybody else before we adjourn the meeting? Well, not hearing anybody…

Garcia: Hey, this is Trevor. Just.

Hauth: Go ahead, Trevor.

Garcia: Yeah, and you guys are talking about food costs. I mean, cost of everything going up. I think one metric we kind of looked at last year, did a cost analysis in October and it wasn't for the full year, but even just up to that point, food costs have, have gone up by about 25,000. And obviously, I know I'm not the biggest operation in the state. But that's a significant increase. Certainly, definitely a wage. Someone's year, yearly wage, pretty close to. So, I mean, just kind of shows you what, how quickly things have gone up. But, now it's been a great meeting.

A Stevenson: Randy?

Hauth: Yeah, thank you very much.

Stewart: Thank you.

Hauth: I will tell you that we do, go ahead, Art.

A Stevenson: Yeah, I want to, I do want to make a comment. Ron, I wish you good luck, my friend. I am there for you at any time. I've been in the program since 1986. And I do know how to quote unquote make things better and create a positive thing. And I know, I know that's what you want to do just by the conversations we have. So, God bless you, my friend. Good luck to you. And use us. Use me, because I will bust my rear end to help you be successful in your goals. And accomplishing great things in this program because I do believe that you can do it. And we're supposed to be a team, so work with us and never hesitate to pick up the phone and make a phone call because the wealth of knowledge. And that knowledge will, I guarantee it, help you be a successful director of the Oregon Business Enterprise Program. Thanks, Randy, for giving me the floor. I'm ready for dinner, so let's get out of this meeting.

Stewart: Thank you, Arthur.

Hauth: Thanks everyone and we'll talk soon. Thanks for participating.

Brown: Thank you.

D Stevenson: I'd just like to say, thank you to Jerry Bird for coming, and, and sharing his stuff with us.

Hauth: And, and Skylar, thank you, Skylar and Trevor, thank you for joining. I think, Skylar, maybe this is your first meeting and Trevor, you haven't been around for a while at the meeting, so it's nice to hear you.

Van Rooy: My pleasure.

Webber: Night everyone.

Hauth: Let's adjourn.

Stewart: Goodnight, thank you.

Brown: Goodnight.

**Motions Passed**

1. **“…that BECC adopt past meeting minutes. (11/20/23)**

Proposed: A Stevenson. Seconded: Webber. Passed: Yes. Yeas: A Stevenson, D Stevenson, Webber, Jackson, Miranda, Hauth

1. **“…that** **BECC team with VendEngine and establish commissary program in Oregon**

Proposed: A Stevenson. Seconded: Miranda. Passed: Yes. Yeas: Miranda, Webber, Hauth, A Stevenson, D Stevenson, Jackson

1. **“…that BECC denounces self-service initiative**

Proposed: Hauth. Seconded: A Stevenson. Passed: Yes. Yeas: Hauth, Webber, Miranda, Jackson, A Stevenson, D Stevenson