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

**Thursday, October 26th, 2023**

**3:00 PM – 3:30 PM**

OREGON COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

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

• 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.
   1. Roll call.
2. ELECTIONS
   1. Salem 1- currently held by Art Stevenson. Nominee: Art Stevenson.
   2. Portland 1- currently held by Steve Jackson. Nominee: Steve Jackson.
   3. Outlying area- currently held by Carole Webber. Nominee: Carole Webber.

ADJOURNMENT

**Transcript**

Hauth: Alright, let's go ahead and start the meeting. And we will take roll, and then I'll turn that over to the agency to conduct their election. So, I know I'm here. I heard Lewanda, you are here, correct?

Miranda: Correct.

Hauth: Carole?

Webber: Yes.

Hauth: Steve Jackson?

Jackson: Yep, right here.

Hauth: Hey, Steve, okay, is there anybody else on the line?

Jackson: Just my alter ego.

Hauth: Okay. Okay, Kathy and Michael and nobody else, okay. Well, it looks like we at least have a quorum, and I know that this meeting was requested by Michael in compliance with what he found in the OARs. And I'll just say real quickly, when it pigeonholes an election to, like, a meeting, a specific meeting in October, probably something we should look at down the line because I believe it used to be like at the Fall In-Service. Just the same, this will work out. So, let's go ahead and go forward and Michael, the floor is yours.

Wolff: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm going to have Kathy read off the votes. And then we can go from there, I guess, to verify.

Hauth: Sure.

Ewing: Okay, we had six people total who vote, six people total who voted. For Salem One, Art Stevenson, five votes. For Portland One, Steve Jackson, five votes. For Outlying Areas, Carole Webber, six votes.

Wolff: So, I would take those votes to mean each election passed.

Ewing: Yes.

Wolff: Mr. Chair, is there anything I'm missing in that process. Just confirming?

Hauth: I know, you know, I don't think so, Michael. I think basically, you know, those were the only nominations they were, you know, nominated and I think it's just basically to do the election, maybe, you know, identify the, the votes and then I would just suggest if anybody else is on the line that wants to cast their vote they're welcome to do so, but you know, nobody's there so, I think it's just a procedural thing from the way I see it, so.

Wolff: And did everybody, any of the other committee members on the call today not vote? Okay. So yeah, it looks like all three elections pass.

Miranda: No, I think we all voted.

Wolff: Oh, sorry.

Miranda: Oh, I, I think we all voted.

Wolff: Okay.

Ewing: Okay, alright, so. Maybe I'll leave the meeting if you guys want to talk about some more things. Is that okay?

Webber: Yes, thank you, Kathy.

Wolff: Yeah, that sounds fine with me, Kathy.

Ewing: Okay, thank you.

Miranda: Thank you, Kathy.

Ewing: Thanks, everybody.

Wolff: I know there wasn't necessarily anything else on the agenda, but I wanted to check and see, Mr. Chair, if you had anything else that you wanted to discuss in the meeting today, and I had one item to just bring up, if that's possible?

Hauth: Sure, yeah, it sounds like, I think we're going to be scheduling a meeting in November to deal with, like, a few items that have been unresolved. I know one of the items is the Department of Corrections coupon pricing and then, you know, there were a few others, but we'll give you, we’ll duly notify you and, you know, try and schedule with you a time in November to hold a meeting. So.

Miranda: We usually have [sic] a meeting every third Thursday with Eric. If that works for you? Just continue on with that.

Wolff: Every third, every third Thursday of every month?

Miranda: Yeah, well, or yeah, and unless, unless we don't need it, but yeah. It's, it's got to be bimonthly anyway.

Hauth: Yeah, I would… Hey Lewanda, I would just suggest, and you're right, that's how we would do it, but I would just suggest right now with Michael being an intern [sic] and, you know, the directorship kind of being in flux, what, I mean, if that works for you, Michael, that's fine. We can, you know, get the agenda to you and see what agenda items you have. But if that doesn't work, you know, let us know, check your schedule and we can be flexible around that, I would suggest… So.

Wolff: Okay. So, the tentative date for the Thursday meeting would be the 16th?

Miranda: Is that the third Thursday?

Wolff: Yeah. That's the Thursday before Thanksgiving. Yeah. Okay.

Miranda: Is that enough time, Chairman Hauth?

Hauth: You know, I think so, where we at right now? What, oh yeah, that'd be November 16th?

Miranda: Yeah.

Wolff: Yep.

Hauth: And that's a Thursday. Okay. Yeah, you know what? Let me get back with you on that. I’ll have to check my schedule. I know that there's some kind of hearing that I might be busy with, or I'll have to get back, I can't answer that right this second. I'm sorry. So.

Miranda: Okay, or we could do it on the 30th, that's the week after Thanksgiving, but that's pushing it really close to our Fall In-Service, but. Anyway.

Wolff: Yeah, two days, would that be? Meeting on the 30th and then the 2nd right? So, it'd be a Thursday and a Saturday.

Miranda: Yeah.

Wolff: Yeah.

Miranda: Yeah. Very close, but.

Hauth: Well, the only other thing I would say is we don't have a, there's not a meeting scheduled during the In-Service is there?

Miranda: No.

Webber: No.

Hauth: Yeah, so, I mean, you know, getting the business done of the Elected Committee. I mean, if we can do it on the 30th, I don't see any problem with doing it if it works in Mike’s, Michael's schedule, so. I mean, whatever you guys decide, I just have to look at my schedule. So.

Wolff: Yeah, let me know. Let me know if the 16th works. If not, I think the 30th would be an option as well.

Hauth: Sounds good. Okay, and what do you have? I don't know if anybody else has anything that they just want to, you know, mention or before Michael shares with us one, one matter he had one to talk to. Okay, well hearing none, Michael, the floor is yours.

Wolff: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, I know I've only been in the interim role for a little while, but in a couple of the meetings, you know, proposals had been made to assign additional vending to VFMs and I know that, you know, a lot of or some VFMs, you know, especially ones who are responsible for cafes or, you know, that operate inside buildings are still dealing with the fallout from people not coming back to buildings and just the, the empty building component that we're dealing with here and that is continuing well past the pandemic. And so, I'm trying just to figure out what options might be available to us, and one, one idea I had was if we could, if the BECC could work on what they would imagine is a livable or reasonable annual gross income that we could look at. If everyone is meeting that, if people are not, and then look at ways to help make VFMs whole if they need to get to what is decided as a sort of livable, annual gross income, and I know there's a lot of data out there about regional and, you know, you know, the, what a livable or reasonable income is in Southern Oregon versus Portland versus other parts of the states and so… But I know that unassigned vending is a, is a thing. And if we have the ability to help, start to make some VFMs whole that maybe aren't whole by, you know, a financial definition that we could come up with, I think that would be a great first step in supporting the VFMs. And I don't know, I don't know how complicated of an ask that is, but I figured I'd at least start with the ask.

Hauth: Well, hey, Michael, I'd just like to say, that's, you know, that's nice to hear, at least a willingness to try and figure it out and I know that, you know, previously I know that Lewanda and Carole were on a [sic] assignment committee or I forget exactly the terminology of the committee but unassigned vending committee and I know that they left and I'd have to look at the status of that right now, but, I think having discussion. I know it's great that you're coming up with the idea, but obviously, we need to sit down at the table and kind of brainstorm back and forth. And I know you just made that offer and again, I'm not trying to take away from that. That's wonderful. That's, that's music to my ears and our ears. But, you know, let's figure out a pathway to work that out, you know, so we can have some good faith, you know, negotiation back and forth and how that might look, so… I mean I don't, I don't think you'd be opposed to that. And I don't think anybody else on the phone would be opposed to that and, you know, come up with some ideas to help people, so.

Wolff: Okay. Well, I would...

Hauth: What do you, what do you guys think?

Webber: Yeah, I think it sounds fine. I'm willing to talk about it.

Miranda: I'm, I'm, I'm just glad that Michael's thinking about managers needing help and trying to, you know, find a way to make that happen in the fairest way that we can, that we can. So. Yeah, I'm willing to, all of us kind of put our heads together and see what, what we can come up with.

Wolff: That's great. Mr. Chair, do you want me to just wait for you to get back to me on sort of a timeline or a process for that? You want to speak to the, gather some additional information or how would you like to go about that?

Hauth: Let's, let’s, yeah, let's, let's get. How about if I get you some information this coming week at the beginning of, you know, next week and let me think through it and, you know, the others on the meeting can think through it and maybe we can, you know, I mean.

Wolff: Okay. Yeah, I mean.

Hauth: So this, I mean, obviously, this, you know, this is the first I've heard of it. And again, it's great news. Let's digest it and circle back at the beginning of next week and put a plan in place to, you know, maybe meet once or twice and try and hammer some of these things out. I think some of the, some of the, some of the things in the past, Michael, I know you're just a [sic] interim manager or a director, you know, and if, you know, if that continues on or not, I'm sure I don't know. But I do know that some of the things in the past, I don't think it has to be too complicated. I think some of the things in the past when people were trying to rely on just managers’ net income, you know, there were questions about, well, is that truly the accurate income? You know, so, if we can, you know, I don't know. Personally, I think, like I'll just say frankly, I mean for the last two, three years it looks like the agency has collected a bunch of unassigned vending that everything I can see is supposed to be going to the vendors. And I know that we pushed back and tried to get some dialogue on that, and I know that the agency, I think directly, Director Morris said, oh well, we wanted to offer this and we’re, we've been working with you, and you know, the managers didn't feel that, that was the case. There's like, as you know, I made a request, I know that Steve Jackson has made a request in public meeting. I know that Art Stevenson made a request. I know others have made a request. So, how do we, and one of those requests that I made is currently pending a [sic] Office of Administrative Hearing unless we can get things worked out. And I know I, I spoke to Art today and I know that he's been working with you on a couple of items. So, how do we get to the table? Discuss these things and not dismiss those current requests that have been made and also help support the managers that, you know, no fault of their own or fault of their own, I'm not sure, are not making the money they need to make or that, like you're talking about, as a [sic] average, you know, wage and so. Personally, I would need to think about this a little bit and get back to you at the beginning of the week and, you know, Lewanda, Carole, I don't know what you guy's thoughts are but... Steve, you know, I know Steve's on the line too. So.

Miranda: Yeah, just give us some time to think about it and then we'll get back to you.

Wolff: That sounds great.

Jackson: Can I say one thing? Steve Jackson.

Hauth: Sure.

Jackson: Anyway.

Hauth: Yeah, Steve, go, go ahead.

Jackson: Yeah, I was just trying to be formal. I think what the Commission might need or would be helpful is we could somehow make a graph or a chart that has the average income of the managers and just maybe use unit numbers instead of names? There was ways that we did this in the past, to find out what the average is, and then we go from there. Does that, sounds [sic] logical?

Wolff: Is that?

Jackson: That, I was talking to you, Michael, cause, cause you're the one that's gonna have to approve it.

Wolff: Yeah.

Jackson: We're trying to be fair, like, we have to find the baseline, you know what I'm saying?

Wolff: Yeah, and I think, I mean when I think of, when I think of that, what I was thinking initially is that, you know, agreeing on what a livable wage is rather than trying to average out, like, instead of getting an average of all of the incomes, deciding on what a livable wage is and seeing if we have folks below what we decide that looks like. And working with that, because that's, that’s, like, livable wages are more based on cost of living, inflation, rent, all those kind of expenses that occur in the area that you're in. And so, you know, if that, if that, I feel like that's a good baseline to start at, if that makes sense.

Hauth: Well, Mike, Michael, Michael, let me share, you know, I won't mention any names, but most of the managers...

Jackson You're breaking up, Randy.

Wolff: Yeah.

Hauth: The managers.

Wolff: Randy.

Webber: We can't hear you, Randy.

Wolff: Mr. Chair, I can't hear you.

Miranda: We can't hear you.

Wolff: Mr. Chair?

Hauth: Hello?

Miranda: There you are.

Wolff: Hey, we couldn't, we couldn't hear you there, the last.

Hauth: Hey, hear you now. There you are. Hey, I just want to say, so, I'll start back over, most of the managers on this call are aware that for a number of years, there was a manager and still is a manager in the program that operated several very large busy cafes, had some assigned vending, had multiple locations that this person was managing. But when you would look at the quarterlies for time and time again, that manager would show no profit. Or loss in profit. And so when that was brought to Director Morris's attention, he said, well, that looks like that's just good bookkeeping to me. And so, you know, if we're gonna go by livable wage, I would, I would think looking at, like, in that particular instance if we were going to go by livable wage and we're looking at this person who, you know, is supposedly not making any money or losing money, but yet they have all these large business opportunities, how are we going to make sure that that, you know, jives out? And I don't know if that's, you know, just one particular instance or not, but, and I don't know exactly the fairest way to do it. But you know, I just wanted to throw that in the mix for conversation, too. That's why we have to kind of think through it. I don't think it has to be that complicated. I think we can get those monies to the managers and help them. You know, and that sounds like you're willing to have the discussion and the agency's willing to have the discussion around that. So, you know...

Wolff: Yeah.

Hauth: There's some of us, like Lewanda and I and Art and Jerry who've been in this program for 35 years, and we have worked very hard to build a good business model. And I'm sure we make more than what the average wage would be. However, you have to remember we been in this program for 35 years and so, you know, do we, do we reward somebody that's not carrying the weight or not reporting properly? So, those are just the things that I think we need to talk through and understand and work on. So.

Wolff: Fair enough.

Hauth: Okay, and so, just one other thing real quick. Yeah, and I mean just one other thing too, is there's been some, there's been some managers that have been pushed into a different service model and so, you know, I'm not sure if you can share with us if you, I know the 31st is nearing. I don't know if you can share with this your intention any further to try and stay in this position or if you can share that or not, but going forward, if you do, or the new manager or new director does, my hope and I know the hope of the managers on the line, are to sit down and try and work through these things and not fight about these things. You know, and I don't know you very well, you seem like a more reasonable person than maybe we're, we've been used to lately. So, hopefully, if you're the person going forward or if the new person is going forward, we can have that dialogue and we can work through these things for the betterment of the program and everybody. So, just, that's, that's my, that's my two cents worth there. So.

Wolff: Thank you. Thank you for sharing that, Mr. Chair. I actually, that reminds me. Has, to your knowledge, has anyone alerted Sherry to who are going to be the participants in the panels?

Hauth: I don't think she has asked. I don't think she’s asked again. I think the last conversation that we had was with Dacia, but you know, I was, I was basically waiting to see when the, close, when the applications closed on the 31st and then I was waiting to hear back from who I suspected either was going to be Dacia or Sherry and then go from there, but it sounded to me if I remember, that they wanted to move this along pretty fast like, right? They wanted to close it on the 31st and then they wanted to start that application process or that interview process.

Wolff: Yeah.

Hauth: So, I mean, you might be more aware than I am, so.

Wolff: No, I just, I just.

Hauth: But let us, let us know. Yeah.

Wolff: No, I just, I just, I think it, yeah, I, I would certainly make sure if you, if you haven't, that you've made the decisions on who's going to be participating.

Hauth: Sure.

Wolff: I will, I will let, I will let Sherry know that you're waiting for outreach on that, but as far as scheduling first round panel interviews, I would imagine that they're probably gonna try and do that fairly quickly after the 31st. So, part, part of that is, just involves schedule flexibility and being available for those, those panel interviews.

Hauth: Sure.

Wolff: So, if you could, yeah, just, start, I would get that, I would get that information ready and I'll actually send Sherry an email today, just letting her know that you're sort of waiting to hear, sort of, from her first.

Hauth: Sounds good.

Wolff: Okay, alright, that sounds great.

Hauth: Alright, anything else before we go?

Wolff: That was all I had. I, I thank you for giving me that time, too, just to discuss that idea.

Hauth: Yep, you bet. You're welcome. Okay, well let's go ahead and close the election and or close the meeting and we'll be in touch. Thanks everybody.

Miranda: Thank you, everybody.

Webber: Thanks, bye.

Wolff: Have a great day, everybody. Take care.

**Motions Passed:**

None