HO’OPONO

Business Enterprise Program

Services for the Blind Branch

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

State of Hawaii Department of Human Services

1901 Bachelot Street, Honolulu, HI 96817

Phone: 808-586-5283

Fax: 808-586-4143

M I N U T E S

ANNUAL STATEWIDE TRAINING AND MEETING of the HAWAII STATE COMMITTEE OF BLIND VENDORS

DATE: Saturday, June 26, 2021

PLACE: Microsoft Teams or Call-in

PRESENT:

1. Committee: Stan Young, Kyle Aihara, Chris Akamine, Dane Alani, Ivy Galariada, Steve Kim, Lespaul Naki, Don Patterson, Wanda Takaesu
2. Licensed Blind Operators: Evelyn Ah San, Dyllon Asami, Ted Chinn, Joel Cho, Ron Flormata, Flordeliza Galiza, Wilmer Galiza, Byron Jitchaku, Roxane Kaneshiro-Sasaki, Desiree Lacewell, Mike Miyashiro, Doug Moises, Norman Ota, Lyn Pasak, Gail Sakamoto, Lynn Schempp, Virgil Stinnett, Myles Tamashiro, Martha Vo (Certified Trainee), and Stan Young
3. Ho'opono: SBA Lea Dias, VFS Bruce Chin and BEP Secretary MJ Andres
4. Guests: VRAA Iva-Starr Cain, Deputy Attorney General Erin Lau, Allan Hegent, Jonah Sniffen, Isaiah Leiu, Henry Gabriel (City & County)

CALL TO ORDER:

Noting the presence of a quorum, Stan called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

TRAINING PROGRAM:

Henry Gabriel, C&C Recycling Branch Chief of Department of Environmental Services Refuse Division, gave a presentation on Ordinance 19-30, which went into effect January 1, 2021. The ordinance regulates single use of plastics to protect human safety and welfare and to improve environmental quality on island, in neighboring marine environment and globally. It affects all food vendors and businesses operating within Honolulu City & County. The information is available at opala.org.

PROGRAM REPORT:

SBA Lea presented the program report submitted by Business Manager Kat Fujimoto as follows:

1. There are 43 blind vendors. Approximately 1/3 of the facilities are closed due to the pandemic.  We do not have an official notice of a reopening schedule for state buildings.  Please stay tuned to the news reports and we will also share information as it’s announced.
2. The current balance in the Randolph-Sheppard Revolving Account is $2,114,365.
3. We are currently conducting Promotion & Transfer for 4 facilities:  DPAA Dept of Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency in Joint Base Pearl Harbor; Honolulu District Court; JBPHH Bldgs. 167 & 2; West Hawaii Civic Center.  Announcements were sent out on Thursday.  Deadline for application is July 8. Please be sure to read all mail that is sent to you.
4. As everyone knows, last year was a dismal business year.  It’s also reflected in the annual Federal RSA-15 report when comparing 2019 to 2020.  FFY 2019 shows total gross sales of $26,398,829, and this went down to $16,990,744 in 2020.  Average vendor income including benefits in 2019 was $127,587 then down to $10,520 in 2020.  Let’s all hope that the pandemic gets under control and business back to somewhat normal.  It is now time to explore new business models and strategies.  Also be sure that your store is thoroughly clean before opening and health and safety procedures are put in place.
5. Randolph-Sheppard Financial Relief and Restoration Payments (FRRP) - The Federal Government has appropriated $2,000,000 to the Randolph-Sheppard Blind Vendors nation-wide.  Of this amount $498,584 is being sent to Hawaii to reimburse licensed blind vendors for losses that were experienced in the year 2020.  This averages about $11,000 per blind vendor.  The department’s accounting has created a special account to overlook these funds.  All funds must be distributed to blind vendors and we anticipate it to happen as soon as possible, in 2 to 3 months.  In order to distribute the funds every blind vendor must submit his/her P & L reports, and complete the worksheet that was developed by Stan and the committee. The SLA will distribute the worksheets to calculate each individual’s financial relief.  Stan and the committee, with the agency’s help, will soon conduct an instructional training on-line to explain the worksheet.  When all calculations are completed, then moneys can be distributed.  So it is very important that all P & L’s are submitted and all worksheets are completed and submitted.

DISCUSSION OF HSCBV BYLAWS:

There was a discussion of the need for the bylaws to be developed by the committee.

Lea added the draft bylaws need to be updated then ratified by a majority of the blind vendors statewide.

VOTE ON BENEFITS FOR STATE FISCAL YEAR 2022:

Stan noted that the committee accepted the recommendation made by the Budget & Finance Sub-Committee to provide the same benefits of $15,000 as last year: $7,000 for medical, $5,000 medical supplement in the spring, and $3,000 at the end of the fiscal year for retirement. The budget includes $200,000 for possible renovations for a total of $1,025,000. Joel moved to approve the committee’s budget proposal as submitted. Virgil seconded and the motion passed without opposition.

ELECTION OF HAWAII STATE COMMITTEE OF BLIND VENDORS:

In previous elections, the League of Women Voters tallied the votes. Due to the pandemic, they could not be reached.

The meeting was recessed at 10:24 a.m. to allow votes to be tallied and reconvened at 10:35 a.m.

ELECTION RESULTS:

Lea read the election results as follows:

Ballot #1 – Non-Federal Representatives

Kyle Aihara

Chris Akamine

Dane Alani

Lespaul Naki

Wanda Takaesu

Stan Young

Ballot #2 – Federal

Ivy Galariada

Steve Kim

Don Patterson

Stan thanked all the blind vendors for attending and noted the new committee will start effective July 1.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to discuss and hearing no objections, Don moved to adjourn the meeting. Steve seconded and the motion passed by voice vote with no opposition. The meeting adjourned at 10:38 a.m.

Respectfully submitted:

LD:mra

Ho'opono/Employment Section