

Meeting Minutes - Elected Committee of Managers (E C M)

The **August 06, 2022**, E C M third quarter meeting was conducted in person at the Residence Inn by Marriott, 2500 Museum Way, Fort Worth, TX 76107, and via phone through the E C M conference call line.

Instructions to access the conference call line were distributed as follows:

Conference number: 1-832-917-1510 access code: 172170 (after the voice prompt press *)

Press 5* to be recognized for questions or comments (This will let the conference manager know you have raised your hand and you will be recognized by the E C M Chairman.)

Press 4* to mute or unmute

Note: conference call was recorded

Attendees were urged to register the phone number they would be calling in with in advance with Mr. Tommy Crawford by calling him at 254-654-0119 or calling Mr. Tom Chepey at 210-789-3191. This helps the E C M recognize who is attending the meeting and helps to make communications more efficient.

Call to order at 8:30 a.m. by Chairman, Zach Davis

Roll call of E C M, Guests, and State Licensing Agency (S L A) Staff

Mrs. Kim Chepey read a list of audience members names, E C M that were present and on the call-in line phone line along with S L A staff in attendance.

Business Enterprises of Texas (B E T) Staff Attending

Jennifer Colehower, Interim B E T Director; Field Operations Supervisor, Cynthia Gonzalez and on the call-in phone line, B E T Houston Business Consultant, Mr. Louis White.

Approval of Minutes for May 14, 2022, 2nd Quarter Meeting

Chairman Davis announced approval of the E C M meeting minutes as motioned by Mr. Larry Watson and seconded by Ms. Aloha Cook.

Ms. Jennifer Colehower introduced herself as the Interim B E T Director after the departure of former B E T Director, Lizet Hinojosa. Ms. Colehower gave a summary of her state government experience and background; talked about her specialized skills in business and policy law. Ms. Colehower pledged her commitment to the program and the licensed managers.

B E T Director's Report

Interim B E T Director Jennifer Colehower's presentation of the Director's Report:

Facilities Information

B E T closed out the third quarter with 116 facilities.

Two facilities were added during the third quarter –

1. New TxDOT campus
2. V A San Antonio Northwest Health Center

Pending new facilities at the end of third quarter -

1. Brook Army Medical Center (now running as of June 1)
2. 1601 South Congress – Advertisement closed, Panel Interviews Pending
3. 1801 South Congress – Manager selected – expected opening in August or early September

During the third quarter, B E T had twenty facilities that received upgraded vending or kitchen equipment, and fifty-six facilities for the year to date total.

Facilities with operational areas to be upgraded – 3 facilities

1. 905 Donley County Rest Areas, Knox County added to the route.
2. 877 A. Maceo Smith, convert to Micro Mart/Light Grill
3. 906 Stars and Stripes, Micro Mart 3rd Party Vendor replacement to B E T Manager.

At the end of the third quarter, B E T had 101 assigned managers and 3 unassigned managers.

Unassigned Managers

1. Sophia Sparks- Fac. 868 – Unassigned 5/3/21
2. Arnold Sanchez- Fac. 897 – Emergency Removal 5/4/22

3. Jay Wolf

No managers left the program in the third quarter.

No managers entered the program in the 3rd Quarter. For FY22 thru 3rd Quarter, two candidates entered the program for training.

1. Scott Magee
2. Daryl Razor

Scott Magee graduated and is in process of being placed in his initial facility.

Next B E T class starts August 8, 2022, with two candidates: Axel Cox, and Jorge Cabello (E C M member, Ms. Aloha Cook, was part of the interview panel).

During the 3rd quarter there were 160 business visitations completed by the B E T Business Consultants; making that a total of 352 visitations from Q1 to Q3.

Value of equipment ordered and delivered in support of businesses during the 3rd quarter was \$ 257,154.20

Q3 number of employees whose disability is blindness in B E T Businesses: 28

Q3 Number of employees with other disabilities in B E T businesses: 123

Number of employees with no disability in B E T: 1410

Ms. Colehower announced the conclusion of the B E T Director's Report.

Q and A after Director's Report

Questions presented by E C M member, Ms. Aloha Cook, concerning the topic of state facilities being closed that are managers primary facility and the management of temporary facilities that have become priority over primary facilities. Ms. Cook questioned why managers are ignoring their primary state facilities and operating their temporary sites? Ms. Cook says that this practice can eventually lead the program to lose state facilities.

Ms. Colehower addressed Ms. Cook's topic by recommending an active and open communication with each building host to gather occupancy data from previous weeks that will help analyze trends.

Mr. Larry Watson restated the importance of a strong host relationship and encouraged everyone in the program to prioritize this task.

Ms. Colehower, Ms. Cook and Mr. Watson circled back to the need for everyone on the team, Business Consultants, and managers, to work together to cultivate a strong relationship with each host.

Mr. Mike Sparks asked if the committee would have an opportunity to be involved with the hiring process for the new B E T director position? Mr. Sparks also asked the S L A to consider going outside of the state to search for a B E T director candidate with extensive food service/management experience.

Ms. Colehower confirmed that the S L A will be looking everywhere by "casting a wide net" for the B E T director position. She addressed Mr. Sparks' other question by referencing the likelihood

that the S L A would not consider the committee having an opportunity with the director hiring due to T W C's compliance with the labor employment laws. The state of Texas adheres to no agencies having any interference or the perception of such with any state government hiring. However, Ms. Colehower did affirm that the S L A's Executive Director, Mr. Ed Serna, does have a clear understanding of what the program needs and will be very responsive with the right candidate selection.

Ms. Aloha Cook asked for the S L A to have better accountability towards the Business Consultants that are not keeping up with their job duties such as the timely submittal of invoices for manager reimbursements.

Ms. Colehower acknowledged the importance of the S L A's responsibility towards holding the Business Consultant's accountable and advised managers to include a "full kit" submission by ensuring that the pertinent information needed is clearly listed on the invoice. The Field Operations Supervisor, Ms. Cynthia Gonzalez, reiterated the importance and cited the requirements that T W C Accounting looks for on each invoice. Ms. Gonzalez gave a synopsis of the approval process she follows as the Field Operations Supervisor when reviewing the invoices in the portal.

Mr. Larry Watson asked for the record to show that the district that is experiencing continued delays with the processing of manager reimbursements is District 2. Mr. Watson also conveyed that the managers within that district are not inexperienced and are fully knowledgeable and in compliance with the requirements put forth by T W C Accounting.

Ms. Gonzalez offered the opportunity for managers that have not been reimbursed within 15 days from the date of submission, to reach out directly to her via email.

Chairman Davis contemplated the need to look at brainstorming ideas that may be helpful to improve the reimbursement process by allowing managers to directly upload their invoices into the portal.

Ms. Cecilia Wilson shared a mutual experience that managers encounter with the transcription of the asset/serial number of the equipment when submitting the invoice for reimbursement. Ms. Wilson asked for the numbers/font size printed on the tags to be larger and more legible.

Ms. Gonzalez confirmed the need for asset tag improvements and said that the S L A is addressing this issue with the T W C warehouse personnel. Other committee and audience members discussed the older equipment tags being made of metal which provided managers with better legibility.

Vice-Chairman Chepey asked about the prospect of the S L A tapping into customer service resources provided by various T W C departments to assist B E T managers in different aspects.

Ms. Colehower acknowledged that idea and cited the example with the previous manager training that involved the T W C Media department taking video footage to be used as a training resource. Ms. Colehower said she would look at what other departmental support resources within T W C could be available to this program.

Ms. Cecilia Wilson asked the Field Operations Supervisor, Ms. Gonzalez, a specific question concerning the manager's addresses

listed on the B E T portal/database. Ms. Gonzalez referred Ms. Wilson to B E T Management Analyst/Trainer, Joe Gonzalez, for assistance.

Mr. Dave Corbett asked to switch the momentum from discussing the Business Consultant's to discuss manager accountability. Mr. Corbett addressed the need to hold managers accountable for not doing their jobs or for very poorly operating their facilities. Mr. Corbett's concern involves a General Services Administration (G S A) facility that if left unaddressed, the program will certainly lose with the risk that G S A will file for termination.

Ms. Gonzalez provided assurance that the S L A is working to resolve these issues. However, could not give specific details due to several legality issues.

Chairman Davis recalled before the former director left, Ms. Hinojosa made advances towards holding managers accountable and those that did not comply were removed from the program. Mr. Davis asked Ms. Colehower if the matter of manager accountability would continue.

Ms. Colehower specified that accountability is a two-way process by holding the managers and the S L A staff accountable. She gave examples while specifying the operational tasks that managers need to be compliant with.

Ms. Aloha Cook cited different scenarios of managers losing their licenses and asked about the S L A's judgment while making a reference of favorability.

Ms. Colehower cited the S L A's commitment to strictly following and applying the B E T Rule and Statute equally for each case therefore no implication of favoritism is applicable.

Chairman's Report - Zach Davis

Chairman Davis began his report by providing updates on the most relevant topics/discussions from the previous meeting as follows: Managers be at the point where their Business Consultants are dealing with Manager Annual Performance Review's (M A P R); this project has been completed with the expectation that the 2024 M A P R's should be available soon. However, some issues with interpretation have come up. Chairman Davis reminds everyone of the committee's primary goal with the M A P R project, correcting the displeasing aspects and simplifying it. Chairman Davis moved on to discuss the collaborative effort between the committee and the S L A to revise the B E 132 Temporary Assignment Matrix form to improve the efficiency with finding and qualifying candidates for temporary management. Final draft is in process with objective to remove formulas, streamlined the process to allow COVID considerations and created the following biggest changes:

- a. Advertisement would be statewide
- b. Priority 1 – qualified candidates in district
- c. Priority 2 – qualified candidates out district
- d. Priority 3 – not qualified candidates in district
- e. Priority 4 – not qualified candidates out of district

Chairman Davis shared an S L A announcement that more qualified volunteers for Level II advertisements are needed. Mr. Davis outlined the qualifications for volunteers to serve in the various Level II opportunities and encouraged everyone to look at their business and professional contacts for possible volunteer

candidates. Mr. Davis transitioned back to the topic of M A P R's by asking each of the committee members to report the status within their districts. This was the breakdown:

Dave Corbett - 4 left

North Austin – meeting this week

Cecilia Wilson – received half

Larry Watson – did not mention

Manny Sifuentes – on the way

Harvey Stavinoha – received several

A discussion proceeded on Level II advertisements and volunteers. Committee members shared many ideas on how to get more volunteers; possible use of E C M members; the use of teaming partners however, this idea was noted that it would not comply with the B E T Rule of “impartial and qualified individuals”. Ms. Colehower reminded everyone that the approach taken must adhere to the rules. Another idea that was tossed around was the use of a workforce employee participating as a volunteer. The discussion transitioned into the rules. Ms. Colehower informed the committee members of the rule process for the S L A and suggested to the E C M the need to be more strategic in which sections to address first, rather than do an omnibus overhaul. Ms. Colehower informed everyone that the agency does no rule work/changes during a Legislative session. Mr. Davis took note of that information and continued his report by transitioning to provide his chairman's aspect concerning the Technical Assistance Circular (T A C) 21-02; noted a projected goal within the next week to restart the T A C 21-02 discussion. Committee member, Ms. Cecilia Wilson, asked if the Retirement, Health Insurance, Vacation Pay and Sick Leave (R H V I S) fund distribution, is still on track

even though the unmanned vending is still in limbo; response given is that it will be continuing at this time. Mr. Mike Sparks suggested to provide a copy of the rules document that was worked on by the committee previously; chairman Davis liked that idea. Mr. Jerry House reminded everyone why the rules are in place and cautioned against the inclination to bypass the rules when looking at temporary management placement, Level I and Level II facility criteria related to COVID implications. Chairman Davis provided Mr. House with his interpretation of how the committee is structuring changes within the parameters of following and adhering to the rules. Chairman Davis asked what the S L A's Procurement and Contracting process is. An overview as follows was provided:

1. Host requests
2. Manager requests
3. Types of equipment
 - a. Accessible – blind accessible – not workable for blind managers
 - b. Modernize
 - c. Host needs
 - d. Position to be able to compete with other food services

It was noted that Vocational Rehabilitation's process also follows the requirements in place by T W C's Procurement & Contracting that the program must adhere to. Ms. Cook gave some examples on ways the S L A can be proactive when purchasing equipment to be utilized by blind managers. Other questions continued towards the sourcing of equipment and the E C M having active participation once new facilities come up. The request for testing and evaluation

of equipment by the E C M before state purchase was also brought up to confirm blind friendly usage. Ms. Colehower offered a few suggestions for the E C M by establishing an equipment sub-committee. Field Operations Supervisor, Ms. Gonzalez, provided additional insight about the S L A's contracting and procurement process for equipment purchases. Ms. Ashley Edwards gave her perspective for the S L A to consider with the purveying of equipment. Some of the factors that Ms. Edwards talked about, involved making budget wise purchases that are aesthetically appealing within the facilities color parameters, equipment that is timeless and will provide longevity, and most importantly, equipment that is operationally blind friendly.

Break taken at 10:20 am

District Reports

Each representative provided a report on events occurring in their district. Chairman Davis reminded everyone to adhere to a 2-minute or less time frame per each representative's report.

District 1 – Manny Sifuentes and Harvey Stavinoha

Mr. Sifuentes reports on the status of TxDOT; said they are working on a projected opening of the cafeteria by October 2022. All parties are diligently working together, TxDOT, Accent and T W C; every morning, Mr. Sifuentes, begins by communicating with his Business Consultant, Aaron Hanna. The Department of Disability Services (D D S) facility is working well under the micromarket business model. Mr. Sifuentes reports on the collaborative efforts that he and Business Consultant, Ren'ee Britt, have cultivated; said he is getting support at D D S which has contributed to developing a strong relationship with the host. Mr. Sifuentes transitioned into providing guidance with the management of micromarkets in the district. He agrees with the earlier discussion presented towards manager accountability and urged managers to take responsibility by following recommendations such as, managers need to be managing those facilities with subcontracting and making sure that the product is getting rotated. Mr. Sifuentes reiterated that it is imperative that managers make sure they are visiting their micromarkets on a weekly basis.

Mr. Harvey Stavinoha reports first on behalf of his facility, Internal Revenue Service (I R S); he says they are very busy. G S A is continuing to request that they open in the evening. However, Mr. Stavinoha says that is not going to take place. He commented on the success they have accrued with the sales of specialty sandwiches from a vending machine that is in place for evening transactions. Mr. Stavinoha shared a mutual concern from managers in his district about when are people going to return to buildings; said, "the way things are now does not make it very sustainable for managers". He suggested that the program may have to convert these cafeteria style business models to a grab &

go concept to meet the new normal. Mr. Stavinoha wrapped up his report by commenting that Mr. Mike Sparks will be presenting several questions during the general session of this meeting during Q & A.

District 2 – Larry Watson and Zachary Davis

Mr. Watson provided a reminder on the reimbursement issues that were brought up earlier. He also discussed an important issue occurring within his district, for over a year, involving equipment that needs to be picked up. Several managers have transported equipment to their personal homes, and another leased a storage warehouse. Mr. Watson discussed another major issue within the district related to the inactivity of replacing older vending machines; this has not happened since the former Business Consultants, Sandra, and Kathy, were in place, citing managers are dealing with archaic 1990 machines that do not have replacement parts available. Mr. Watson commented that district 2 is behind the curve and very neglected with vending equipment replacements. He discussed the advertisement placed on hold for the convenience store in downtown Dallas. Ms. Gonzalez provided an update concerning the renewal of the convenience store advertisement that she would be working on during the week. She also elaborated on the purchasing and replacement process of equipment and the lifespan of vending equipment citing the system in place by the S L A to replace machines that are 10 to 15 years old. Ms. Gonzalez acknowledged the requests of equipment replacements, using a wish list process, for district 2. However, Mr. Watson voiced a concern about whether the wish list was properly done as an example, the machines in the rest areas which take abuse due to their high public usage.

Chairman Davis reports hearing back from two managers. He reiterated the importance of communication between the managers and the Business Consultants especially when it involves the need to replace older equipment. The managers are the ones that know what equipment is vital and need replacement. Chairman Davis reports that Scott Smith is doing well with the uptick of traffic. Mr. Davis conveyed a question from Mr. Smith related to the purchase status of credit card readers by the S L A. Ms. Gonzalez replied that 22 were purchased but are on hold due to the vendor owing unpaid sales tax to the state Comptroller's office. Ms. Gonzalez reports reaching out to Chairman Davis to request what other viable credit card readers would managers be interested in using; the S L A is looking at other vendors. Chairman Davis reports on behalf of former/deceased manager, Mr. Steve Saltzman's 2nd reopening attempt. Chairman Davis advised him to run a small inventory to start. After Chairman Davis's report conclusion, Mr. Larry Watson gave an additional update concerning manager Tyrell Smith; said he was not contacted about any satellite opportunities and that there is no B E 132 form in place for temporary placement. A conversation took place that addressed the process for temporary placement.

District 3 – Cecilia Wilson and Ashley Edwards

Ms. Cecilia Wilson asked for ideas and help concerning a purchase she made for antenna boosters; needs extension cables. Note, no other update from Ms. Wilson was available due to inaudible recording.

Ms. Ashley Edwards reports everyone is continuing to run their business as best as possible. She highlighted the new incoming licensed manager, Mr. Scott Magee, projected to take over the

Mickey Leland Federal Building. Ms. Edwards addressed no other issues or complaints to report within district 3.

District 4 – Dave Corbett and Jerry House

Mr. Corbett reports that the bulk of complaints revolve around the M A P R's; one manager sending emails that Mr. Corbett had to address the E C M about given that the person who got 100 is the least active manager in the district. The common complaint voiced by managers surrounding the M A P R process is that managers are not being graded by their skills and by how they are performing in their business; just being graded on reports and their set aside. Mr. Corbett mentioned that he keeps reminding managers in district 4 that this is a temporary process that is evolving and urged managers that are unhappy to get involved with the sub-committees available via the E C M. Mr. Corbett reports on behalf of the McConnell prison manager giving their 90 day notice towards retirement in July and addressed not having a date for the Panel II interview.

Mr. Jerry House reports on behalf of manager Kristin McNabb as having ongoing equipment issues that may have been resolved by the S L A staff. Manager Edgar Mendez has been very unhappy with what has taken place in respect to meals that Mr. Mendez affirms as being prepackaged however, the B C said the meals were being prepared on site. Another issue brought up by manager Mendez is the equalization payments and whether they are being delayed as he has not had any payments in a year. Mr. House reports hearing from manager Nure with respect to the Laredo Bridges facility as he was the only manager that applied; there seem to be questions with the B E 132 that is in place which may be slowing the process down. However, Mr. House commented

that the E C M or the S L A may be better informed with what is taking place on this front. Mr. House wrapped up his report by citing low sales with the V A facility that is being run via satellite manager, Ms. Gay Nimitz. Chairman Davis and Ms. Gonzalez addressed the concerns with manager's Edgar and Nure; Ms. Gonzalez mentioned that T W C Legal is working with manager Edgar Mendez and manager Nure has been assigned and is getting the keys. Additional information shared about the Laredo Bridges facility was relevant to the location not being serviced properly and manager Nure's offer to purchase machines.

District 5 – Tommy Crawford and Paul Parker

Mr. Tommy Crawford reports sales improvements with roadside vending locations however, state buildings continue to report money losses. Manager Tony Campbell reached out to Mr. Crawford with respect to his license being revoked; he is upset and may file a grievance. Mr. Crawford noted that this issue is out of his hands but lies in the hands of the S L A. Mr. Crawford addressed the timely completion of all the M A P R's by the district 5 B C's, Carlos, and Julia, with one exception of manager Travis Warren but was informed that S L A management was reviewing Mr. Warren's M A P R. Mr. Crawford cited 20% downward revenue at his military facility, Fort Bliss.

No report available from Mr. Paul Parker as he was not in attendance.

District 6 – Aloha Cook and Tom Chepey

Ms. Aloha Cook reports getting a call from a manager having older vending machines with credit card readers not being A D A complaint. This manager was told that Bell County staff would be making their rounds to inspect. Ms. Cook discussed the use of

Payrange as an option which is a mobile payment app that she utilizes within her facility. Ms. Cook asked for other suggestions. Ms. Gonzalez confirmed the needed removal of those credit card readers before the inspection takes place and cited that older vending machines would be replaced by the S L A. Various ideas were tossed around as options with the possibility of using Q R codes as an alternative and questions about what the requirements are were addressed however, Chairman Davis noted the need for further research on this topic. Ms. Cook had no other updates to report. Ms. Cecilia Wilson offered some insight based on her experience with credit card readers on her vending machines, the use of antenna boosters and citing the importance of having cell phone signals if electing to use mobile payment apps.

Vice-Chairman Tom Chepey reports not getting any responses back from his email to managers. He urged managers in his district to inform him if anything is needed and is hopeful that managers are communicating with their building hosts and S L A management. Vice-Chair Chepey mentioned reluctance within the last two previous years towards providing anything in writing as he discussed building population numbers. He addressed numbers at 20 to 25% previously with building occupancy at his facility that brought in good income. Mr. Chepey mentioned speaking with the North Austin B C's, Nancy Greely, and Samantha Sweezy; said no issues were brought up or any changes within the district. Mr. Chepey addressed distributors wanting \$1500 minimum purchase upfront before delivery; said he's looking at other distributors that do not have a minimum but noted that strategy impacts the product with a higher price. He cautioned managers about the importance to actively monitor all cost for goods, and labor. Chairman Davis asked Mr. Chepey how he has dealt with swings in building

population at his facility. Vice-Chair Chepey noted Mondays and Fridays with the lowest building population of 5% and cited the removal of product in vending on other floors to minimize waste which encouraged patrons to seek out the grab and go for purchases. Mr. Chepey placed a notice as to why vending products were being removed with no rebuttal from the building host as some H H S C management have directed their staff to go home and would re-evaluate in October. Thankfully, the removed vending products were purchased by E C M manager, Ms. Aloha Cook. Mr. Chepey emphasized that they are still optimistic while keeping an eye out on labor cost, maintaining tight inventory and being resourceful by “thinking outside of the box”.

Sub Committees Reports:

Rules and By-Laws Sub Committee – Chairman Zach Davis

Chairman Davis presented opportunity for discussion on Rule draft and asked Mr. Mike Sparks for his pending questions. Noted, the committee’s work on the rules has continued since February of 2021. Mr. Jerry House asked if there are plans to have the rules checked by an attorney before sending to the S L A? Chairman Davis responded that a vote would need to take place to determine whether the committee would pay for that service.

Finance Sub Committee – Tommy Crawford

Mr. Crawford reports no changes from the last report as no new transactions took place. He reviewed the Wells Fargo account and noted two former managers that passed away last year, Mr. Jaime Garza and Mr. Gregory Stavinoha, as relief/donation payments of \$1,500 each were given to their families; one of those checks has not been cashed. Mr. Crawford noted he would research and report back his findings and if needed would re-issue a new check. Before

Mr. Crawford yielded his time, Mr. Dave Corbett presented him with a question about the E C M doing any fund raising and Mr. Crawford acknowledged that it's been a while; he suggested doing something during the manager's fourth quarter meeting, closer to the holidays, and welcomed everyone's ideas to brainstorm this endeavor.

A discussion emerged about requesting brailled agendas and agendas printed in large font for future E C M meetings as Chairman Davis asked if this is a practice that the S L A can resume?

Training of Potential Managers Sub Committee – Aloha Cook

Ms. Aloha Cook gave an update on newly licensed manager, Mr. Scott Magee, as projected to take over the Mickey Leland Federal Building in Houston; the changeover date is tentatively set for August 15th. Ms. Cook reports on the two potential training candidates, Mr. Axel Cox, and Mr. Jorge Cabello. Ms. Kim Chepey asked if the two candidates have any food service or vending experience? Ms. Cook said Mr. Cox has a background in the insurance industry and Mr. Cabello did work at Whataburger a while back; said both candidates as very eager to begin.

Mr. Jerry House asked about a Micromarket training document put together by Joe Gonzalez.

Mr. House asked for an update – has the committee or Ms. Cook provided comments to Joe and how will this training be incorporated into the current training curriculum? Ms. Cook's response was that the micromarket training is being considered and should be added to the current curriculum. However, she did not have a definite timeframe.

Mr. Mike Sparks asked Ms. Cook for any information regarding a letter that was sent by him and Chairman Davis concerning the addition of the C F R to the training curriculum? Ms. Cook said she had not heard anything back but would get with the S L A.

Ms. Cecilia Wilson asked for an update on the Elias Ramirez advertisement. Field Operations Supervisor, Cynthia Gonzalez, commented the advertisement is projected to be put forth once the last of the repairs have been completed.

Chairman Davis asked the S L A for a copy of a form that is available for placement of personal equipment at facilities.

Mr. Davis shared information about a possible C F R training module that may already be established which was coordinated by the N F B and is available online via Mississippi's training; he will research and present his findings later as he commented that this would be a useful resource to help Joe Gonzalez incorporate this training into the curriculum.

Vending Sub Committee – Jerry House

Mr. House reports on the first vending newsletter that was distributed and very well received; is working on the current addition and asked committee members and active vending managers to send in their tips and suggestions. Mr. House noted the active participation by Mr. Dave Corbett concerning the vending pricing changes.

Question presented by Ms. Cecilia Wilson regarding deadlines for vending newsletter submissions. Mr. House gave details as to the process and noted for items to be submitted by the 15th of the month.

Ms. Aloha Cook asked Mr. House for clarification as to Dave Corbett's role with the vending sub-committee.

Mr. Dave Corbett presented a question to the S L A about price changes and the formula he created to determine vending costs; said this process will prove useful to assist managers by determining a maximum price. Commentary suggested this could be a quick reference sheet. Ms. Cynthia Gonzalez presented the S L A's pricing process/strategy. However, Mr. House noted a problem with managers not paying the same prices that are set on the sheet for the cost of the product (there is product cost variation for a given product – use average of the cost). Ms. Aloha Cook conveyed a pricing question from T D C J; they asked about pricing and how it is done. Ms. Cynthia Gonzalez gave an informative look at how prices are determined and mentioned that pricing is state mandated. Mr. Larry Watson presented a question about how the program can get into the business of prison commissaries? A discussion about who operates commissaries proceeded with the consensus that they are run by state employees; Mr. Larry Watson shared that they are being subcontracted. Mr. Dave Corbett commented that the products are being purchased by the state in bulk at a much lower cost allowing for suppressed prices in the commissary. Further discussion ensued concerning prison commissary card changes and the ability to put more money on cards.

Forms Revisions – Tom Chepey

Chairman Davis acknowledged this topic was previously addressed.

Meeting and Conference Planning – Tom Chepey

Vice-Chairman Chepey provided an update concerning the annual training conference as he confirmed that it will be held virtually. Mr. Chepey talked about using the subscription to the National Federation of the Blind's Entrepreneurs Initiative (N F B E I) as a training resource and asking them to provide modules and break sessions over two Saturdays. A discussion took place concerning the need to clarify what "attendance" means – entire amount of time should be credited to everyone and would have to attend every session; easier to track by phone. A discussion will be held at later date by the committee to outline attendance guidelines. The S L A asked if there is a tentative date in mind; Chairman Davis noted a date would be determined once an upcoming meeting with Terry Smith takes place; also commented that as part of the N F B subscription is to have them involved in the training.

Strategic Planning/Improvement – Manny Sifuentes

Mr. Sifuentes reports no updates available as there has been no movement with this committee.

Discussion on Facility Advertisement Threshold

Chairman Davis gave a historical synopsis of the facility advertisement threshold numbers and the committee's thought process about when a facility is "viable". Discussion and comments ensued to highlight the following points:

- Concern – stop advertising "bad" facilities – pre covid
- Pre covid – low income – won't change
- Raised issue of T A C
- Concern about "rule"
- Overview of attachment memo recs
- Use R S A 15 median income? Should it be a percentage?

- Cafeterias are not going to open again. But location has vending. LaSalle County – there are some other areas in region that could be attached.
- Keep on a sliding scale?

Field Operations Supervisor, Ms. Cynthia Gonzalez, gave an informative overview of the S L A's process and asked for the committee's feedback and suggestions with establishing an updated facility advertisement threshold.

Open floor for discussion, questions, comments, and concerns.

Manager Mike Sparks asked if R H V I S is still scheduled? His suggestion is to scrap R H V I S and divide among managers. Mr. Sparks said that idea was brought to the S L A's attention however, due to a R H V I S grievance, no R H V I S communication could take place. Chairman Davis said he would follow-up with the S L A to confirm if the R H V I S grievance was still in existence. A further discussion, was suggested, between the S L A and the E C M to resolve what to do with R H I V S.

Mr. Sparks changed topics and offered a suggestion about getting a discussion started between, the S L A, the E C M and the N A B M leaders, Terry Smith, and Nicky Gacos, on how to get more military dining facilities.

Mr. Sparks presented another question/comment and asked if the E C M is ready to become involved with the S L A concerning the programs budget. Mr. Sparks suggested the committee's budget involvement would ensure active participation and be instrumental when purchasing equipment decisions take place. Chairman Davis

addressed the committee's need to learn how the S L A's budget works.

Ms. Aloha Cook raised an issue with adding more facilities as she suggested the committee look at federal prisons.

Chairman Davis brought up the N A B M subscription service and how it can be used for the new B E T director.

Ms. Cynthia Gonzalez made a request to the E C M – asked the committee to address the T A C 21.02 and provide guidance on how to attach facilities. Chairman Davis expressed that a list of locations is available, and he would provide via email to Ms. Gonzalez.

Mr. Larry Watson addressed the ongoing Coke distribution issues that most managers are experiencing with Coke pulling out of providing drink machines. Mr. Watson highlighted the need for a plan, the need to have buying power and the need for assistance. A discussion took place that raised the following criteria:

- Need to explore other options for vending drink machines.
- Can the S L A get buying power from the state for the managers to buy them? – Or look at options for the managers to buy, and then it reduces their set aside?
- Should the S L A negotiate on behalf of the managers for drink machines from distributors? To address facility history.

Mr. Mike Sparks reminded the E C M that the drink machine issue will continue to be problematic; he urged the committee to address this with Mr. Ed Serna, T W C Executive Director. Mr. Sparks recalled a request by Mr. Serna asking the E C M to provide a number for cost to buy drink machines. Chairman Davis reiterated

the use of a grab and go concept which would negate the need for drink machines, as an alternative.

There were no additional comments, discussions, or questions.

Location for Next Meeting or Workshop -

Location and date were not selected as Vice-Chairman Chepey mentioned the need to get with B E T Central Office personnel, Sharon Hubbard.

Adjournment -

Motion to adjourn was made and seconded by all.