

BEP VENDOR COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

June 21, 2019 • OB2, Olympia, WA

Vendor Committee Members Present

- Robert Miller, At-Large, Committee Chairman
- James Janney, NE Region
- Robert Ott, SW Region, Committee Co-Chair
- Roy Gappert, SW Region
- Committee Not Present: Gloria Walling and Stephanie Hilton

BEP Staff Present

- Elvis Pruetz, BEP Interim Manager
- Liz Tunison

Others in Attendance

- Roderick Roberts, BEP SW Operator
- Lessa Mangold, Roderick's Manager

MEETING MINUTES

1. Introductions

- Everyone present introduced themselves
- Agenda was read.

2. Financial Report P&L Format

- There has been reporting issues with DSB new data management program Aware. BEP isn't confident the numbers reported are accurate. There was a large boost in February, which about the time DSB was transitioning programs.
- As of May, Operating Balance is \$539,700.
- In April, there were many purchases associated with opening the US District Courthouse in Seattle and transitioning vendors at Goodrich. These include smallwares, equipment upgrades & repairs and consulting fees.

- The overall cost to open US Courthouse came in below what Bobby had originally estimated, but there are still anticipated costs with installing an espresso bar.
- **Rent Owed:** as of May, the amount owed is \$8773 between three vendors, with the majority belonging to one. There are tentative payment plans in place such as using vending pass thru towards rent.
- **Consumable Inventory Owed:** As of May, the balance is \$29,224 for five facilities. The larger of the balance is for the newest transitions and the vendors aren't required to start paying these down until later this year. No one is behind in payments.
- It was asked if the BEP staff salaries and benefits come out of the BEP budget and the answer is yes.

3. Training Program update

- Updated information about the new Hadley training process on the agency shared drive for VR staff to access. More work needs to be done to familiarize VR staff with the new process.
- Currently, there is one trainee that just completed their Hadley BEP Training. They are waiting to be scheduled for On-the-Job Training. BEP is holding off a bit until new manager has been hired as well as the L & I bid has been completed. Want to make sure Keith isn't placed in a facility where there might be potential vendor turnover. BEP will send student assignments to retain their learning as well as keeping them engaged.
- Bobby and Elvis have met with several clients that have shown interest in BEP. Some are taking active steps towards training through site visits and Hadley pre-requisite classes.
- The contract the administrator of the BEP entrance evaluation is near expiration. It was determined she wasn't carrying insurance as no one had mentioned it prior. She asked if BEP could assist with the cost of insurance, which BEP cannot. Renewing the contract has been put on hold. BEP is going to look into the possibility that the agency may have another qualified person that could do the evaluation. There is also the question of whether the evaluation was still needed since the Hadley pre-requisites such as Math were covered. There

was much discussion amongst the group and it was determined having some type of entrance evaluation was important to determine if the individual had right temperament to own/run their own business. Might be time to look at a reboot and update the current evaluation process. Felt it was important to emphasize math and handling of personal finances as vendors have seen many fail that struggled in these areas. There was also discussion if it was possible to screen for mental health or addiction problems that might impede success as an independent business owner.

- Client going thru Hadley pre-requisites questioned the redundancy of Excel training since they just had it at OTC. Everyone present felt it was still important to get as much training and exposure to Excel as possible so no reason to eliminate it.
- Hadley is currently restructuring some of their online classes and not all math classes are available. Suggested to reach out to School for the Blind to see if there were any possible options.

4. State Rehabilitation Council (S.R.C.) update

- a) Gloria Walling wasn't present to report on April's quarterly meeting.

5. BEP Manager Status

- b) Interviews held on May 15. The seven panel members (2 vendors & 5 DSB staff) collaboratively opted not to move forward with the three applicants. The job position has been posted again and interviews are scheduled for the 24th.

6. Report on Existing Facilities

a) Clark County Courthouse – January 2019

- Business is going well. BEP contractor visited recently for a site evaluation. Brought some maintenance concerns to the vendor and they were being addressed.
- Vendor has brought in some new breakfast items and has brought back the hotdog machine.
- Vendor's customer engagement is great.

b) NOAA- September 2018

- Vendor present to report. Been in facility for nine months and open for seven (due to government shutdown). Understands business is slightly seasonal due to the NOAA ships going out to sea. Sales have been picking up. Staff is stable. Been several catering events. Customers seem happy. However, based on the cost of doing business in Seattle, the vendor doesn't feel NOAA generates enough revenue to be a standalone sight. Feels it's a better fit as a satellite or possibly a micromarket. Facility has expressed expectations in regards to staffing during day, but café is only busy during lunchtime with minimal breakfast business.

c) US Courthouse Seattle- April 8, 2019

- Vendor was present to report. Facility has tremendous potential, but customer flow has been lower than expected. Vendor had to make staffing cuts although sales have been trending upwards. There has been a challenge in getting GSA to fix things in a timely manner. Working on getting an espresso bar added which will BEP expects to be about a \$15k investment.
- Raised menu prices to offset cost of running business and feels there has been some pushback on the change.

d) Goodrich – April 2019

- Current vendor has maintained, if not increased sales. Vendor has been facing all the usual challenges of a new operator such as staff turnover and equipment failure. Vendor is great at reaching out to other vendors or BEP staff for assistance when needed and is receptive to advice.

e) FAA Des Moines

- Location appears operationally sound. Been positive feedback and the customer volume is there. There is a great opportunity for catering, but vendor doesn't seem interested in taking advantage. When BEP and a

committee member offered assistance to help build the business, the vendor declined.

- Website needs either to be updated or taken down, as prices are incorrect.
- Vendor is behind in submitting monthly P & L statements despite several requests for them. Vendor reports working with a newly acquired bookkeeper. Committee felt it was important for staff to follow up on these due to their importance. Suggested that vendor is reminded of federal law regarding the requirement of these monthly statements and BEP confirmed they had.
- FAA will remain on the agenda through the rest of year. BEP wants to ensure program maintains good relationship with GSA.

f) DOT / ESD Olympia

- Vendor present to report facility has been delivering food within the building the past two months. Soon they are going to start taking online orders. Sales have been improving at ESD due to increased food sales. Coffee sales at ESD are static. Vendor feels the facility is definitely viable for a vendor to support themselves in the operation of these locations. WSDOT staff seem vested in the success of the café.
- Elvis reported that the possibility of the building going through an earthquake retrofit / remodel about the time the current emergency contract ends. It would entail closing half the building down at a time which would obviously affect café sales. The café may possibly be relocated. Unsure how much BEP would have to kick in for improvements or if they can have any input in the design. Possibility the café may lose the hood.

g) King County Courthouse

- BEP and committee chairperson wanted to discuss this location due to some concerns with the business. Operator has reported staffing shortages on numerous

occasions. BEP has not received any operating statements in many months despite several requests so program is unsure the fiscal status of the business.

- BEP asked contractor and committee chairperson to arrange a meeting with vendor. Both scheduled attempts have been cancelled by the vendor due to staffing issues.
- From prior operating statements, the facility is viable and a strong location for the program.
- Committee chair ask that vendors reach out and offer encouragement or assistance.

h) Labor & Industries HQ

- Current vendor is retiring on September 27. Congrats was shared by all!
- L & I did surveyed staff to find out what they'd like to see changed or remain. Staff is looking for more inclusive options (i.e. Vegan) and increased grab & go.
- L & I will put together some requirements they'd like the next vendor to offer to be included in the bid. They will also provide some interview questions.
- BEP hopes to put the Notice of Availability out on July 1 with applications due July 15. Anticipate final selection to be made by the end of July. BEP anticipates a potential domino effect of facilities coming available based on the L & I transition.
- L & I will be charging rent although final amount hasn't been determined. They anticipate funds being used to do some remodeling. BEP is hoping the remodel is approved and current vendor will be able to provide some input into the design. If this isn't possible, then at least hold off until incoming vendor has acclimated and can make more educated remodel suggestions. BEP asked that any construction be complete after hours so not to impact cafeteria's operation.

7. New Facilities & Opportunities

a) Snohomish PUD- October 2019

- Will be a satellite location for Snohomish County Courthouse.
- BEP wants to minimize costs. Needs to determine which equipment owned by PUD need to be replaced or repaired. BEP may purchase some of the current owner's equipment, but depends on their cost and condition.

b) BPA Vancouver

- Café was offered to BEP, so Elvis and BEP contractor did a site visit.
- BPA is a very large, sprawling campus with approximately 600 staff.
- The café is large and quite spread out. Would require 3-4 people to operate it.
- BPA was determined an unviable opportunity, but may be possibility of a micromarket to increase vending revenue.

c) Department of Ecology Headquarters Lacey

- BEP was offered this location again. Elvis did a site visit.
- 600+ staff, but many work in the field. Based on this fact and the café history, BEP opted to turn down the opportunity at this time.
- Suggested they replace café with micromarket. Facility is still trying to determine their future plan.

d) King County Children & Family Justice Center (CFJC)

- Will be replacing old King County Youth Services and opening this fall.
- BEP has be offered the opportunity to install a dry stand. BEP would have to pay for the build out. Further discussion needs to happen in order to determine feasibility.

e) WSDOT Olympic Region Maintenance and Administration Facility

- New facility scheduled to open in Lacey in 2021.
- Estimated 350+ staff.
- Elvis is trying to arrange a meeting with the project manager. Facility may just be seeking micromarket.
- Committee questioned where staff for that building would come from. Would it affect current staffing at WSDOT Olympia HQ or Goodrich?

8. Facility Condition / Status upon Departure

- Been an ongoing issue for the program for multiple years where facilities are left uncleaned, equipment in need of repairs and smallwares inventory depleted when vendor leaves. This ends up costing the program a lot of money to bring the facility back up to standards for the new incoming vendor. While sometimes this is a bit unavoidable if an outgoing vendor gives short notice, it's still the vendor's responsibility under policy (WAC 67-35-230 and law).
- Current L & I vendor shared how they are prepping the facility for their departure in order to set the incoming vendor for success and limit financial impact on BEP.
- BEP hasn't been doing an effective and consistent job in holding outgoing vendor accountable.
- Was suggested that BEP use a (more efficient) transition checklist.
- Suggestion of a type of security deposit the vendor would have to provide that could be used again necessary upkeep when vacating facility.
- Vendor mentioned signing off on an inventory list that BEP provided, but they had no way of knowing if items were truly there and functional. These should be done as a team with both incoming and outgoing vendor and BEP staff.

- Standard ongoing maintenance needs to be happening and BEP needs to address issues as they arise, holding vendor accountable. Incoming vendor needs to be advised of expected maintenance duties such as when grease trap is due for cleaning.
- Greater communication in the transition process with all parties seemed to be the main takeaway.
- This topic will need to be revisited at next meeting as time was running short.

9. Other Business – Robert Miller

- Was discussed if a committee member should give up their post if unable to attend meetings consistently. While understandably, it is challenging for some vendors to leave their facility during a business day, they've also committed to being part of the committee. Topic was tabled for now.
- Vendor expressed importance of having new operators attend committee meetings. It's valuable for them to understand what's going on with their program. Especially with several vendors looking at retirement in not too far future.
- Next Vendor meeting will be held on September 20 with location to be determined.
- All State scheduled for October 18-19 so not to interfere with WCB or NBFW Conventions. Several topic ideas were discussed.
 - [Aira](#)- hands free assistance thru phone. This group has contacted BEP and is tentatively scheduled for the meeting.
 - Bob Miller met someone that worked with adaptive technology testing for IBM. Might be a potential speaker.

- Precisely Right Accounting Services.
- Online Ordering. Rod Roberts is currently in the process of setting up this system is open to sharing his experience and its potential impact on business.
- Intercommunication Skills. Tips on how to diffuse emotions. Best communication practices. May be a potential to find a speaker utilizing Skype. Robert Ott was going to pass along some information he received about this.