Randolph Sheppard

Executive Committee Meeting

December 17th, 2021

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Let's see who we got here. Shelly, Candice, Frank. We don't have a quorum yet, do we?

FRANK GAFFNEY: Reado's supposed to be trying to come in.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: That's him right there. Hey, Herb.

HERBERT READO: Hello.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Hello.

HERBERT READO: Hello. How everybody doing?

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Hey, Herbert. How was lunch over there at Clinton Cafeteria? Lunch business?

HERBERT READO: Terrible today.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Several parties here in the building too I was worried about.

HERBERT READO: Huh?

STEVEN DEBRUHL: They had several parties in our building today too that were going to affect sales.

HERBERT READO: Yeah. Everybody was having a party today.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Yeah. They got parties today and nobody shows up for two weeks.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: I'm getting ready to let somebody in that says Zoom user.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Must be Candice again.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Yeah. I think it's her. Dropped out. No. She's up on the top there. Well, we got enough to get started. Want to get started here, guys?

FRANK GAFFNEY: Yeah.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Before we get going, I want to welcome Lynsey Hebert from Caption That. She's on the line with us. She will be recording this meeting for posterity sake. And it's also being recorded to the cloud, Kevin, so we can access it for future reference if we so need. So, Frank, item number one is call to order. You want to call to order?

FRANK GAFFNEY: Call the committee meeting to order.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Take a roll call.

CANDICE LINVILLE: Candice Linville, New Orleans.

EMMA PALMER: Emma Palmar, Shreveport.

HERBERT READO: Herbert Reado, Baton Rouge.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Shelly LeJuene, Baton Rouge.

DON ARABY: Don Araby, Alexandria.

EARL HEBERT: Earl Hebert, Lafayette.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: And we have the chairman, Frank Gaffney.

FRANK GAFFNEY: I want to welcome everybody to the meeting. Next thing is opening remarks by Steve.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: All right. Got to keep looking over there, make sure nobody's popping up on us. All right. So, yeah. Season’s greetings. Glad to see everyone here. Herb just mentioned about Christmas. They are having Christmas parties in the state buildings. The parking lot is looking a little empty out there. I want to start with a Christmas Covid update. Which I know is exciting to you. We originally thought we would be together in person, but that just did not work out. And the way things are going it looks like we're going to have another wave here shortly. About an hour ago Shawn Payton, coach of the Saints, he got diagnosed with Covid. So he's going to be out. He won't be coaching against Tampa Bay. They had 62 players in the NFL test positive in the last two days. A hundred ten in the first three months. It's definitely spiking. Last night on Broadway they sat down to watch Moulin Rouge and they canceled the show after everybody sat down because of Covid in the cast. I was just looking at the numbers. I'm kind of a geek when it comes to the Covid numbers. They have been ticking up here. We're doing better than most people are doing. There are 1100 cases. Yesterday we had 1100 cases which is up, the second day over a thousand that we've had. Here in town Loyola and Tulane have decided to go virtual for the rest of the semester. Share my screen right here. Right now there's 207 people in the hospital. That’s up about eight from yesterday. But exactly four months ago there were 3,098 people in the hospital. So we're doing better than most. See New York Times. Share screen. New York Times map of what's going on. For whatever reason, Rhode Island's one of the most vaccinated states in the United States and they are spiking like crazy up there. So cases up nationwide over the last three weeks, last two weeks of 31 percent. But as far as the south is doing better than most. And I think it's because of the wintertime up there people are going indoors. But this is definitely going to affect us. In New Orleans the mayor said starting in the new year for any children five and above to enter a public building they have to show proof of vaccination just like adults. And they're going to require all Orleans Parish school children to be vaccinated. Which is Orleans and then I think Los Angeles County are the only two school districts in the United States going to require that. That's what's going on down here with Covid. Can y'all hear me?

FRANK GAFFNEY: Yeah.

EMMA PALMER: Yeah. I do.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: All right. Just want to make sure. Give a quick update on locations. Iberville and Bienville are both the former manager in the house. The Iberville location, Ms. Carol is going to takeover that location next week. I apologize. January 3rd she is going to inventory in, and Hasan is going to inventory out. Shirley McCorkle is moving onto the field of retirement. Shirley is going to inventory out to Tracey Jackson is going to be taking over the location. Next Tuesday, Shirley, I believe you said it was?

SHIRLEY MCCORKLE: Yes.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Okay. Well, while you're on the phone say thank you for your service. You've been around for many EC meeting, I'm sure.

SHIRLEY MCCORKLE: Yep.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Why don't you kind of just give us an update what's been happening at your building over the last year or so, if you don't mind?

SHIRLEY MCCORKLE: Well, being the Department of Health and Hospitals my building has not gone above 25 percent. Probably it went up for about two weeks, but then everything went back down. So we're still at 25 percent occupancy. I guess whenever the variant and everything gets through then, you know. And, of course, this is naturally a slow time of years for both managers. You know, come March it will probably pick up, you know.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Let's hope so. Well, thank you for your service. Appreciate it.

SHIRLEY MCCORKLE: You're welcome. Randolph Sheppard is a great program.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: It's because of people like you that make it work. You've been a great manager for a long time. Me and Kevin and Michael, we always get to know the managers that we always got to deal with on a disciplinary basis. But there's so many other managers, y'all just take care of your business and only hear about you when you do something good. Again, thank you for your service.

LWC, the Louisiana Workforce Commission micro market, Chauntey sent out that bid letter for the third time in the last couple of months. Frank and I talked about it. Zora at the post office has been kind of working with Tony over there. Tony's ready to get out of the location. You know, he's got the post office on Bluebonnet and wants to kind of move on and get over there. So the bid's out. Michelle's got a tour date setup. And then that's going to be the week after the next. But there's talk about having Tony inventory out and let Zora serve as interim manager until we can finalize that bid. Zora said he is going to bid on the location as a satellite, but he made us put it out as a permanent location. We don't see any other managers since no one's applied for it the last two times. So, Frank, what's your thought process letting Zora assume it as interim manager until we get a satellite manager in there? Cause there's no guarantee that we'll get anybody other than Zora that will respond to his bid.

FRANK GAFFNEY: We put Tony off quite a few times. If we had an interim manager willing to do it for that period of time, I'm all in favor.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: What about anybody else?

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Yeah. I'm good with it.

DON ARABY: Yeah.

HERBERT READO: You said the advertising has already gone out?

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Yeah. In fact, I emailed it to you. I sent all the RSMAs. It was mailed out. But with the mail, especially this time of the year, who knows when it's going to get here. So all the RSMAs are going to reach out to all their managers and make sure they know there's an opening. And there's going to be a tour.

MICHELLE DUNCAN: And it is scheduled for the 28th. The tour.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Yes. It is.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Hi, Michelle. You're showing up as a Zoom user. Glad that's you.

HERBERT READO: So if Zora picks it up as the interim manager when would he takeover as the interim manager?

MICHELLE DUNCAN: He's actually ready to start doing the inventory on Monday, if he could, if everybody agrees that he's okay doing it. Tony's really ready to get out. He said he's struggling to keep up with ordering for the post office, ordering for LWC.

HERBERT READO: I'm all on board with that.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Cause LWC is not looking so good. I think if either of the two locations are suffering because of this is LWC. I think we could use a breath of fresh air over there. All right. Well, that's great. Another challenge is up right now is the Baton Rouge governmental complex. Troy Chaney has a medical situation and he's going to be resigning from the location. Or has resigned from the location. Michelle can probably give us a little more feedback. But the snack bar has been closed since the pandemic and he's been servicing the vending machines. Michelle, why don't you tell us what happened with that.

MICHELLE DUNCAN: Well, Troy just verbally told me that he will have to retire due to some medical reasons. And he will keep up the vending machines until we can get the bid out and get another manager to takeover. But due to some medical reasons, he will not be able to open the snack shop back open and he will continue just to service the vending machines until we can get another manager in there.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: I think the building is looking for them to get that snack shop back open again, right?

MICHELLE DUNCAN: Actually, I know that he told me that a lot of the employees have been asking him when he was going to reopen the snack shop.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Nothing official from them?

MICHELLE DUNCAN: No. Because a lot of the places that were downtown, even the big cafeteria that was in the courthouse, they have all closed. So there's not a lot of places close for them to go and get food. So they're definitely looking for somewhere to be able to go and get something to eat.

KEVIN MONK: Do we know how many occupants or people there are in the building at this point? Is it 50 percent?

MICHELLE DUNCAN: I don't. I don't know right now. Not on that building.

KEVIN MONK: I think it's a good idea, but we don't want to set somebody up to fail if they're at 25 percent occupancy or something.

MICHELLE DUNCAN: Well, I know he still is doing really good with the vending machines. So, you know, it is something that if someone takes over, they'll, you know, they'll still have the vending machines. And he does very well with those.

HERBERT READO: My question would be with the new virus, what impact that's going to have. Do we want to open it up and have to step down or what?

STEVEN DEBRUHL: I think the main thing, like Michelle said, we need to make sure the vending machines are secure. Snack bar hasn't been opened since what, 18 months now.

MICHELLE DUNCAN: Yeah.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Especially this time of the year. Circle back in mid-January. I think we need to go ahead and proceed and get that out maybe and explain in the bid letter that right now it's vending only.

MICHELLE DUNCAN: Yeah. They are going to want that snack bar back open. But I can't guarantee a timeframe right now.

HERBERT READO: Yeah. Okay.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: All right. That was just kind of my little update. I do want to recognize we have Chauntey, Eric, Mica and Michelle. And Paul, you still there? And Paul's on the line with us. Or maybe he's not. Okay. Next on the agenda says remarks‑‑

PAUL: I'm here, Steve.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Hey, Paul.

PAUL: I had to unmute, man. It takes a second. But yeah, I'm here.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: All right. Appreciate you. So remarks by Kevin Monk, Charles Kevin Monk, director of blind services is next on the agenda.

KEVIN MONK: Hello, everybody. I hope everybody has a wonderful Christmas season. I know we're going into that time of year when everything, especially business wise, tends to slow down a little bit. Then everybody's going to start on their diets and all that. So I hope everybody does well with that coming up. Again, I want to say thank you to Shirley McCorkle for her years of service. I can't tell you the number of times I've gone over to the building, I'm also on the Commission for the Deaf, you go over to the building and the machines always look good. I can't go throughout the whole building, but I always look at the ones on the first floor when I pass. And they always look good. A lot of times, you know, from where I sit if you don't hear anything no news tends to be good news. And so a lot of times it's the people you don't hear out of that it's good. Cause people are always, they're always quick to complain and slow to give compliments. That's just human nature.

Anyway, wanted to touch base with you. I've requested updates from legal on a number of issues. I have not yet heard, I requested that earlier in the week, I have not heard anything. They are wanting to make some modifications to the letter that I wrote requesting site survey for federal locations. You know, that's one of the updates that I requested. I have not seen the edits that they want to make to my letter yet. We've also have asked for updates on the state hospital situation. And again, I'm awaiting a response on that. I was told there is an update, I just don't know what it is. And so that's kind of what I have for now to start with. I'm sure I'll chime in as things come up during the meeting. I know that one of the topics that we had discussed last time was the possibility of doing inventory forgiveness. And I've had the discussion with Melissa, I've also informed Frank that basically what Melissa wants to do is for whatever the appropriate subcommittee is to meet, let's come up with a procedure or whatever we're going to use to forgive any inventory debit that may exist. I know Frank and I had specifically discussed, and I think Steve as well, the folks that had just opened up and then Hurricane Ida hit and, you know, knocked everything back again. So we want to look at specific situations, what kind of situations that we want to use to forgive inventory debit. Because if we don't apply parameters, we're going to have any and everything out there. So we want to do it where we can be as fair as we can be with it. And so if chairman will, before the end of the meeting, if we can get together with that, get together a subcommittee, I think that would be helpful.

FRANK GAFFNEY: We've already done it, Kevin.

KEVIN MONK: Oh, you've done it.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Frank sent me the draft.

KEVIN MONK: Okay.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Draft of an outline of a concept of what could be policy. So (inaudible) tweak it up.

KEVIN MONK: Awesome.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Frank and I were discussing as well, you know, we have the power go out, you get shutdown for three months like everybody was, that's one ballgame. That's probably not going to happen that often, hopefully. But if the power does go out for 72 hours that's enough to wipe you out.

KEVIN MONK: Yep.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: So maybe make it to cover short‑term and long‑term losses, you know. And then apply it evenly to all the managers throughout the program. But the problem is, you know, Shelly, Frank, a few of these gentleman have already paid off all their inventory. So they have no initial inventory which to apply a credit. So in that case, Frank, you would just not receive compensation, is that what you're saying?

FRANK GAFFNEY: Right.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Is that an issue, you think, that there are some that would receive benefit and others would not? Is that demotivating to make someone want to pay their inventory?

FRANK GAFFNEY: Well, I don't think it detracts from anything. The ones that are already paid off, we know it, and we're the ones voting on it. And, truthfully, I don't see anybody paying off their inventory anymore.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Yeah.

KEVIN MONK: Another conversation for another day.

FRANK GAFFNEY: For any reason.

KEVIN MONK: Well, especially if we adopt a procedure for this, I think you're right. I don't think it will ever happen again.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Well, could it be that if somebody already paid their inventory off, they would get a credit and receive compensation when they left?

FRANK GAFFNEY: We can work something in, but if it holds up anything, I don't see it. If that got turned over to the lawyers for them to do something, I wouldn't be in favor of it. Not as long as they take.

HERBERT READO: Well, could we make a provision that if they paid the inventory off then they would have the option of getting reimbursed?

FRANK GAFFNEY: We can't reimburse.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: That's part of the issues, Herb. We can no longer do that reimbursement as outlined by the RSA.

KEVIN MONK: You can only reimburse when you leave the location.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Right.

KEVIN MONK: So, to that extent maybe...

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Maybe if they left a location, say they only end up having a 2,000‑dollar loss. Let's say he did leave. He doesn't have an initial inventory to offset that. But does he get a 2,000‑dollar credit on the date that he leaves that he's also got that 2,000‑dollars he's getting paid back for. Is that the same thing as just paying someone a check. I don't know.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: I think that, Steve, would be maybe something the attorneys may have to look at, legal. And I think there's three of us, not two. Didn't Raymus pay his?

STEVEN DEBRUHL: I think Max paid off. Don's paid his. Different locations. Just don't want to make any kind of policy that would exclude anybody else. Especially excluding because their good behavior in the past. I know where Frank's coming from, and I definitely want to try to help as many people as we can. And if that's the only way we can do it, I'm all for it. So, Frank, why not take what you got, you sent me, and Mica and I and Eric will work on it on our end and then maybe we'll have another subcommittee meeting and go over that and send it to Kevin to send up the food chain.

FRANK GAFFNEY: That was the whole committee that was involved in that one.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: All right. So this is what Frank says. Inventory forgiveness policy. I'm going to read it to you. Vending facility inventory loss documented by RSMA due to no fault of the manager. Example would be hurricanes, tornados, electrical failure, faulty (inaudible) supplies or equipment, faulty closure‑‑ sorry. Facility closure for more than three months. The amount of inventory lost documented with RSMA may be reduced from his or her beginning inventory. So that's basically it. Any questions there, Kevin, about that?

KEVIN MONK: No. It's the first time I hear it, so I would have to think about it. I'm not sure. But, yeah. Kind of what I had in mind, you know, some provisions.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Right.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Kevin, if you notice, I put the word supplies in there.

KEVIN MONK: Yeah.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Says refrigerators are supplies.

KEVIN MONK: Yeah.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: All right. Well, do you want to vote on this?

FRANK GAFFNEY: Yeah.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Okay.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Shelly, want to make a motion?

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Accept it as written or we can polish up the language a little bit.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Wouldn't you want to wait till you polish it up to make sure so nobody can come back again and say something?

FRANK GAFFNEY: I would like to put it in to begin with.

HERBERT READO: Yeah. I think we need to go ahead and vote on it as is and then....

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Can y'all see my screen here?

HERBERT READO: I make the motion that we accept it as is.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Do I hear a second?

DON ARABY: I'll second it.

FRANK GAFFNEY: All in favor?

{Collective aye}

FRANK GAFFNEY: Opposed? Hearing none, motion passed.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: The ayes have it.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Steve, I got one other thing. While we got Shirley B on here. You know, we didn't have one of these during that time and I think we ought to thank her for her service too.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: That was next on my list here, Frank.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Okay.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: I was going to recognize our guests. We do have Lynn Blanchard from ABL with us. And we also have Shirley Thibodaux, also known as Shirley B. And I want to thank Shirley for her service. I'm glad she's zooming in. And never too late to come home again. If you want to come back to the program, we have a few openings here. But if you just want to zoom in and listen to what's going on, you're welcome to do that too. Thank you for all the hard work you've done over the years as well, Ms. Thibodaux. Those are the only guests we have at the moment. We have review of agenda. Approval and correction of the October 4th minutes. Frank, did you get chance to look at those?

FRANK GAFFNEY: Oh, yes. Several times. And everything, like we always say, they're word for word. She doesn't miss a thing.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: I would like to move that we accept the minutes.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Do I hear a second?

HERBERT READO: Second it.

FRANK GAFFNEY: All in favor?

{Collective aye}

FRANK GAFFNEY: Motion passed.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: We're coming up to old business and Kevin just kind of hit on the first topic, Fort Polk, Belle Chasse, Barksdale. It's all under one thing. Also includes the federal prisons and the hospitals. Inventory forgiveness we just hit on. So we're past that. What is the next step on that, Kevin, with the inventory? That's not something we have to promulgate, right?

KEVIN MONK: Yeah. I'm going to have to look at it and see. I don't think so. I think that would go under the policy. I don't think we would have to promulgate it.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Okay.

FRANK GAFFNEY: You know, Kevin, on the form 2012 it's right on the inventory log sheet that it can remove from your beginning inventory.

KEVIN MONK: Okay. So it's already there?

FRANK GAFFNEY: It's already there.

KEVIN MONK: Okay. All we need to do is just put in the procedure for consideration then, apparently.

FRANK GAFFNEY: It's on the 2012 is the date on it.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: The first thing it says building facility inventory loss documented by the RSMA through no fault of the manager. So that means receipts within the date range. That means photographs of stuff you're throwing in the garbage can.

KEVIN MONK: Yeah. We're going to have to probably add a few more words into that section. But I get you guys' points there.

FRANK GAFFNEY: That's why I put that in there twice. That it had to be documented.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: You're right.

FRANK GAFFNEY: And Kevin, on the hospitals, would it help you to know that the commission check goes to Ochsner?

KEVIN MONK: I already knew that. And I wish it did help me, Frank. Because to me, you know, that's clearly state property. I think, you know, Ochsner's decision to do that was wrong. So we'll see.

FRANK GAFFNEY: You know, also it's stated in the BEP that it's the SLA's responsibility to go to any state-owned property and submit our claim. And if the place refuses that the SLA has to file a grievance against them, a full evidentiary hearing. That's in the BEP.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: It is.

SPEAKER: Yep.

KEVIN MONK: I'm aware.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: That might be a topic for new business when we get down there. Last item on old business was vacation pay. Explain what you're talking about when you say vacation pay.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Vacation pay is authorized federal money. And I sent in a thing for 750‑dollar vacation pay, and it seems to be forgotten.

KEVIN MONK: No. It's not forgotten.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Well, I would like the letter to be sent out to everybody to vote.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Kevin, go ahead. You want to say something.

KEVIN MONK: Yeah. I've had conversations with Melissa about that as well. And our only concern with this is that we want to‑‑ well, number one is we know the federal locations are going to be a thing of the past. We know we have to take those and give them to managers. So we're aware of that. So we're going to be left with the state locations only and we want to ensure that with what's left that we have a stipend program or medical stipend that's going to be sustainable for hopefully many, many years. That's our only concern at this point.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Okay. Kevin, they realize that one hospital in Shreveport would take care of all of that?

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Possibly could.

KEVIN MONK: If we could get it, yeah.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Right.

KEVIN MONK: Possibly. Unless RSA comes out and says that the state locations have to be treated like federal too at some point. God only knows if that's going to happen. I haven't heard that it is. I'm not saying that.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Things can all be changed then just like they changed with everything that came out now. I'm trying to get some people some money. They're not making any money. Few people, but mostly not. And I think we're just stuck on what if and we need the now. Because I even put in there that it would be consistent upon availability of funds.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: So did we determine you have to do an election with all the managers have to agree?

KEVIN MONK: Yeah. I'm pretty sure you do.

FRANK GAFFNEY: I made up a letter for it.

KEVIN MONK: Yeah. I've seen it.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Let me ask you this. You also have‑‑ we're going to have to start working on the election for the executive committee, all the folks in this meeting here, the next couple of weeks, three weeks. Would you want to include that? If we're going to send an envelope.

FRANK GAFFNEY: That would be fine.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Got to send it out. We got to send the initial letter mailing's going to be for nominations. Would you want to include that?

FRANK GAFFNEY: That would be sent out in the same letter and returned in the same letter.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Do we want to co‑mingle?

EMMA PALMER: Yeah. But Frank, a lot of them don't vote on that. They might not get that back in.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Well, they have to open the letter to see what it is. Might encourage them to vote if they're looking for money.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: That's kind of what I'm thinking too. We could also make them aware that, getting ready to send it out, there's two ballots. There's two things in there. There's a nomination and there's also the vacation pay ballot. Which you need to fill out and send back. You don't have to nominate anybody, but you do have to mail that ballot back. Then we have a second round of the nominations and have the election after that. So do we want to try to do that, Kevin?

FRANK GAFFNEY: That sounds good to me.

DON ARABY: Sounds like a good idea.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Kevin, what do you think?

KEVIN MONK: I'll see if I can get it done.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: All right. That sounds good. Onto new business.

EMMA PALMER: I was under the impression that the RSMA was going to carry that around and let them sign it.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Well, what do you even need? You need like a majority of the licensed managers?

KEVIN MONK: Yeah. Yes.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Majority of the votes?

FRANK GAFFNEY: Majority of licensed managers.

KEVIN MONK: A majority of, not licensed managers, majority of‑‑ is my understanding, of vendors of those people who are actually managing locations.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Active managers.

KEVIN MONK: Active managers. And I'd have to go back and reread it to make sure. But I'm about 90 percent sure of that.

FRANK GAFFNEY: It's active managers.

KEVIN MONK: Yes.

FRANK GAFFNEY: So they're the only ones that can vote on‑‑

STEVEN DEBRUHL: That's exactly right.

FRANK GAFFNEY: ‑‑ the people. And they're the only ones that would get the vacation pay.

KEVIN MONK: Right.

EMMA PALMER: And that's why I say when we do the election there be so few people that sent in the ballot back for voting that we should just go back the way they said it first that the RSMA would carry to each shop and have them sign it.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Yeah. But it's one thing to nominate Emma to be on the EC. It's another thing to vote myself 750‑dollar vacation check.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Right.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: I'd probably more motivated to do that. Probably have a bigger turnout for the election.

EMMA PALMER: Okay.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: But there's no reason why we couldn't do both Emma. But let's start by mailing it out. Because I think we need to show RSA that we're doing that too. All federal funds, right? Trust fund funds, I guess. Like a stipend, right?

KEVIN MONK: Well, they say we got to treat all trust fund money as federal funds.

SPEAKER: Right.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: The medical stipends is strictly trust fund money. Is it the same pool of money you're talking about?

FRANK GAFFNEY: Yes.

KEVIN MONK: Yeah. You can't match for vacation or for insurance.

FRANK GAFFNEY: It's not eligible for match, federal match.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Make that clear. Okay. All right. So new business. Now Melissa's in an all-day meeting with the secretary and others. She was going to try to zoom in a little bit if she has an opportunity. Anderson Lee wants to join us. Let him in. But Frank and Melissa want to talk one on one probably next week. So Frank can talk to her about what you want to talk to her about. The second item on here is training. Which we're going to leave that to our guest, Lynn Blanchard. Lynn, why don't you unmute and tell us what's going on down there at ABL.

LYNN BLANCHARD: What you want to know?

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Y'all still open?

LYNN BLANCHARD: We're still open by a prayer and a shoestring.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Yeah.

LYNN BLANCHARD: Something about that LRS business, I don't know. Yeah. I mean, we're still training. We still have clients that are in here under LRS as well as some other funding. Residential clients and we have day clients. But we have not had our cafeteria open. I was just trying to remember, probably since we're somewhere in the 20-month range, the cafeteria was open very briefly August before last. And from March to where we are now, about 21 months. So catering food in right now. And when you guys, I mean, we're hoping in January if numbers shift whenever you guys are ready, we know we have a pipeline of people, we'll resume those services. It makes no sense for me to have a Randolph Sheppard trainer in here and running the kitchen if I don't have some prospects. Even for one it's not feasible. You know, I would have to have two or three lined up.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Right.

KEVIN MONK: And I did, we made a virtual presentation to the National Federation of the Blind Convention, told them that we need managers in the program. I am sending the location announcements to the VR counselors as they come out so that they are aware that (inaudible) moving the program, that there are vacancies out there. And then I will be calling each one personally and talking to them about any prospects that they have as managers for the program. I've heard that there's at least one, maybe two out there. But I would hope there's got to be more than that.

LYNN BLANCHARD: And let me just make another comment. The good and bad. The duration of time it's taking a counselor to process a person right now is averaging, I mean, what we've experienced (inaudible). So even if you had those (inaudible), you know, we need an idea. On the other hand, on the good foot, the thing that historically, you know, counselors want to put people in jobs. That's the number one priority. And we have been very thankful having an opportunity to train these people for the years that we've had them. And they've come in spells. I've actually had two managers that had no clients out of the five or six managers I've had during the time we've had that. Not the exception. Not the rule. So we're vested. We're paying somebody's salary to do that even when LRS doesn't have a client for us to train, okay. That's not the case today. But that's what historically the case has been. But the problem is that I never understood why we wouldn't have, you know, ten people coming out the door because Randolph Sheppard training and this program, ever since we've been doing (inaudible) pretty much 100-percent. I mean, if a counselor wants to place somebody and they have the aptitude and the ability to do that and they're interested in that, it just seems to me that they would be pushing that left and right. Cause it's been, I'm telling you, 99 percent placement.

KEVIN MONK: Lynn, I have been requesting that the blind counselors be notified for months.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: They have been notified. If you look at every bid letter I sent out‑‑

LYNN BLANCHARD: Oh, yeah. I just mean in general. Even over the past 10, 15, 20 years. I mean, Kevin, even when we worked together, we always thought it was kind of odd that that program wasn't promoted more because it used to be, talking years ago, it used to be a (inaudible) ground, but it was not. It's a very, very (inaudible) program for entrepreneurs and businesspeople. And so I'm just saying, we need to market it better not only (inaudible) LRS, but to draw people (inaudible). I still think the counselors (inaudible) how good of a program this is. (Inaudible) the whole Randolph Sheppard program, you know what I'm saying.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Well, sometimes you have to market to yourself. And that's what Kevin's talking about doing and that's what we're going to try to do the year coming up. Definitely seeing the other shoe on the other foot is we got people sitting on the bench for two and a half years. Now we need them. You don't want to get somebody false hope. You go here, you're going to get a stand, you're going to make all this money. You want to give people real expectations what they can expect as well.

KEVIN MONK: You know, we don't really know what's going to come back from Covid and how many people are going to be wanting to move and, you know, these other locations are going to be performing low. But, I mean, point taken is that we do need to find some managers, some people that are motivated and willing to train. We just don't want to train 20 or 30 right now.

FRANK GAFFNEY: No.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: At the same time, like Frank was saying, we got people not making money now. Some of these locations, for example, Baton Rouge Post Office. That's a couple vending machines and a money pit of a snack bar. Is that really a location. Or should that be merged, you know, go to vending only, merge that with another location. Try to give a manager where we can make some money. Not have to go physically two different places. We want to make sure we're taking care of the people we got. Try to help them grow their business. Also, I talked to Mike Doucet. He's actually hired two blind people worked for him out of his five people that work for him. He met one fellow at convention. The guy's now interested in the program because he's been working with Mike and open up a case file. So you guys are out there, y'all, you know, y'all can prospect as well. Anybody that's interested have them reach out to their RSMA and we can take it from there at LRS. The way it goes, go through the front door at LRS and then they get setup with a counselor and then that's when they talk to them about Randolph Sheppard, and they would come to us. But they have to be an LRS client. We can get them on their way if they contact us directly, but that's the mechanism in which it would happen.

EMMA PALMER: Steve, in Shreveport we're having such a hard time keeping a person in LRS.

FRANK GAFFNEY: They don't know who Randolph Sheppard is.

KEVIN MONK: And, you know, we're not, we haven't seen that as much with the blind program. I mean, we're having some issues with like the blind counselors in New Orleans and Shreveport at this point. But we're seeing that as a whole for the agency. We're having trouble keeping counselors as a whole. Not necessarily in the blind caseload across the state.

FRANK GAFFNEY: I had to go to the new regional manager to get anything.

KEVIN MONK: Theresa?

FRANK GAFFNEY: Yes.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: You always get your government resources allocated to you.

HERBERT READO: I got a question for Lynn, Mr. Blanchard.

LYNN BLANCHARD: Sure. Go ahead.

HERBERT READO: When you're doing these Randolph Sheppard training, is it a certain time of enrollment or is it just‑‑

LYNN BLANCHARD: No. Usually when we get a referral as soon as they're ready to roll. Unless we have a lot of people. You know, like we wouldn't (inaudible) three at the same time. We try to spread them out like one month, two months. Like that so they're not on top of each other. But usually (inaudible) as soon as we know they're getting ready to come, you know.

HERBERT READO: Yeah. Cause I thought it may work better if we had a certain enrollment period time. Like other states have certain times that do Randolph Sheppard training. They only have like twice a year training and those are the open enrollment.

LYNN BLANCHARD: We do it year-round.

HERBERT READO: That way it gives us time to build up clients.

DON ARABY: Steve, this it Don Araby. Just a thought that hit me as far as letting some of the blind people know of the program. I know years ago I was one of them that we would go to the school for the visually impaired once a year and talk to, you know, like in the general assembly and talk to them and tell them about the program. That's been years ago though. I mean, you know, there's a lot of students there that might like the opportunity. Cause college is not for everyone, you know. Give them something to think about.

KEVIN MONK: And it's been since before, just before Covid that I was over there at the school. And they actually had the students filling vending machines over there. And they were actually, you know, getting them some experience, kind of trying to promote the program on campus that way. You know, so the people could kind of get a feel for what it's like. Are they doing that today, I don't know. Cause like I said, I haven't been there since Covid. For a long time they weren't taking outside visitors on campus. I don't know if they're doing it today or not.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Kevin, I had a comment on what Don said. Because of covid it screwed up a lot of stuff, but Herbert and I has been on campus and actually at a classroom and we did do that sort of thing. Is that correct, Herbert?

HERBERT READO: That's correct.

KEVIN MONK: Have they allowed you to do that since Covid?

SHELLY LEJEUNE: No.

KEVIN MONK: Maybe I'll try to reach out. Well, they're closing down campus today.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Right.

KEVIN MONK: I can call them maybe, see if anybody's around next week on a prayer that they would be and have a discussion and see.

HERBERT READO: Several years ago I used to do an outreach program with the school where they would send different students to me, and they would work in the facility like on the job training program some years ago. Matter of fact, I think we got a couple managers now. I know one of them was Craig out in Shreveport. He used to come down there to DOTD with me and I encouraged him to the program. It was a couple, Craig and another guy from Shreveport. I know two of them from Shreveport was in there.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Eddie Smith.

HERBERT READO: Who?

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Eddie Smith

FRANK GAFFNEY: Might have been Eddie Smith.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Oh, Willie. Willie. Eddie Smith or else Willie.

HERBERT READO: Willie.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Yeah. Willie White.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Okay. Well, I agree. We need to try to promote the program as much as we can, to as many people we can. Again, promote it amongst yourselves and I'm reaching out to the counselors too if they have any prospects. But we just don't want to have bodies. We want people that fit the profile, you know, be able to operate a business themselves. You're not going to get a lot of high school graduates. Kobe and LeBron went to the NBA out of high school, but a lot of people didn't make it.

KEVIN MONK: And that being said, we still have a manager, one manager that I know of on the bench that is waiting for a location.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Very good. So, Frank, you have on here retirements. Is that just kind of‑‑

FRANK GAFFNEY: Yeah. I think that was part of the recruitment. We got more people going to be retiring with the age. It's been a few years back that circle thing we had, all the ages.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Exactly. We need some young blood is what you're saying.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Yeah.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Not that we discriminate based on age or gender or sexual orientation or anything else around here. But never thought we'd lose Shirley McCorkle or Shirley Thibodeaux, but they've had enough. They decided to take it downstream. So yeah, we definitely need to work on recruitment. That will be a goal for us this year coming up. Now you have hiring a lawyer under new business, Frank. What exactly do you mean by that?

FRANK GAFFNEY: We were discussing getting a lawyer which is for contract and advise since our state attorneys either don't have the time or not qualified to find some contract work for us. Like deal with Fort Polk and all these other deals that they're, I have to say it, they're not doing it. How many years we've been involved in this.

{Members speaking simultaneously}

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Did you have a specific attorney in mind, or you just want to hire outside council?

FRANK GAFFNEY: Well, you know, the one right now that knows our program is that Mary White.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Mary White.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Which I think she's already on the state's contract list. I'm not positive, but I'm assuming. Whoever it would be would have to be on the state contract list.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Mary White just represented us for the Cedric Mitchell hearing. Which we did, the judge did find in our favor that we were within our rights to revoke his permit based on performance. And I think you know her from the Fort Polk days gone by. You said you had a conversation with Mary White about that?

FRANK GAFFNEY: Yes. When it came up, I even talked to her about I wish we could get her when Cedric, everything was over I wish that we could work out some kind of deal like that. I didn't know if we could, but I thought it would be to our advantage. And she said that they would love to do some contract work.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: I bet.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Well, yeah. Like we want to sell a candy bar, she wants to sell some (inaudible). I don't even know how that would work as far as she would be hired by the EC or SLA or?

FRANK GAFFNEY: We don't have any money, the EC.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Have to be the SLA.

FRANK GAFFNEY: But my understanding is we can do that under contract and advise.

KEVIN MONK: Yeah. It can be consultation and not litigation. If I remember the words correctly.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Right. No litigation.

KEVIN MONK: If I remember the terms.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: A lot of these things you're asking about, you know, (inaudible) involves litigation. Now is a full evidentiary hearing considered litigation, you think, Kevin?

FRANK GAFFNEY: Well, that would probably be different.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: If it got to that point.

FRANK GAFFNEY: If it got to that point. But if you got the correct lawyers doing it, you know, you fight it back and forth before you ever get to the full evidentiary hearing. Then it's the SLA's responsibility to do it.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: So whatever legal fees that were paid for consultation, Kevin, would that be like trust fund money, get the federal match for that?

KEVIN MONK: I believe so. I would have to read. But I believe that would be eligible for match.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Yeah. It would fall under professional services, I believe. And it should be, you know, credible for matching federal dollars. I know I did some research, and several states are doing it.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: You want to make a specific motion in regard to this, or how do you want to do it?

FRANK GAFFNEY: Herb or Shelly, would you like to make a motion?

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Yeah. I'll move that we check into being able to get contract attorneys.

CANDICE LINVILLE: I second that.

FRANK GAFFNEY: All in favor?

{Collective aye}

FRANK GAFFNEY: Opposed? Motion carries.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: That's good.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Anderson Lee, are you on the phone?

EMMA PALMER: I'm on here.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: I saw Anderson Lee had zoomed in earlier and I think he lost and somebody else called back in. I was going to tell him hello, but he's gone now. Number six on your new business was additional grant money. So that's FRRP. Now we're in the process of implementing all those things into the 761 system. After it was all said and done administrative costs were lower than we anticipated. Not that we didn't (inaudible). So there was approximately 48,000‑dollars leftover after everyone got paid. So two of the managers will receive checks, bring them to 100‑percent of their compensated loss, of their total losses. And there's going to be eight additional managers who will receive another check, approximately 4,800‑dollars. We're in the process, we have to document everything we do here as far as money out the door. We created a new form for that. We'll be able to use the documents that we submitted the first time around. So we won't require anymore additional signatures. Hopefully, Mardi Gras is March 1st. It will be before Mardi Gras, but maybe a little more along the lines of MLK date, you know. Somewhere later in January hopefully we'll have all the money out the door. And Mica's working on the federal report. And they've extended the federal report to give us 30 more days. They're still trying to figure out how to account for this FRRP money on the federal report. They even talked about maybe going 30 more days after that. They still haven't given us the guidance of what we're supposed to do as far as the federal report to account for this. But, you know, I'm sure everybody is going to receive a 1099 form because that's what the state does. Takes their money and send a 1099. As far as it being taxable, I believe it is. But that will be a conversation you have with your financial adviser/accountant. Whoever it is. Any questions on that? All right. Next on the agenda we have open discussion. Frank, do you want to discuss anything we haven't discussed?

FRANK GAFFNEY: We've done pretty good. I think just unless somebody else has something? I don't have anything on the top of my head. My head was pretty full.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: All right. Moving on to subcommittee. We've got budget which is Pinky Harris who's not with us today. Constitution and bylaws. That's Emma. Emma, got anything on that? Emma?

FRANK GAFFNEY: Probably not. We haven't done anything.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: All right. Well, Kevin and I had a meeting with Theresa about the promulgation process. Want to make a change to the BEP, the rule.

EMMA PALMER: I'm unmuted now.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: All right, Emma.

EMMA PALMER: No. I didn't have nothing. Go ahead, Steve.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Yeah, Kevin and I had a meeting with Theresa who does this for the agency. Whenever you change the BEP, you have to change the law. So there's a step-by-step by step-by-step process you have to do to do that. And what it requires is the active participation of the executive committee. Now to change the law for the State of Louisiana sometimes it affects, if we're changing one law it may affect the federal law, the RSA. So anytime we go to change it it's a very lengthy process and very deliberate process. So but there are some changes we need to make in the BEP manual. Some are actually, seems to me, like typographical errors and stuff. That might be the committee, the subcommittee to work on that. Frank, do you think?

FRANK GAFFNEY: Yeah. I would say probably the whole committee just as well as the subcommittee. I know when I was doing it the last time it was me and Shelly and I don't remember who else. But every time we made a move then we would call everybody on the committee and explain to them what we were doing. So the more people we can get on the meeting, make it less phone calls.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Yeah. And save more time.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Yeah.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: It's going to take time. And it also needs to be documented. So Theresa said she's used Lynsey on the LRS side. So we want to make sure we incorporate Lynsey in all our discussions going forward on that.

KEVIN MONK: Yes. I think that's the public forum that we have to do. Because as part of the process you have to have a public forum and all of that. So yeah, we definitely will be following up.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Yeah. Our beginning discussions we can put together and then whatever our beginning discussion is then has to go a little bit further with Kevin and everything. And then once we get everything worked out then we'd go through, I would imagine, with a transcriptionist.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Well, Melissa's flagged a few things that she caught when she read it. So we have her suggestions. And it's such a convoluted process. If we're going to do it, we need to do it one time and that's it. Now Janel did do it in 2015. So there have been changes made to kind of coincide with the law change back in those days. But as far as, you know, like your vision to be blind is 2100. The law is 2200. So even though it seems like that would be simple to change that, somebody just hit a one instead of a two, it actually has to all be promulgated. Things like that that are just really housekeeping. But like we said, we're going to go through it, might as well do it all at one time.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Yeah. That's one of the things they changed too, you couldn't make the little change. When you do it you have to send the whole BEP in.

SPEAKER: Yep.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Steve, on that, that meeting I sent you on in the email, I was thinking about we get the committee together on a meeting and play that, so everybody get an idea of what we're talking about.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Okay. Have a meeting to watch another meeting.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Yeah. You can edit it down to just that part.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: I didn't watch the whole thing. I'll go back and look at it.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Yeah. It's about 30 to 40 minutes long. It's not that bad.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: The BEP is not nearly as long as the tag manual. But I think, you know, we might have to sit here and read it word for word. But maybe everyone can do their own reading prior to, get any kind of changes you think are necessary and address those. Then just go through it again. I'll retire and y'all can carry on. So we'll start working on that. Now we got inventory for Earl which we kind of talked about already. Location merger, Shelly.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: I don't think we have any right now.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Michelle, you still on?

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Yeah. I'm still here.

MICHELLE DUNCAN: Yes.

KEVIN MONK: Do we need to maybe, just as a suggestion, kind of start gathering information on the downtown post office and maybe looking around to see if we could merge that with something? Cause it's just not hitting on much even without Covid.

MICHELLE DUNCAN: I would like to make the suggestion Department of Agriculture and the post office, maybe merging those two together.

KEVIN MONK: What about the CATS bus terminal? I don't know, just a thought.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Geographically they're kind of in line right down Florida Boulevard. Pretty much, right?

ERIC CHUPINA: Right.

MICHELLE DUNCAN: Yes. It would be, but the bus stop is going to actually become, at the first of the year, they're going to have their snack bar, supposed to finish it back up starting the first of the year. That's what Ms. Vanessa is shooting for. And then I think there would be some changes to the Department of Agriculture. And I think we need to make a change to the post office. Which would also open up brickyard as well. So just a suggestion to think about those locations.

KEVIN MONK: Do you want to talk about the changes, Michelle, to Department of Ag?

MICHELLE DUNCAN: Okay.

EMMA PALMER: I was just going to ask the Department of Agriculture, what they not going to have a snack bar?

MICHELLE DUNCAN: Correct. They do not want a snack bar anymore. They are looking at maybe changing the snack bar and putting in more vending machines. Probably maybe a freezer machine or something like that. We are actually going to kind of, got to meet with Mr. Dan and see how he wants to handle it. But he did call yesterday and advise that he would like to maybe no longer do the snack bar.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: She's tried and tried over there. Herb, you've been over there. You know how it is.

HERBERT READO: Yeah. Yeah. Not the best.

MICHELLE DUNCAN: She's selling‑- sorry. She advised she's selling less than two biscuits a morning right now. So she's trying to not do that. They told her that they wanted to have lunch and people asked for lunch. And when she does lunches, she might sell three lunches in a day. And that's a busy day for her.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Maybe not vending only. That's still not enough of a location to make, you know, our goal for a manager to make. But you combine that with maybe with the post office and/or the bus station, that would be two vending and they'd have the cooking available for them at the bus station.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Steve, it sort of sounds like Baton Rouge has more of a problem with getting places merged. So why don't we get together with Michelle since she knows more about it, and we can work from there?

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Well, we could also incorporate this into when we spin these federal machines off as well. Federal courthouse across the street from the post office there's four machines over there that we're getting commissions on. So incorporate that to the post office and the brickyard, maybe that would be enough.

MICHELLE DUNCAN: To have one location, yeah.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: We need to take a look at available. Like I said, federal opportunities as well that we'd have to, at some point, spin off. Maybe use that as part of combining a location.

MICHELLE DUNCAN: And look, even if we do that, Steve, I would suggest, you know, Department of Agriculture, truly, isn't far from the bus station. If the federal building got combined with that and brickyard with the post office to make one route, and then you could do the CTC bus station with just the vending at Department of Agriculture. Because, you know, the bus station only has one coke machine. They don't have any other vending.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Right.

MICHELLE DUNCAN: So that wouldn't be bad either.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Okay. Well, I know Mica was doing, on federal court, looking at median salary and income. Based on what people report there's a lot of underperforming locations out there. You know, we can go out and get new managers to work at underperforming locations or try to combine some of these so the managers that we do have have a better opportunity to make a living wage. So at the end of the year everybody sends their numbers in so we can take a look at it, and we can see if the numbers are reported correctly who's making money, who's not making money. To me that would be pretty much (inaudible) geographic location criteria for merger. Shelly, why don't we circle back maybe mid-January and have a meeting and put them all together.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Yes. Right. Okay.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Cause Baton Rouge seems to be the one we have the most challenges in.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Okay. That's what it sounds like to me. Okay.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: In Shreveport too, Frank. Got a few up there.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Yeah. One we got taken care of. We can go ahead and combine the post office. Not the post office, but the Benton Courthouse with the police department.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Okay.

MICHELLE DUNCAN: Yeah. That's here. We just have, like Department of Agriculture and the post office, they just, people don't support those locations and they're not big enough buildings, you know, for it to be a standalone location.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Department of Agriculture is a two-story building. It's big, but a lot of it's, there's a lot of empty space inside those walls too.

MICHELLE DUNCAN: Right. I think they have less than 200 people that come into the Department of Agriculture.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Somehow or another we need counts of people in the buildings. And I don't know how we can get it. They won't tell us.

MICHELLE DUNCAN: Well, OSB downtown, they do take scanners. Johnson Control actually is the people that help OSB get those numbers. And Calvin did give me some numbers for the LaSalle Building the other day. They had 527 people badge in one day, was the only day he could get from Johnson Controls. But he said he is having a hard time getting contact with them and getting them to pull numbers for him.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: That's close to 50‑percent, Michelle.

MICHELLE DUNCAN: Yes. Yes, it is close. LaSalle is close to 50‑percent. I have talked to Mike about being interested in going ahead and trying to, after the first of the year we're going to see what the numbers are and start working on getting everything together for him to go ahead and started moving down there. And, you know, get with Steve and have Poydras put out before then and all that so.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: That's another issue is Poydras is going to be coming up.

MICHELLE DUNCAN: Yes. And I don't have any managers. And look, you know, I know a while ago we were talking about people coming into the program. And Samantha in the Baton Rouge location area, she's the blind counselor over here. And she gave me two people that were interested in the beginning and then sat down and we went over everything, you know. I was about to sign off and send the paperwork to Steve and then Samantha came and said they withdrew. They didn't want to go through the Randolph Sheppard program. So, you know, that's kind of frustrating when you think you have some potential people to come through and then they back out on us.

CANDICE LINVILLE: Did they say why they didn't want to?

MICHELLE DUNCAN: No. I didn't talk to Samantha on why. She just said that they were going in a different direction than what they thought they were interested in. And neither one of them had a lot of cooking experience or anything like that. But, you know, I thought at least if they went through the program maybe they would have that.

CANDICE LINVILLE: It's, you know, a really good topic when we do make contact with some of these VR counselors or whatever. It isn't about just the food. They need to know that it's about business skills.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: That's exactly what I was going to say Candice.

MICHELLE DUNCAN: You know, one of them had no business experience at all. And I think he was a little intimidated by having a financial responsibility, you know, after he got rid of the two weeks’ worth of products. And so I think that's why he backed out. The other one, I'm not quite sure at all why he backed out.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: You don't want people going in with doubts. You want someone who's a businessperson, who wants to have their own business. Those are hard to find.

KEVIN MONK: Yeah. If they're going to be scared off, you'd rather scare them off upfront.

MICHELLE DUNCAN: Right. Yes. Yeah. Because I know, you know, I know in the past I have had someone that I've made suggestions to and said you know, like if you're really truly interested in going through the program you have no experience at all, she had no working experience, no food experience, she had just come out of high school. You know, and I made some suggestions, and she didn't want to do any of the suggestions so.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: I suggest you don't talk about her anymore. Let her go back to her counselor. We do have‑‑ cooking is important. But we have some managers who want to be cooks, you know. But that's not really what we need. Cooking the food is just the way you make it presentable to sale at another point in time. You want to sale, sale, sale. I think we've kind of gotten in that situation too. If you focus too much on what's for lunch, you forget to stock the cooler with everything else you could be selling to everybody else. It's all about the product. If that means you got to cook it or buy it from somebody else. Okay.

FRANK GAFFNEY: You don't manage your money, you can't buy anymore stock.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Exactly.

CANDICE LINVILLE: Correct.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Frank, you got roadsides on here.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Yep. Everybody's up and going at the present time. Donald's in place, still waiting for more construction. Sam is open and got construction on one side or the other. Candice is open. And I'm open.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Okay.

FRANK GAFFNEY: We got one on third party. And Urlean is open.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Big talk on roadsides nationwide is putting in these electric charging stations. Kevin and I had a meeting with the blind vendors managers. So that's coming, you know. Some would protest it and say it's going hurt our business and everything else. I think that's on the horizon. There's 7 billion‑dollars in the transportation fund to pay for charging stations all over the place.

KEVIN MONK: Basically, you know, the first little bit they don't anticipate it being an issue for Randolph Sheppard. You know, they do two or three charging stations or whatever. You know, probably not going to be a problem. But once people get to buying electric vehicles and once, you know, there's a bigger demand and there's 30 or 40 charging stations out there at a rest area and people are going to want something more than a bottle drink and a bag of chips out of a machine. They're going to want McDonalds or Subway or whatever while they're charging their car. And so the fear is that it will be just the tip of the ice burg and ultimately, probably Randolph Sheppard would lose in the whole thing.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Our only priority is just vending machines.

KEVIN MONK: Right.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: That's it. We only have priority. That's it.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: But the roadsides are state locations. They're not federal locations. There is federal directives to adhere to. As long as we keep maintaining our good relationship with DOTD. With the vast majority of people at DOTD, huh, Michelle. Just keep doing what we're doing. Candice, we got vending as a subcommittee. You've been doing a lot of vending lately.

CANDICE LINVILLE: Yes, I have. Just trying to get my AMSs to work properly. You know, keep the coin mecs and dollar bill validators. Recently got one of those new, what's it called, Frank?

FRANK GAFFNEY: Recycler.

CANDICE LINVILLE: The recycler. Well, I got one at Delgado, actually, when we went to open up for this semester. But I never really got to see it in operation cause we closed right after, you know. But I got one put at the rest area. And actually my coke man is supposed to get all new mecs and put recyclers on all the machines. And it will take up to, I mean, you can set it however you want or have them set it rather. But it will go up to 100‑dollar bill. And it's supposed to, you know, which I kept mine set at 20 and below. But you could if you wanted. And it does have the counter fit, you know, aspect to where you're not going to get the bad bills. And that's all I know new on vending machines.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: That's Herbert Reado kind of money talking about putting 100‑dollar bill in a vending machine.

CANDICE LINVILLE: I can't believe‑‑ look, I try to keep mine working good. I would never stick a 20‑dollar bill in a vending machine. Just because, you know. But I had a lady like two weeks ago put a 20 in one of my vendors. And so the rest area called me because the lady, it got stuck in the validator and she couldn't get it out. And it was a piece of it was sticking out and they said they tried to get tweezers to pull it and they were afraid of whatever. So we ran over there and got it out. And I was like who puts a 20 in there. There's not even a sticker on there that says it takes anything more than a one. But I guess at other rest areas maybe it's just common for them to take the twenties, tens, and fives, you know. I don't know. But I tell you what, so what I'm going to do with the rest area, I hadn't really talked to them about it, but anyway. So that lady left her information for me to refund and the 20 was in there, of course, when I went. But I was like send me, so I looked her up online and Facebook and I called and left the lady a message. And I had her address. Cause I was like why spend the money on a stamp and deal with the mail and send cash. I Venomed her the money. She was more than happy. And then that way, you know. I'm going to do that, actually, with both of them if there's an issue like that. Make sure you get their phone number. Well, it's free. And it's instant. And you have electronic receipt. It shows that you sent it to them.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Win, win, win.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: It's much faster than the mail.

CANDICE LINVILLE: Right.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Pony express is faster than the mail.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Yeah. Right.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: I skipped over training and upward mobility training. Combined the two with Herb and Shelly.

HERBERT READO: I don't have nothing new.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Not right now.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Now Blast, I think they have a virtual conference coming up in January. Supposed to be in‑person in Atlantic City, I think. That might be an opportunity. I could find out more about that and let everybody know. First of January. I kind of like those Blast conferences on Zoom. They tend to get pretty good information from it.

CANDICE LINVILLE: Right.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Y'all agree?

FRANK GAFFNEY: I'm listening to all the other states on their committee calls.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: What are you learning, Frank?

FRANK GAFFNEY: That a lot of people got problems.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Yeah. He's learning things he don't want to learn. A lot of problems.

FRANK GAFFNEY: California started the pandemic with 88 managers and now they got 55.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Yeah. But one time they had 300 something managers over there.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Yeah.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: 350.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Yep.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: All right. Well, I'll find out where Blast is at. We got Sage Brush coming up. Anybody going to Sage Brush?

EMMA PALMER: I am.

HERBERT READO: Yeah. I'll be there.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: And Emma too?

EMMA PALMER: Yeah.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Going to Vegas, huh. And that's 1st of January as well?

SHELLY LEJEUNE: February.

FRANK GAFFNEY: February 14th through the 18th.

HERBERT READO: The week the Dallas Cowboys in the Superbowl.

CANDICE LINVILLE: Dream on.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: What's that policy on drug testing managers.

CANDICE LINVILLE: Right.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Last thing is insurance, Frank.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Yes. I hadn't got all the final stuff yet. I signed all the paperwork last Friday. I verified all the managers that I knew. And everything that had been sent in. We're still missing something. Michelle's got quite a few of them, I believe. But, you know, we're on good terms with the man in charge. So we're insured.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Good.

FRANK GAFFNEY: We just got to make sure we send the person the extra checks as soon as they come in.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Well, David sent an email. He's been sending us like a daily update. We've been doing pretty good on the collection. I think we're down about six or seven people. Some of those checks are in hand already.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Right. I know Michelle's got some of them.

MICHELLE DUNCAN: I have a lot, actually.

FRANK GAFFNEY: I wasn't going to say that.

MICA SMITH: I had three managers and I sent David an update just before this meeting. And all of them told me they put the checks in the mail either yesterday or Wednesday. So David should be getting them Monday, I would assume, or Tuesday.

FRANK GAFFNEY: I hope.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: I just got an email from city hall. That's what I was going to ask you, Mica. I don't know if you got that. We have a situation at city hall. There's no hot water going to the building at all. Come to find out, it hasn't had hot water since January. So the health inspector went out there and tested Tony's water and said you've got no hot water. That's a critical violation. Mica and I had to have a conversation with her on the phone. Even though it's pretty much prepackaged, sells popcorn and coffee, she said you still got to be able to have hot water to mop the floor which, you know. Continue to operate, they're giving us till the 19th to get it fixed. But the problem is it's not us, it's the entire building of city hall. But he's got to suspend serving coffee until we get the hot water fixed. So Mica sent city hall guy an email earlier in the week. He just send it back. He said we have the paperwork routed to get the hot water heater replaced. But since it requires a contract, I can't guarantee you it will be repaired before 1/19/22. In fact, I would say chances are it won't. If you would like for me to explain the situation to LDH directly, I would be happy to. But Mica and I explained the situation directly to LDH and she don't care. She's like we don't care about city hall, we just care about the snack bar at city hall. So we're trying to work around that situation right now. And that is affecting Tony.

CANDICE LINVILLE: Does anybody have a contact out there?

STEVEN DEBRUHL: This is a facility manager at city hall. And we talked to the supervisor at LDH. We also have criminal court right next door which Tony has and was shutdown. So we're checking on that. Might be able to get a small hot water heater put in the snack bar itself. Cause there was one at one point in time, but it was taken out. I think when they started getting hot water from city hall. So we're trying to locate that mini hot water heater to put back in the snack bar. Just kind of give you an update what's going on with city hall. District concerns. Anybody have anything? Rundown it, but if you have anything? Anybody else have a concern from a district they want to bring up at this point?

CANDICE LINVILLE: Well, I do.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Okay.

CANDICE LINVILLE: So I sent you a text yesterday, I believe. I was out at Delgado on‑‑ I don't know what day it is anymore. Wednesday, I guess, I don't know. And talked to some faculty and what not. Anyway, they are so below on their enrollment numbers. So they try to have about 14,500 students enrolled. With the majority of the enrollees at city park campus. There's what, seven campuses. They are at 6,098 people enrolled as of right now. Between all seven campuses. Of course, you know, they never can differentiate that number for us. But they weren't even giving any numbers. I just happened to, you know, talk to somebody and got some. But anyway, that's low.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: That is low. Your text said this time last year we had 8,000. So a couple thousand off.

CANDICE LINVILLE: Right. And that was in the middle of the pandemic.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Traditionally they do tend to sign up late. But it's getting late. Semester starts about four weeks.

CANDICE LINVILLE: Right. 20th, I think.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Right.

MICA SMITH: The other major issue with that too is the online. Online classes, percentage of students taking online classes is going up. If you take that 6,000 something and divide it between all the campus and then take out the online, you're probably not left with much.

CANDICE LINVILLE: Right.

FRANK GAFFNEY: You might as well take half of it away.

CANDICE LINVILLE: Right. Cause it's about 50‑percent.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Mica, why don't you tell them what Hasan's been up to.

MICA SMITH: Hasan's cafeteria opened and vending machines that are assigned to that location also. He's been doing about‑‑ a really, really good day for him, the best day that I've heard him tell me about is about 600 in sales. So that's really, you know, making 600‑dollars in sales, I don't think he's really making any money, you know.

CANDICE LINVILLE: Right.

MICA SMITH: He has to pay, he has two employees working in the back doing the cooking. And that's pretty much the minimum, you know, the cooking and serving, actually. That's pretty much, in my eyes, that's like the bare minimum. And then he's got somebody at the cash register. And then he's got someone who helps him fill vending machines and is kind of like an assistant type of person. So, you know, that's four employees. And he's doing his best to try to minimize their hours when he can. You know, send the people home early or, you know, have them not come in. Of course, can't have them come in 40 hours a week. It's a part time job to begin with. Just try to minimize their hours.

CANDICE LINVILLE: Is he opening on Friday?

MICA SMITH: Yeah. He was opening on Fridays. Of course, he closed down now. He closed down after the final exams were over with. But Fridays were very, very slow.

CANDICE LINVILLE: Right.

MICA SMITH: Of course, you know.

CANDICE LINVILLE: I was open for two Fridays and I didn't even ring 200‑dollars on either Friday. And on Mondays and Wednesdays I was doing like between 4 and 600. And Tuesdays and Thursdays I had just gotten to where I was doing about 900. So, I mean, you would think with me being closed up in building one that maybe he would do a little bit more business and he's not.

MICA SMITH: Right. The foot traffic is just not there.

CANDICE LINVILLE: Right.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Mica, has he picked up any catering yet?

MICA SMITH: He has had a few very small catering jobs. Cause Delgado, they haven't went back to like their main catering things which were you have Goldman Sachs. Which as of right now, who knows what's going to happen next semester. But as of right now Goldman Sachs is planning on starting up their in‑person sessions for next semester. And so he's working with the two administrators at Goldman Sachs to come up with a menu and prices. So he's doing a good job with that, working with them. But with Covid, with the Covid situation currently, you know, that could not happen, you know. Delgado could just stay online or who knows what's going to happen. So he hasn't had that. You know, that's been nonexistent since Covid, Goldman Sachs. There's a few other major events that happen every semester. Complications is the one I'm thinking of. That's a really big event that the cafeteria caters. But that hasn't been going on. So he's had some very small stuff. He had one small thing with the SGA and then he had a small thing with the ROTC people on campus. But it was like, for ROTC, it was like cupcakes that they wanted to give away, you know. So I think he made them like 50 cupcakes. And the other one, I'm not exactly sure, but I know it was small.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Have we talked to Delgado anymore about going over and looking at say kind of like an operation like Pinky has for the coffee shop?

MICA SMITH: I've invited Chris several times. Chris is the main person I want to get over there because, you know, I just want to show‑‑ he's the person that can go back to Russo, his boss. And I don't think Russo’s going to go over there. But Chris is actually on Delgado west bank campus right now they're shooting a TV show. And so Chris has been over there, and he's had to be dealing with that. And so he told me that maybe next week he can meet me over there. So we just wanted to show him, you know, another coffee operation besides Einstein. Let them know.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: I don't want to interrupt, but Mica and I met with Delgado and then we also talked to the guy, Beau, from Einstein. Delgado is not, they're actually their franchisee and we operate a location. They didn't even know they were the franchisee until we told them. They thought we were. So the agreement, we can get out of it by sending them a letter saying we don't want to do it anymore. They don't care about taking the equipment back. All that equipment belongs to Delgado. Whatever doesn't belong to us. So we can convert that from an Einstein bagel franchise into something else if that's what we decide to do. Now Candice has already told us there's a minimum menus they go by. He was supposed to provide that to us. But he's also good for leaving it closed for, he said after 18 months they canceled the permit. You have to reapply blah, blah, blah. But he says since Candice reopened, and the clock started when you closed again.

CANDICE LINVILLE: Oh, good.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: But I don't know how long Delgado is going to want that spot to be closed. Got to have some activity in there.

CANDICE LINVILLE: I saw Chris when I was there Wednesday, and he didn't ask me anything about it.

KEVIN MONK: Candice, in your estimation, I mean when things are good, I know that Einstein did well, but is there a benefit to having that recognized name verses, you know, Candice's Bagels or whatever bagel shop?

CANDICE LINVILLE: Without a doubt. At first, I didn't realize it. It took me working the franchise a little bit to grasp it because, you know, you can sit there and kind of, I don't know, like I was, I had royalties to pay, the marketing to pay, the auditors they would send. You know, all the little things that you have to pay for. But in saying that, your prices from them on your products are way cheaper than you could ever get it from any distributor as being one business. So when you have a franchise whether it's a licensee or whatever, like with Einstein you're part of 500 stores. So your buying power is just so much better. So just for instance, I was sitting down at one of our meetings and Pinky was at the table. I'm not saying their product is exactly the same, but I'm sure it's close. So she uses a powdered ice cream-based milk product which is how she makes her frozen coffees. She paid more than twice what I paid for the same product. So and that's the buying power of being with a franchise that has 500 stores instead of one store with, you know, buying your stuff. So it offsets those extra costs. But regardless, you have to have people there. I think Mica said on their call that they had that Beau was saying that my sales that I was doing the two weeks that I was open was not sustainable for what it cost buying the product and labor. And it wasn't. I only wanted to be open cause I wanted my girls to be able to start making some money and I didn't want them to go anywhere else. I wanted to keep them. And so I just, you know, opened and wanted to stay open for that reason and that reason alone.

FRANK GAFFNEY: You can't buy cream cheese now.

KEVIN MONK: Thanks for that explanation. It's sort of what I thought, but it had never been confirmed for me in terms of the franchise. I mean, clearly, you know, customers tend to like name recognition and, you know, and that kind of thing. But the buying power, you know, of the group also is significant.

CANDICE LINVILLE: Right. Yes. But you got to have people and there's just not enough people on campus. And the way they designed that store. I mean, I guess, you know, they wanted it to service their students. But the way that they should have designed that store, is it should have been to where you could access it from the community as well so that way for one, it would have kept it open 52‑weeks a year instead of on a semester basis. Cause when the school's closed you can't get in the parking lot, you can't get in the building. So you have to do their same schedule.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Well, you know, it's their campus, and really for their students. They don't care about the manager. But they do want us to make money. They're saying if we have to drop out and do that, they're open to doing that as well. But right now I think we should let sleeping dogs lie. They're not asking us to open it up. I think we have to talk about maybe next time around about merging that Delgado location. At one point the franchise Einstein was part of the deal. When we got to, we removed Scott from Einstein and put it out to bid. But at this point, you know, Hasan's only doing 600‑dollars. I don't know about putting another manager on campus.

CANDICE LINVILLE: Right.

FRANK GAFFNEY: That's why I was asking about that other coffee location. As low as Hasan is doing now.

MICA SMITH: Six hundred‑dollars was the best day that he told me about. I mean, there was plenty of days where he did 300‑dollars, you know. I think with the situation with keeping Einstein on campus and going with something else is darned if you do, darned if you don't. We don't know the future. If we knew there was going to be a lot of foot traffic in the future, then yeah, it would be worth it to keep it. But you got, like Candice said, you got to have the foot traffic. If you don't have foot traffic, you can't sell.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: I think we just let, you know, just keep it closed. And when they start pressing us to open it back up again, we'll figure it out at that time.

CANDICE LINVILLE: Right. It's a great franchise though. You know, it really is.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: That's why you quit, right. I shouldn't have gone there.

CANDICE LINVILLE: Well, this place is 20‑minutes from my house.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: All right.

CANDICE LINVILLE: It's right by my house.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Okay. Yeah. I love you. We're just not good together. All right. We've come to the date for the next meeting. Kevin, I think we're supposed to come up with a date for the next four meetings. Kevin, is that right?

SPEAKER: How are you going to do that?

STEVEN DEBRUHL: We'll do it right now. I have a calendar in front of me. Today is December 17th. Y'all want to look at March 22 as our next target date? The 4th, the 11th, the 18th and the 25th if we want to continue to do them on a Friday.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Yes.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: When is Mardi Gras?

MICA SMITH: March 1st.

DON ARABY: March 1st.

SPEAKER: March 1st.

KEVIN MONK: Lynn just sent a message. He wants to know if you can let him back on, Steve.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Who?

KEVIN MONK: Lynn Blanchard did. He just sent a message said his thing died out or whatever. His phone or whatever it was.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: He's back in. Y'all want to go maybe March 10th?

FRANK GAFFNEY: You mean the 11th?

STEVEN DEBRUHL: I lost my schedule. Lynn got me. Yeah. March 11th would be the second, the week after Mardi Gras. 3/11.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Yeah. That's good.

SPEAKER: Yeah. That's good.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: 3/11. Lynsey, I know you're getting this. So if we go three more months out, March, April, May, June. June 3rd, June 10th, June 17th or June 24th. Want to go for the 10th?

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Let's go with the 10th.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: That's 6/10. And September Labor Day is a Friday which is the first Friday, the 2nd. The 9th would be the Monday after Labor Day.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Wait. You mean?

STEVEN DEBRUHL: 23rd or 30th. The Fridays in September. Friday the 2nd is Labor Day weekend.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: The Friday after Labor Day.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Which would be the 9th.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Yeah.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: 9/9 of 22. This time next year we have the 2nd, the 9th, the 16th, the 23rd and the 30th. Want to go 12/9 there? Basically it's the second Friday of each quarter.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Yeah. That sounds good.

DON ARABY: Yeah. That's good.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: All right. Well, I'll put that together. In fact, I'll probably end up doing the Zoom invitations right now, you know, send it out.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Yeah. That's the way we have to do our meetings for our chapter here for ABL. All of them for the year.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Well, I think cause it is a public meeting we have to advertise it and everything else. Make sure we're in compliance with all that. Next item is adjournment. Frank, you got anything to say before we do that?

FRANK GAFFNEY: Do I hear a motion to adjourn?

SHELLY LEJEUNE: I move that we adjourn the committee meeting.

CANDICE LINVILLE: I second.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: All right. So wraps another year of the EC.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Meeting is adjourned.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: We're all in favor.

Randolph Sheppard

Blind Vendors Trust Fund

December 17th, 2021

STEVEN DEBRUHL: So at this point we're going to dovetail into the blind vendors trust fund meeting. Open that agenda right here on my computer. So call to order, Mr. Chairman.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Call this meeting to order. I was trying to get my agenda back under my magnifier.

CANDICE LINVILLE: Candice Linville, New Orleans.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Shelly Lejeune, Baton Rouge.

DON ARABY: Don Araby, Alexandria.

EARL HEBERT: Earl Hebert, Lafayette.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Frank Gaffney, chairman.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: We lost Herbert and Emma.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Herbert you there? Emma, are you still online with us?

FRANK GAFFNEY: Do we have quorum?

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Herbert, is that you?

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Yeah. We have four, Frank.

DON ARABY: We do have four. Yes, we do.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Yeah. If I can count that much right now.

DON ARABY: We do.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Is that a quorum?

FRANK GAFFNEY: Yes.

HERBERT READO: There you go. Unmute me. There you go.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: There's Herb.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: There he is.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: You're unmuted. Herbert Reado. All right. That's fine.

FRANK GAFFNEY: We have review of the agenda. And approval of the October minutes. I read them all. Again, several times. So we're good there. Do I hear a motion to approve the minutes?

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Aye.

DON ARABY: I move that we approve the minutes as read.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: I'll second. Shelly.

FRANK GAFFNEY: All in favor?

{Collective aye}

FRANK GAFFNEY: Opposed? Motion carries. All right.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: All right. Trust fund monthly income disbursements. I'm going to share my screen here.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Yeah. What you sent me, Steve, doesn't have all the stuff.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Well, I'll explain it to you. All right. So, I sent you guys an excel document. Can y'all see that? Mica, can you see that? Mica, are you able to see what I've got up here?

FRANK GAFFNEY: It's there, but I can't read it even with a magnifier.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: I know. But I'm asking‑‑ Eric, can you see that spread sheet?

ERIC CHUPINA: Yeah.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Okay.

MICA SMITH: I can see it.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: There's Mica.

KEVIN MONK: This is Kevin.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: All right. So y'all can see. All right. So this is Louisiana Workforce Commission blind vendors trust fund. This is the balance as of today. Well, they just gave us this information first of the weekend. So the current balance is $728,981.11. Had a couple big expenditure months. In the month of September we sent 72,000. October was 67,000. Those were the medical stipend payments that finally cleared the bank. Didn't spend a whole lot of money in December. Only 153‑dollars. And then 2600. So right now the balance as it stands today is a little bit over 729,000‑dollars. Now, Frank, at the bottom of that tab, I don't know if you can see it. So on an excel document at the bottom they have different tabs. So if you click on budget verses actual that breaks it down, gives you all the different locations, Frank.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Okay.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: You can play with it. It breaks it up by month over here. It's got opening period right here. That would be, I guess, July 1st when we start, right, for the state fiscal year.

KEVIN MONK: Yes.

CANDICE LINVILLE: Wait. Where's‑‑

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Sorry, Candice. What were you saying?

CANDICE LINVILLE: Will you move it for a second so I can see. Where did you click to get to that?

STEVEN DEBRUHL: All right.

CANDICE LINVILLE: Oh, wait. I see.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: At the very bottom of the excel document. The first tab says year to date. All right.

CANDICE LINVILLE: I see it now. Okay. Your pointer is just small.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Okay. Let me try to blow this up.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: That's cause he can see it.

KEVIN MONK: And for those who are JAWS users, there are keyboard commands to access that. I think it's control page down, if I'm not mistaken, would take you to the next tab. And control page up, I think it is, takes you to the previous.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: So that first page, you know, all expenses broken out by large categories. Other charges is 101,000. So that would be purchases, repairs, things of that nature. Got it by month. And then the year to date on the third tab it says by month GL account. Next tab says budget verses actual. That's where it goes into individual locations. And you can see under column P it says opening period. On the top it's got H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P. P says opening period. So that would be starting in June. July, August, September. When you get to zero that would be the next month. So that's where we are right now as far as the trust fund is. I know Frank wants to get more things in the collection column over here. This is where we are. Eric does this spread sheet for us as well. Eric, are you looking at your spread sheet? Can you see it? Is that you Eric on the screen?

ERIC CHUPINA: Can you hear me?

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Yeah. Is that you?

ERIC CHUPINA: Yeah. Yes.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: So these are, Eric maintains the spread sheet as we get the collections in. These are the totals we're looking at right now. Year to date. What month is this, Eric? This is October 20 till September 21.

ERIC CHUPINA: Yeah. This is up until October 2021. I haven't finished the October 2021 and November.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: You can see cokes a big‑‑ we got 51,000 from coke so far this year. 103,000 from Refreshment Solutions. A lot of that has to do with University Hospital of New Orleans with that money from them. That's been averaging around five to six a month. So that's a good one there. That also includes Corp of Engineers and a few other ones. Louisiana Toms. So far, again, we've got some new numbers to put in, but that's 27,000. The big one we got Toms, Refreshment Solutions, coke are the three biggest contributors to the trust fund. But then going to Refreshment Solutions. Again, I can send you guys this. At the bottom of the tab Eric has it broken down by month. So we got Baton Rouge Police Department. Bridge City Youth. What we also have here he breaks it out by federal location, state location. So the yellow is state. The blue is federal. So we got Coast Guard on here. We have Corp of Engineers on here. We have FL Hebert. Hale Boggs. NASA. Customs House. Department of Agriculture New Orleans and district court. These are federal locations that we have from Refreshment Solutions. And these are the locations we have to look at when it comes to spinning them off and maybe merging them with another manager's location. So I think I sent you guys this in the past. If you want, Eric can make sure we get everything in there and I can send it out to you next week if you want to get a copy of this.

CANDICE LINVILLE: I'd like a copy.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Okay.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Yeah. Sounds good.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: I'll send you this and then as we get the updates, I'll just send it after.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Okay.

ERIC CHUPINA: Yeah. I could do the updates. I can finish up on Monday. The new fiscal year.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Okay. Let's do that. We'll just send you a fresh one next week. That's how we keep track of it. Chauntey does it for us. She gets a check, she has a spreadsheet, she keys them, and Eric breaks it out by the fed and state. To the best of our efforts it's always a little bit off on what they're showing being deposited because sometimes there's a deposit made at the very beginning of the fiscal year. In the process of figuring that out. Canteen, Natari, coke, Ten M. Eric actually added this, checks we received from managers in the year 2021. So we're keeping track of how the managers pay us back as well.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Does that come to us or go to the general fund?

STEVEN DEBRUHL: It gets deposited into our account.

FRANK GAFFNEY: I didn't think so. Unless they changed it.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: It used to went to the general fund.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Yeah. It always went to the general fund.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Hey, we'll take it.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: If it goes in our account doesn't mean they won't come back and take it out later.

FRANK GAFFNEY: They told us it couldn't come to us. This is what they told us in past years. It couldn't come to us because it couldn't go into the trust fund.

KEVIN MONK: I thought money in the trust fund could come from any source from what I remember. But I'm going to make a note.

FRANK GAFFNEY: They said, this is what they told us. That it was managers paying their money back and that was federal dollars that they were paying back.

KEVIN MONK: Yeah. Possibly. At least part of it.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Yeah. Well, I mean, I'm tickled to have it come to us.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: So am I.

KEVIN MONK: I'm tickled that people are paying off their debit.

KEVIN MONK: Chauntey gets the checks. They make a deposit, it goes into our account.

FRANK GAFFNEY: That's good. We won't say nothing else about it.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Might be Refreshment Solutions and a small G Washington check coming in.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Wow.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Chump change.

KEVIN MONK: All right. I got a note to ask Steven about that to confirm.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: May want to let sleeping dogs lie. I don't know.

KEVIN MONK: Yeah. Well, maybe so.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: But I've heard that what Frank said before too about that.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Yeah. Everything went in general fund. Especially if a manager paid any money back.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Well, that kind of makes sense. I mean, it is federal money by in large. 78‑percent of it. We should at least be able to get our‑‑

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Our share of it.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Yeah. We'll see. Okay. Stop sharing my screen. Trust fund balance. Unfinished business. We got blind vendor trust fund source of revenue data, Frank. Kind of what I just went through right there.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Yeah.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: In that spread sheet. Okay. Like I said, we'll update those, and we'll send you guys‑‑ cause Eric's great about doing that. As soon as he sends me an update from now on, I'll forward it to all the members of the EC. And now we got open discussion.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Open discussion. More locations, more money.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Yeah. Need managers.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: We're trying. One thing we've added to the RSMAs each month they have to go out and find a new location that could possibly be an opportunity. So we're going to redouble our efforts to try to look for new locations, new managers in the year to come and get more money in the trust fund. But at the same token, I mean, Kevin and I saw our buddy Michael Tally. He gave us a speech during our Randolph Sheppard day at the national association meeting we had. He's got 150 vending machines, but I think he only has ten through the state building. So he's got a lot of private locations and they do supply him with the machines. If he goes out and finds a spot, they're supporting him with the equipment. Now we've done that with a few managers, you know. But if you guys find something else you want to work on that are not on state property, that could be in your neighborhood, we're more than happy to try to support you with that too. If y'all find somewhere that you want to add to your place or could be good for the trust fund, you let us know as well. So we should all be prospecting all the time.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Now we don't know what's going to come of this, but Nicky and them are having meetings with Amazon.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Okay.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Yeah. They had some already, but we didn't get no results yet.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Yeah. Still got more meetings working.

KEVIN MONK: Amazon's popping up all over the place. Baton Rouge, Lafayette. They're all over the place.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Shreveport.

KEVIN MONK: Okay. I didn't know they had one up there.

FRANK GAFFNEY: It's supposed to be the biggest one in the state.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: I don't know, the one here in Baton Rouge where the mall was is pretty damn big.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: That would be great. So what kind of feedback you said Nicky got?

FRANK GAFFNEY: They're having meetings with them. That's all we're getting right now. It hadn't been just one meeting. They're having continuous‑‑

SHELLY LEJEUNE: They had several meetings already. But nothing came up for or against us yet. Which is good.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Okay. You know, Amazon, they're in the business themselves. So I don't know if they would view us as competition. Go to Wal‑Mart they got the 75‑cent canned drinks out there too.

KEVIN MONK: We can dream.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: We can dream.

FRANK GAFFNEY: You know Wal‑Mart's supplied by Pepsi and coke.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Right.

FRANK GAFFNEY: They do their machines.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: They sell them cheap too over there.

FRANK GAFFNEY: For years they did it themselves and then they turned it over to the soda companies.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Yeah. I don't ever buy anything from there. All right.

FRANK GAFFNEY: I went one time, and I was dying for a soda. I got me a Diet Pepsi and it was six months out of date.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: That will keep you on your diet for sure. All right. Anything else to discuss? Open discussion. Close it right up.

FRANK GAFFNEY: All right. Do I hear a motion to close?

SHELLY LEJEUNE: I move that we adjourn the trust fund meeting right now.

DON ARABY: I second.

FRANK GAFFNEY: All in favor?

{Collective aye}

FRANK GAFFNEY: Anybody opposed?

SHELLY LEJEUNE: I don't think so. Kevin's gone already.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: I'll be gone as soon as I click this button. Before I leave, want to tell everyone season’s greetings, happy holidays, happy kwanza.

DON ARABY: You too.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Merry Christmas. Whatever you got going on.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Everybody be safe for the holidays.

DON ARABY: Merry Christmas to everybody.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Don't forget about Covid. You know me, get vaccinated. All right. Lynsey, you got our dates down there? You're going to be good to go for those dates? Put them on your calendar for next year.

FRANK GAFFNEY: What was the Covid rate in Denver? I got people from Brigham Young University coming in for a football game.

SHELLY LEJEUNE: Yeah.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Our one football game.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Who else is playing in that besides BYU?

FRANK GAFFNEY: A team from Alabama. One of the Alabama’s. I don't know which one. Alabama something.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Alabama Birmingham, something like that. All right. You guys have a good weekend.

CANDICE LINVILLE: You too.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: See you later.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Bye, bye.