Randolph Sheppard

 Blind Vendors Trust Fund

 September 8, 2023

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Call to order then, Frank.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Call the meeting to order of the trust fund. Roll call.

SHELLEY LEJEUNE: Shelley LeJeune, Baton Rouge.

EMMA PALMER: Emma Palmer, Shreveport.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Frank Gaffney, Shreveport. State employees.

KEVIN MONK: Kevin Monk, blind services director.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Steven DeBruhl, Randolph Sheppard program manager.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Guests.

PAM GAFFNEY: Pam Gaffney.

BIANCA SHAW: Bianca Shaw, blind services.

FRANK GAFFNEY: And Lynsey. Kevin, I don't know if you're requesting again, I know you sent me a copy of the meetings. I already had a copy of the meetings. In that meeting, cause I listened to it on the way down here and Melissa told me she was going to send me a written explanation. And a copy of the minutes is not a written explanation. That explanation didn't explain anything to us. And I need something I can send to RSA that they can understand it.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: I had forwarded you what Stephen sent to Kevin and I one time, didn't I?

FRANK GAFFNEY: No.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: I think I did. All right. We'll work on that when we get back to the office.

FRANK GAFFNEY: In the minutes Melissa said she was going to send it to me but that never happened.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Back on the Trust Fund Advisory Board, review of agenda.

FRANK GAFFNEY: I've read it all.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Approval of minutes from the last meeting, which was Friday, June 9th, 2023.

FRANK GAFFNEY: I approve them.

SHELLEY LEJEUNE: I approve. I read them too.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: New business. Trust fund monthly income and disbursements trust fund balance. Go backwards. Currently the balance of the trust fund as of Thursday September 7th is $630,095.90.

SHELLEY LEJEUNE: Is that before or after the stipend?

STEVEN DEBRUHL: That's before.

SHELLEY LEJEUNE: Okay. I was wondering.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Haven't cashed yet.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Well, probably will reflect in there. Running balance. If you cash that check that you got, which I'm sure you probably hammered it in there, so that would come out of there. So we'll have a clearer idea by next meeting. But right now going into it 630,000 with some stipends taken out but not all stipends taken out. If none of the stipends were taken out that would bring us down to 530. And the month of June we had 42,000‑dollars in expenditures. That's June. 63095. What I might do is get an update maybe in a month from now once everything clears. I'll do that and I'll email you that. A new month total. Bianca provided us with printouts of the trust fund appropriations.

FRANK GAFFNEY: A stack of them.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Color too.

FRANK GAFFNEY: I'll be under my CCTV for a while.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Yeah. So you can go through there and see where the money went.

FRANK GAFFNEY: I can only look at that so long. Hurts my eyes.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Any questions about the balance other than what we talked about? Unfinished business. Blind vendors source of revenue data. Actually, that's what we got here.

FRANK GAFFNEY: What has come in?

STEVEN DEBRUHL: It's actually two pages here. So in August the expenditures were‑‑ okay, so 109,000‑dollars has come out this month which is the stipend payment. So the new balance, I apologize, $554,542.22. So that's with 100,000‑dollars of expenditures coming out. So that's the vast majority of the stipends. That's updated September 7th. So we're at 554. So we should start putting money back in here. I will say the third-party checks have been picking up just like everybody else's business. Our big winner is always the hospital in New Orleans. This last month we got 6,000‑dollars from the Coke machines over there. 5,500‑dollars from the snack machines. So that one location is producing like 1,100‑dollars. Which is the hospital, Frank. I know that tickles your fancy about that.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Yep. That's why we need three more of them.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Now as far as, you know, vending on federal property we received that technical advice and guidance from RSA. They're saying, and we talked about it before, you know, you have a federal property on third party that needs to be spun off to a blind manager when that contract runs out. Our contracts are kind of opened ended. They're not really contracts. They're agreements that we'll do it here until you tell us to leave, or we decide to leave. Give you a 30-day notice. So we did make the one change. The money from NASA was going to the trust fund and that was averaging about 1,200‑dollars a month. And that was actually on the same footprint as Bobby Jesus. So by law he should have been getting that money. And so he's been getting paid third party from NASA.

We talked about Leon earlier. This is an opportunity I talked to Frank about too. We still have downtown in New Orleans, the Hale Boggs Federal Courthouse Building which used to be a manned location, then third party, then manned, or womanned in that case. So now it's still on third party. That could be a location we could look to maybe spin out to a New Orleans person like Leon if he was able to get there. Hit on the trust fund would be a bit similar. Like a thousand dollars a month on that. Those machines actually do pretty good. Six machines in the Hale Boggs Courthouse. Two machines in the courthouse next to it and two machines and the machine across the street. So between the three of them we're receiving about 1,100‑dollars a month, you know. That would probably put the sales in the 3 to 4,000‑dollar a month range, which might be enough for a manager. That's something y'all might want to think about spinning that off. Might want to get some active participation on that. That will have to go to a new manager.

Now the GSA called us, the Social Security Administration building in Alexandria. In the past we put that out to bid whichever company was going to pay us the most we'll let them have the machines there. But because it's a federal location we no longer do that. That's why it's imperative we get a manager. So Don can service it. I don't see the federal third party going up at all. If anything it's going to go down. That's why it's imperative to get more state locations. Open discussion on trust fund?

FRANK GAFFNEY: My only open discussion is get more state locations.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Okay.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Now there is one, and I don't know if that would even amount to anything anymore. But, you know, that driver's license bureau was put on a temporary situation and went to John because he didn't have enough coming in. I don't even know how hard it is for Hasan to get there.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: It's not too bad. About a mile from the place. It's closer than the Westbank. But again, the DMV, I can speak from experience on that. My office, the DMV's in the ground floor of our building. And there used to be a time before the pandemic people would come in and wait in line for the DMV and they'll be literally 6 to 700 people a day would come in. Like 400 people in the building and 700 people come in the door. But now the DMV is appointment only.

SHELLEY LEJEUNE: They locked the damn door.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: And they still make people wait outside the building, which I don't understand why they do that.

SHELLEY LEJEUNE: I know. They do that here in Baton Rouge.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: And they don't let them in until‑‑ physically when you walk in the door of the building the DMV's right to your right. There's the bank of elevators and then we have the snack machines. And there's another room in the back. They used to go back and forth, and they congregate by the snack bar and everything else. But now when they walk in the door they walk straight to the DMV, do their business. Maybe one out of a hundred might walk around oh, there's a Coke machine. So the machines are definitely not what they used to be. They're being supported by the tenants in the building with the very rare occasion of somebody coming in.

MICHELLE DUNCAN: Is the little fast tracks part of the DMV? You know where you can go it's called like fast track or whatever. It's a DMV, you can go in there.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Also, like Michael went to a third-party type. That's how he got his license. I think he paid another five bucks or ten bucks more for the thing. So I don't think that would qualify. But if it's owned by the state.

EMMA PALMER: The ones in Shreveport don't have machines. Those fast track.

MICHELLE DUNCAN: I just know most of the fast tracks have an ATM machine in them.

EMMA PALMER: Yeah. Shreveport too. But not a snack machine. I think if it is just the work employees use it.

KEVIN MONK: I know here in Baton Rouge they have one in a shopping center actually.

EMMA PALMER: And I forgot to sat it. The old General Motors plant they bringing in two new companies. I had spoke with David, but I just cannot get contact.

FRANK GAFFNEY: A company taking over most of the old GM plants.

KEVIN MONK: Private company?

FRANK GAFFNEY: Private company.

EMMA PALMER: Then one of them is going to lease like what they say, 600 something square foot. But they bringing a lot of employees.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Most of the state, most of the building.

EMMA PALMER: Going to be two different companies.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Could be something close to a thousand employees.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Really?

EMMA PALMER: Yeah. But I can't get a contact.

FRANK GAFFNEY: But there's nobody we can check with to find out that information. Cause we're not hooked up with politicians and other stuff.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: Well, that's something you might want to think about getting hooked up with. A lot of what we do is government controlled. But we can't contact your legislator for you. But if you guys reach out to them, they probably help you. Especially if you vote for them or if you have the ability to vote for them as a constituent.

FRANK GAFFNEY: See, one of the things we talked about when we first went to workforce we thought it was going to be good for us because of these companies that the state gives them this opportunity and workforce is working with them to hire employees and stuff like that. But we never got mentioned.

STEVEN DEBRUHL: You're going to have a new manager in here. New broom sweeps clean. Maybe that's something y'all work with him. Maybe he can reach out. But I do think, you know, economic development what you're talking about. That should dovetail perfectly with us, but we don't really have any relationship with those folks at all. That should probably come from the agency head to work with.

FRANK GAFFNEY: Well, do I hear a motion?

EMMA PALMER: I make a motion we adjourn.

SHELLEY LEJEUNE: I second it.