



The National Association for the Employment of People who are Blind

**NAEPB Board of Directors Special Meeting
CONFIDENTIAL – NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION
Monday, September 21, 2015
10:00am EST**

APPROVED MAY 24, 2016

Call to Order

The Special Meeting of the NAEPB Board of Directors was called to order at 10:30am on Monday, September 21, 2015 by President Dennis Steiner. Secretary Garrett proceeded with the Board Roll Call, after which he announced that a quorum was reached.

NAEPB Board Roll Call

Erika Arbogast	Assistant Vice President, Public Policy
Rudy D’Amico	Treasurer
Ken Fernald	Assistant Vice President, Operations
Robert Garrett	Secretary
David Horton	Vice President of Base Supply Centers
Kevin Lynch	Ex-Officio Member, President and CEO, NIB
Reinhard Mabry	Vice President, Services
Michael Monteferrante	Vice President, Strategic Planning
Dennis Steiner	President
Dave Wells	Vice President, Public Policy
Eric Stueckrath	Vice President, Operations
Shelly Taylor	Chair of Ethics

NIB Staff Members Present

Angela Hartley	Executive Vice President, Chief Program Officer
Heather Lyons	General Counsel
Carla Williams	Coordinator

Background/Purpose of Special Call

The purpose of the Special call was for the NAEPB Board to convene and discuss next steps in the process of drafting a final version of a response letter on behalf of NAEPB to the U.S. AbilityOne Commission. NAEPB sent a letter to Commission Chair Jim Kesteloot on 8/27/15. The letter addressed concerns on the topics of procurement list additions, ratio issues, lack of an ETS policy and the Commission staff’s non-responsiveness to said issues. Mr. Kesteloot responded to the NAEPB letter and requested additional evidence to support the information cited in the letter. The Board reviewed in advance for discussion on the call the following: 1) the original letter sent to the Commission from NAEPB on 8/27; 2) Jim Kesteloot’s response to the 8/27 letter; and 3) NAEPB’s proposed response to Kesteloot rebuttal letter. President Steiner led the call and discussion.

Discussion

Mr. Steiner opened the floor for feedback and discussion on the response letter drafted to Commission Chair Jim Kesteloot. Mr. Monteferrante gave positive feedback on the letter that was sent. He also commended the draft response and mentioned that it was time for the face-to-face meeting with the Commission. Mr. Fernald agreed with Mr. Monteferrante regarding the well written draft response and echoed the sentiments that a face-to-face meeting was in order. Mr. Garrett concurred with the comments, but suggested providing in the letter to Mr. Kesteloot information on the allegations raised regarding ratios. Mr. Steiner stated that he would ask for NIB’s assistance in

pulling together the information on ratios from the Commission minutes. Mr. Horton agreed that the letter should have information on ratios, but also stated that it was vital to have a face-to-face meeting and to strengthen the relationship between NAEPB and the Commission. Mr. Steiner has requested a meeting with Mr. Kesteloot and will continue to work with him to finalize a meeting date. Mr. Wells raised concern regarding the tone of the response letter. Mr. Garrett stated that several concerns were not addressed by the Commission and answers were unsatisfactory. Mr. D'Amico stated that following review of the first draft letter, it was tempered, edited and approved.

Mr. D'Amico expressed concern with the Commission's lack of addressing concerns in the response letter. He further asked for NIB's guidance and feedback on the letter. Mr. Lynch stated that the PL addition process on average, took close to 7 months to complete. There was back and forth with the Commission specifically regarding pricing, so much to the point where NIB was asked to provide responses above and beyond what would be considered normal questions in the process. There was substantial email traffic regarding NIB wanting an understanding of the status of the program. On several occasions, Mr. Lynch stated that he raised the issue in face-to-face meetings with Tina Ballard (Executive Director, U.S. AbilityOne Commission) and Kim Zeich (Deputy Director, U.S. AbilityOne Commission). Ms. Ballard advised in one meeting that the award wasn't going to go forward because the Commission members had not given approval. There have been a number of different conversations. Mr. Steiner explained that the lack of responsiveness drove the entire initiative to send letters.

Mr. Lynch stated that the TIGER team met with Ms. Ballard and Ms. Zeich during the 2015 Public Policy Forum and there were numerous attempts to keep the dialogue moving forward. He further stated that since the CNN report, communication has diminished, there has been more activity in terms of retirements at the Commission, including Mr. Bartalot and Mr. Selby. Mr. Garrett stated that there had been lots of great comments on the letter, so he moved to make the changes, which includes the ratio information and proceed with sending the response letter to the Commission. Mr. Steiner advised that he would make the changes and distribute the letter to the Board for final review and approval.

Action

Mr. Steiner will continue to attempt to arrange a meeting with the Commission by working with Mr. Kesteloot. He further stated that NAEPB has cooperated with the Commission on several initiatives including Quality Work Environment (QWE) and a new certification program. Mr. Lynch commented that he would provide information from the Commission's meeting minutes regarding agencies that have gone through the ratio issue, but suggested that the NAEPB keep the letter the way that it is currently written as it would focus more attention on the main purpose of the letter. He further suggested that discussing the ratio issue face to face with the Commission may be the best approach. Mr. Garrett stated that the ratio program was a very large percentage of the curriculum. Mr. Fernald suggested making reference to the Commission meeting minutes without adding additional information to the letter. Ms. Taylor inquired about adding a statement in the letter that declares that professionalism wasn't being criticized, yet questioning whether rules were being followed. Mr. Steiner stated that he would like to add a paragraph for clarification and understanding to the letter.

Mr. Steiner will make the appropriate edits and asked the Board to provide responses as soon as possible. Mr. Lynch requested that someone on the NAEPB Board serve as a representative at the upcoming Commission meeting. Mr. Lynch advised that NIB will be sending a letter to ten associated agencies that were selected to provide survey information to the Commission. The information provided from the agencies will be provided to an outside company.

Adjournment

Mr. Steiner thanked everyone for participating on the call. As there was no further business to be discussed, the teleconference was adjourned at 10:35am EST.