



The National Association for the Employment of People who are Blind

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS
EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**MARCH 27, 2025
3:00 PM ET
VIA ZOOM**

Mr. Mittman called an executive session of the board to discuss matters that needed board approval for proceeding.

Present were George Abbott, Leona Holloman, Jon Katz, Danny Kelly, Chris Lafollette, Reinhard Mabry, Jeff Mittman, Dennis Steiner, Eric Stueckrath and Cindy Watson.

Mr. Mittman told the group that there was a NAEPB Public Policy Forum planning meeting scheduled for Friday. He would like to have a strategic planning session of the board on Thursday immediately following the PPF. Mr. Mittman would like to focus on the strategic priorities discussed at the recent CEO retreat and Ms. Watson will assist with that. He will also ask several of the other members to help to determine the priorities for the next 3-4 years so they can be set.

The second item is when it was decided to combine the Public Policy Forum and Training Conference and Expo and schedule them to be held in March, we need to determine when to have the CEO retreat. It should be scheduled in the late fall timeframe to set us up to roll into the new year. It can be held anywhere and does not have to take place in conjunction with any other meetings, except the NAEPB annual membership meeting and the NAEPB annual board of directors meeting. Mr. Mittman asked for suggested timing and location to begin discussions with NIB to start working on the logistics for a hotel.

The annual membership meeting and annual board of directors meeting will take place prior to the start of the retreat. After discussion it was agreed that the first week of October would be the preferred week to hold the meeting.

Mr. Mittman said he would be in touch with some of the larger agencies to see if they would be interested in hosting the meeting with a large enough space. If there is not an agency who can host and have the meeting at their location, the meeting may be held at NIB to help keep the costs down.

Ms. Watson asked if the meeting will be opened to a broader audience and have a larger meeting. Mr. Mittman thinks it is better to have the additional group there, but that can be decided closer to the meeting.

Mr. Mittman has had several conversations with Soraya and Kim Zeich about things going on at the Commission. Carol Dobak is officially out and off the Commission so it will be down to seven members. There is no word on new members for the Commission yet although names have been submitted to the White House. It is not clear if they will nominate anyone in the near term.

Policy 405 is still on hold and there is no word on that.

There was a surprise last week when it was announced that the three forms were approved by OMB. Currently there is no use for form 2 which is related to policy 405. Mr. Mittman will work with Matt Wieseler and ask NIB to send out some kind of communication on the forms and how they will be used. There has been talk about making some of the fields on form 2 optional since it is the one that requests a lot of personal information.

He spoke with Kim and she said they are swamped right now. All of the staff in the DC area are in the office. Remote employees are trying to find federal office space to work in.

The Commission is expecting DOGE to show up at the office soon. They do not expect any more staff to be let go with the ones who have left and the several retirements they are expecting.

A group has been organized to work on process improvements. That group has been meeting for the last few weeks, with Rob Buettner leading that group. They are meeting at NIB next Tuesday and Wednesday in person. The group is moving forward with reimagining the processes to work more efficiently and quickly.

Mr. Mittman has been talking with Soraya and others about the drop in sales due to what is going on. If anyone sees a decline in sales you need to let NIB know immediately. Due to the timing of reporting, NIB won't know about these drops for several months. Mr. Mabry said that Ed Welsh said several of his stores had zero sales last week. Mr. Lafolette said many of the BSCs are having declining sales. Most of the NY agencies are seeing a decline in federal sales as are some agencies in other locations.

Some areas are up due to being back in the office, but other areas are down for various reasons.

GSA has a shrinking footprint and that is having an effect on JanSan sales at their buildings, as well as office products.

NIB is working to determine how to handle the decline in sales, and it is important for the agencies to make sure to stay in touch with them on what is happening.

Kim is getting inquiries from OFP and MIA office about where products are sourced from. There are waivers for products that do not have any US sources.

GSA is also on the bandwagon because they know that a lot of the materials in commodities fall under TAA and they are going to exploit the possibility of getting these products removed from the PL.

Mr. Mittman brought up that NIB's reporting explaining that it is based on the Cooperative Agreement but there is no reporting on the health of the NPAs. This is why he has asked that a scorecard be created to report on what NIB is doing for the NPAs. Mr. Steiner asked if Soraya or NIB is clear on what NAEPB is asking for. Mr. Mittman said yes, her comment was regarding the collection of the data. He told her that NIB has the data so it is only a matter of creating the scorecard to report on the health of the agencies.

How many projects have been approved? How many have been added? Is employment up or down and by how much?

The second piece is going back to the conversations we had with Mr. Koses about what NAEPB would like the Commission to do. Mr. Mittman wants to re-engage Mr. Hogue in these conversations.

Mr. Lafollette asked if we should stay in touch with Koses since he has now returned full time to his day job.

Mr. Mittman did give feedback to Soraya about the CEO Town Hall Meeting and told her that he did not like the format.

NIB has been sending out updates on the Executive Orders and that is good information. Mr. Mabry said that these orders are incredibly vague and he thinks there must be someone knows what they want to accomplish. He said he is a bit concerned that NIB's public policy firm does not seem able to get good information from the Administration. Mr. Steiner said this would be a good time to look for an AbilityOne Champion in the House or the Senate, who has power and is in with the Administration.

Mr. Mittman thanked everyone for attending the meeting and said he would send information on the public policy forum after the planning meeting and would contact a few of the agencies to ask if they would be interested in hosting the CEO retreat in October.