fNFB Business Meeting Minutes

Held August 27, 2023

Annual State Convention of the National Federation of the Blind

The meeting was called to order. President Porterfield led the national pledge and NFB pledge.

Our President asked that all divisions and groups who had elections please send their results to him so that he can update the National Office.

# Treasurer’s Report

Donna Silba

Before the reading of the Treasurer’s Report, President Porterfield reminded us that we have spent a lot of money on this year’s Convention. However, monies that are raised are meant to fund events such as this. He stated that part of our movement is funding our movement.

Donna also reminded us that events before Tuesday, August 22, 2023, are not reflected in this report.

Previous Balance as of 8/31/2022: $151,300.27. The balance was comprised of $5,432.58 in Restricted Funds and $145,868.09 in Unrestricted Funds.

Total income was $19,574.48.

Expenses totaled $52,901.63.

New balance as of 8/22/23 $116,089.98 of which $7784.92 is restricted and $108305.76 is unrestricted. The report was approved as read.

President Porterfield stated that the Yuma Chapter is currently on a hold due to the lack of transient membership. Funds will be held for up to three years. If the chapter has not been established by that time, the $39 will be moved to the Affiliate account. Membership building is definitely needed.

He also let us know there will be a disparity of what the convention costs versus what we bring in. We should not stop doing what we do. Instead, we should do a better job of fundraising at the local and affiliate levels. Rachel does tireless work, but fundraising needs to be an affiliate-wide project. We do accept donations.

We should all reach out to our family and friends and encourage the to donate to our affiliate. Let them know how the National Federation of the Blind has helped you on the way to independence and equality. We’ve been good stewards of our money, but we need to be better stewards of bringing in more money. Members should feel free to bring forth their fundraising ideas. Bob and Lynn proposed the idea of disseminating information about the National Federation of the Blind to funeral homes, allowing families seeking to make additional contributions to our cause the opportunity to do so.

Next Quarterly Board meeting will take place on Zoom and in-person in Tucson on Saturday, November 11 at 9:30 a.m. This will be our first live Board meeting in a few years. More information is forthcoming because we now have a listserv that works.

# Chapter & Division Reports:

## East Valley: Mark Feliz

In October 2022 for BEAM month, activities included a high school presentation at Mountainview View, during which they discussed blindness and the white cane with approximately 1,000 students, along with teachers, administrators, and assistants. Additionally, they set up an informational booth at the Tempe Library, offering photos with people’s names in braille.

Moving on to December, the East Valley Chapter hosted their annual Christmas party, attended by members from other chapters and divisions. The event featured an auction and a gift exchange.

In January, new elections were held, resulting in a diverse Board with experienced federationists guiding and mentoring. Some members from this chapter were sponsored to attend the Washington Seminar, and others participated in the Phoenix Seminar.

From February to May, the Chapter welcomed several new members. In May, they organized a cane walk in Mesa, which included students, parents, grandparents, siblings, and chapter members. They used the light rail to travel to downtown Mesa, providing a significant exposure to blindness.

In June, the East Valley provided lunch for one of the days at the Phoenix Bell Academy. Their annual pool potluck party was also a notable event.

In July, around ten individuals from the Chapter attended the National Convention. They've made an effort to have guest speakers at each meeting, attracting more people to attend. Board members lead philosophy discussions, resulting in engaging conversations. Zoom participation has been robust, alongside in-person meetings.

Additionally, the East Valley Chapter has collaborated with the Arizona Association of Blind Students (AABS) by supporting their fundraisers, and Matt has been actively selling candy. Additionally, Tony Sohl asked those who will to come to the back table to sign a card for his mom, Ruth Swenson. Due to her not doing well at this time in her health, she was unable to be at this Convention. President Porterfield reminded us that Ruth was a long times civil rights and disability rights advocate attorney and one of our past affiliate presidents.

## Phoenix Chapter: Jordan Moon

In October 2022, the annual picnic took place and was successful. During January, the Chapter participated in the MLK Day events including a 2 mile march and a table at the Margaret T. Hance park. The Chapter also supported four members to participate in the Washington Seminar.

Many members participated in the Phoenix Seminar as well.

The Phoenix chapter has been actively engaged in fundraising efforts. In April 2023, they hosted the first picnic of the year, which resulted in the recruitment of two new members. In May, Vicki Farley organized a White Cane informational seminar conducted over Zoom, with the intention of featuring it during BEAM month.

June saw the chapter providing lunch for one day to the Bell Academy, where they enjoyed "Taco Tuesday." In July, a total of 18 chapter members attended the National Convention. During our current Arizona state Convention, this chapter is playing a co-hosting role in conjunction with the students. Jordan expressed gratitude to the Arizona Association of Blind Students (AABS) for their productive collaboration with the Chapter. Jordan also discussed potential fundraisers with the East Valley in the near future.

Membership has seen growth, with new members joining from the West Valley, bringing this Chapter’s current membership to approximately 40 members. For BEAM month, the chapter plans to participate in the First Friday art festival event on Roosevelt Row. They also intend to host a table at the VA White Cane Awareness event. On December 9th, the holiday party is scheduled, and there are plans to participate in the MLK Day event in January 2024.

## Tucson Chapter: Tarik Williams

During our recent meetings, the Tucson Chapter has fostered engaging conversations and philosophical discussions. Attendance has shown remarkable consistency, underscoring our commitment to building a strong and inclusive community. We are pleased to report that our efforts have resulted in a significant increase in new member enrollment. In October 2022, for BEAM month, the chapter established a valuable partnership with the Pima County Recorder's office. Additionally, our members actively participated in key events such as the Washington Seminar in February and the National Convention in July. We are currently engaged in discussions about outreach initiatives to extend our support to blind individuals who may not have yet connected with the National Federation of the Blind.

President Porterfield raised a significant point regarding a statement made by Tarik during one of the Tucson meetings. Tarik had pointed out that there is a substantial number of blind individuals in the state who remain unaware of the National Federation of the Blind and its mission. Acknowledging the truth in Tarik's statement, we recognize the need for extensive outreach and educational efforts. It was emphasized that BEAM month provides a valuable opportunity for an entire month of concentrated outreach activities. However, it was also stressed that outreach should not be limited to a specific time frame but should be an ongoing and daily task, as mandated by the Constitution. President Porterfield further highlighted his own efforts in educating Lyft drivers as an example of the continuous outreach work that can make a significant impact. This discussion underscored the affiliate’s commitment to expanding awareness and promoting the mission of the National Federal of the Blind.

## Special Recognition:

Every year since 2017, President Porterfield has chosen to give special recognition to a member who stands out for a wide variety of reasons. They are recognized for their powerful contribution to the organized blind movement. Through their leadership, mentorship, and commitment to educating and advocating, their contributions have impacted everyone of us. The award was given to Bob Kresmer. He has been steadfast in his support for Donald Porterfield as president and for every member of the Arizona Affiliate. He has been our past Affiliate President, currently chairs the Governor’s Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment and sits squarely in the center of our movement. He was presented with a Louis Braille coin and received much applause.

## Students Division: Ammar Tarin

Throughout the year, the Student Division has been actively engaged in fundraising activities, demonstrating their commitment to supporting the chapter's mission. During BEAM month, they collaborated with the East Valley division at Mountainview High School for a joint effort.

A noteworthy development occurred during the August 26 business meeting when the chapter's Constitution was amended. The amendment introduced the creation of a Secretary/Treasurer position in addition to the creation of one Vice President position. Furthermore, elections took place during this meeting. The Board now is comprised of:

President: Ammar Tarin

Vice-President: Mariana Flores

Secretrary/Treasurer: Sammy Chavez

Director: Desiree Morales

Director: Tasnim Alshuli

## Senior Division:

Mark Feliz gave a report on this Division’s meeting that took place on August 26. The meeting had about 7-8 members who attended. They are planning to use Zoom for meetings throughout the year. Mark Feliz will make sure President Porterfield gets the report of elections. Eve is new President.

## Diabetic Action Network: Matt Mazak

Matt stated that they are working on gaining new members with the goal of rebuilding this group.

## Parents Division: Ashleigh Moon

Had a few activities that took place this year. The Parents joined the Phoenix chapter for both picnics and had craft activities for the kids. They collaborated with Saavi’s Youth program for a Thanksgiving event. At this event, they networked and discussed making games accessible for the entire family. In the Spring, they collaborated once again with the Saavi Youth Program and went to the Children’s Museum. Elections

President Ashleigh Moon

Vice-President: Allison Hilliker

Secretary: Heather Bowes

Director: Qadir Muhammad

## Education Committee: Ashleigh Moon

They had an IEP seminar this year with Casey Robertson as the speaker. It was fantastic event. They were thanked for their hard work. Anyone who wants to be an advocate is encouraged to come and participate.

The affiliate voted for funds to go towards seminars by the education committee. It would be great to see more participation and more people wanting to become advocates for children.

## Membership:

President Porterfield asked us if we received information concerning the new Member Portal from the National listserv. If you think you should be receiving emails from the listserv, please get with your Chapter or Division President so that you can receive this valuable information. This portal will give us the ability to modify, correct, add/delete any information on the portal about ourselves. This should enhance the communication you receive.

If you have not been signed up on the membership form, please reach out to your president. This triggers information sent to you about the National Federation of the Blind and ensures that you get your membership coin.

We are being encouraged to carry our membership coin to all NFB events.

# State Convention:

I t was properly moved and seconded that we have our Arizona State Convention in 2024.

The Convention Arrangements Committee was thanked for their hard work. But we were reminded that it takes all of us to make any Convention happen.

# Phoenix Seminar:

Phoenix Seminar normally takes place the Tuesday after MLK Day. It was properly moved and seconded that we have our 2024 seminar on January 16.

For this to take place and be successful, the work will need to start as soon as possible in contacting legislative members’ office.

We must make sure to show up in force to change laws. We make a difference when we show up as one voice.

# Washington Seminar:

Last year (2023), 12 members of our affiliate participated. For 2024, Washington Seminar will take place from January 29 through February 1st. After much discussion, it was properly moved and seconded to allocate up to $5,000 at the President’s discretion for support in assisting members to participate in Washington Seminar.

# National Convention:

In 2024, we will be in Orlando, Florida. We annually provide financial assistance to help people get to Convention. It was properly moved and seconded that we support sending members to National Convention, but defer on deciding an amount until we have an accurate account of our treasury.

# Remarks by Our National Rep:

Marci Carpenter

President Porterfield remarked with agreement by all, that Marci has been a true pleasure to have here as our National Rep. She was called an Associate member of the Arizona Affiliate.

Marci Carpenter stated that she truly enjoyed herself here in Arizona. She felt that the energy she experienced here has been quite amazing.

She recounted the Core Values of our Strategic Plan. The values are about our promise to each other—how will we treat each other, and They are:

Believe in blind people

Lead courageously

Champion collective action

Foster Inclusion

Dream big

She stated that she has witnessed all of these in our Arizona Convention.

She welcomed us to visit Washington’s 2024 Convention taking place March 1-3. She thanked us for making her feel very welcome.

After auctioning off some beautiful handmade items made by our members as well as a few more things, we had final announcements and the meeting was adjourned.

The next Board meeting will take place on Saturday, November 11. It will be in person in Tucson as well as over Zoom.