Quarterly Board Meeting Minutes for

May 11, 2024

# Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 9:40 AM. The roll call was taken and all Board members were present.

Others present included: Warren Yazzie, Lori Kirsop, Kris Crawley, Don Knowles, Abdallah Shoolie, Jean Parker, Tim Caulk, and Vicki Farley.

President Porterfield reminded us of proper Zoom protocol in order to have a successful meeting. He wished all the Mothers a happy Mother’s Day. Following this, both the pledge of allegiance and the NFB pledge, along with the One-minute message was recited.

Congratulations was extended to Mara Ulvestad as well as Colon Wong for being among the 30 finalists to receive NFB scholarships.

# Secretary’s Report – Sharonda Goode

The Secretary’s report was read and it was moved by Bob Kresmer and seconded by Mark Feliz to be adopted with the following amendments:

1. Amy Porterfield recommended that the bill number 1335 be added for the ILB Funding Bill.

# Treasurer’s Report – Donna Silba

Previous Balance as of 2/10/2024 total $103,408.27.

With $8216.79 restricted and $95,191.48 unrestricted. $5,787.33 income. Expenses $3607.32.

Ending Balance as of 5/11/24 totaled $105,383.28. Restricted funds total $8,120.75. Unrestricted funds total $97,262.53.

Donna stated that all mistakes on the report sent out have been corrected.

She also informed us that no PayPal report has been received. Further discovery proved that she has not been receiving notification emails from PayPal at all. President Porterfield asked that all PayPal reports be re-sent to Donna. As soon as she receives the reports, updates will take place. Mark Feliz moved the Treasurer’s report be adopted and Amy Porterfield seconded.

President Porterfield informed us that he will be speaking with President Riccobono to request the release of funds from our Trust account for all sound system expenses as well as the $12,000 for our Bell program.

Joe Goode asked for the protocol for purchasing the sound equipment. President Porterfield replied that after the research had been solidified and the requested amount confirmed, the invoice should be sent to both the President and the Treasurer, who would then issue him a check to purchase the equipment. When the equipment is secured, please send receipts to both the President and the Treasurer.

Jordan Moon sought clarification from President Porterfield in whether we would withdraw from the Trust account for all future BELL programs, or just this one. The President replied that this ask was just a one-time request.

Bob Kresmer motioned that we request $30,000 from our Trust account. After some discussion on whether we should specify which programs would receive what funds, the motion was modified to include this information. The motion was seconded by Amy Porterfield.

Mark Feliz commented that he prefers we continue to designate the programs wherein we spend the funds, as it would bring greater transparency to the Affiliate as well as for National. The $30,000 would include designations of $7500 for sound equipment; $12,000 for Bell programs; and $10,000 for State Convention.

# Philosophy:

President Porterfield asked for a volunteer to facilitate our next Board meeting in August.

Next, he posed the question: Why are our National and State Conventions important to us?

Bob Kresmer stated that both our National and State Conventions are the Official place and time where we conduct national and affiliate business.

Joanne Williams reminded us that these Conventions are our family reunions where the attendees understand the capabilities of blind people. This is a breath of fresh air. As a professional, it is a shot in the arm that is necessary to rejuvenate and restore for the upcoming year.

Jordan stated that our Conventions are the perfect opportunity to build the Federation. It increases enthusiasm and helps to build membership.

Mark Feliz reminded us that we should have a sense of pride to put on a Convention. This shows that we know what we’re doing and we know how to do it right.

Cody Beardslee said that he joined the NFB at a National Convention. Conventions are important because they change lives.

Lori Kirsop—Agreed with Joanne. Conventions help us know that we are not the only ones going through challenges of blindness. Conventions open up a whole new world.

Rachel Kuntz stated that people come and get connected to great jobs and careers at Conventions. Networking takes place and we become one big, united voice.

Sharonda Goode brought up the power of advocating on personal and systemic levels.

Ammar Tarin stated that both networking and friendships occur at Conventions. In addition, our Conventions show the

public that people in the blind community have the same expectations as the sighted community. Conventions are the Supreme authority of the NFB and the NFBAZ. Come together to help set the policies that will propel our organization forward.

# Legislative Report – Amy Porterfield

Elections: No bill dropped. A folder was opened, but because of so many questions about UOCAVA, no legislation moved forward. While people were in favor for accessible voting for blind folks, the language needs to be changed so that it is easy to understand and that it will occur.

ChatGPT

No legislation was introduced regarding elections, despite support for accessible voting for blind individuals. The process stalled due to questions about UOCAVA, and the language of the proposed changes needs to be clarified to ensure effective implementation.

SB1592—the Braille Certification bill was heard in Sen. Bennet’s committee. Unfortunately, it was voted down very quickly by a margin of two votes.

HB1335: A recommendation was made to add $500,000 to the budget for the ILB program, with a lobbyist assisting pro bono to advance the legislation. Joanne mentioned that the ILB program leader resigned, and there's a hiring freeze affecting new positions, though existing ones can be replaced. Amy emphasized our strong participation and commitment to continuing the fight for ILB. Representative Livingston highlighted the importance of the ILB program, using his father as an example of its positive impact on independence.

HR3935: Federal Aviation Administration. This bill proposes training for those assisting people with disabilities, improving accessibility for in-flight entertainment, and establishing a one-time registration system for guide dogs. The bill passed the Senate with strong support and is now in the House. We were encouraged to share personal stories highlighting the need for better training of staff when contacting representatives to advocate for the bill. Amy urged staying informed about a bipartisan bill sponsored by Rep. Greg Stanton, with more details to come. Joanne suggested adding Braille signage on airplane aisles to the bill, noting some airlines have already begun this. Phone calls and emails supporting HR3935 should be completed by Friday.

President Porterfield announced a virtual Listening session on Thursday from 3-4 PM via Zoom, focusing on the election process and the barriers encountered when voting. This session is crucial to us, as we believe our vote should be private without requiring any assistance in the process. Some voters have arrived at the polls only to find that accessible polling devices are either non-functional or that no one has been trained to operate them. Addressing these issues is a high priority.

# National Convention:

July 3-8 is our National Convention in Orlando, Florida. The host hotel is already sold out for a few nights of the Convention. There are three overflow hotels that still have availability. There will be shuttles organized by the NFB to run between the overflow hotels and the Rosen Center. Amy stated that the Rosen Plaza is the closest to the Convention hotel.

Each year we make financial contributions to various funds and doorprizes for National Convention. Mark Feliz made a motion that we keep our standing amounts to donate as we did last year. This motion was seconded by Amy Porterfield . Therefore, $1000 will be sent toeach of these funds: the Jernigan fund, the White Cane fund, and the Jacobus TenBroek fund. Additionally, we will donate $1000 for doorprizes at National.

Tucson voted to contribute $50 for the same funds as the Affiliate to our National organization. Additionally, they have voted to set aside $100 to assist those who need help going to National Convention.

Phoenix contributed $25 for each of the three funds plus doorprizes, totaling $100.

Students will have a meeting within the next couple weeks and decide their contribution.

East Valley is meeting next week and will decide their contribution.

President Porterfield asked that emails be sent to him and Donna stating the amounts each chapter/division will contribute so that a check can be cut and sent to National.

Volunteers! We will need volunteers in the Independence market, Ambassadors, and at the Arizona Table. We will be selling blankets at our table again this year. We have a significant amount of blankets to sell. All volunteers should reach out to Rachel. Blankets have been moved over to Tucson, as we have a member who will drive a van to Tucson.

If you are willing to work the independence market, notify President Porterfield.

Jordan Moon reminded us that President Riccobono asked for ambassadors. Ambassadors assist in marshalling and helping to guide and direct people to various sessions. If interested in this area, send President Porterfield an email. Your contact information will be provided to National.

Resolutions set the priorities that the National organization will move forward with. The final form of your resolutions are due by June 4. A blog went out to help people learn how to write resolutions. If you plan to research and write a resolution and need help, contact President Porterfield, and he will help as much as possible.

Financial assistance has been approved. Send President Porterfield an email with Convention Financial Assistance in the subject line. State and amount you’re requesting in the email and how you plan to use the assistance, if you’ve received assistance before. Requests are due June 1.

[Nfb.az.president@gmail.com](mailto:Nfb.az.president@gmail.com)

If you receive financial assistance, you will be expected to volunteer. President Porterfield will need your mailing address and mobile phone number. Your address is needed so that the check can be sent to you.

# State Convention: Jordan Moon

Our state Convention takes place August 22-25 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel 122 N Second street in Phoenix. Registration will be opening soon. Our committee is meeting frequently; Cody Beardslee has been added to our Committee and is handling door prizes and auction items.

If you can think of any seminars you would like to lead, please send a description of that seminar to President Porterfield.

Fundraising: If you know of potential sponsors for our Convention, send information to Rachel.

Misael is of course working with the website

If you want to volunteer for any area, please let Amy Porterfield know of your desire to volunteer.

Last year, we had comments from the Mayor, our national rep, and the NABS rep about the energy they felt from our State Convention.

Seminar suggestions are due May 31.

# Virtual Meetings:

Our Zoom License is through the NFB and the National Center. Changes were made through security settings. The default is to have people start at the waiting room and then be admitted. This is because we want to limit the opportunities of Zoom-bombers. President Porterfield will be playing with our account to make sure things get a bit easier. Please be patient during your time in the waiting room, just know that this is a layer of security.

Joe highlighted ways to disable Zoom alerts, especially if you are the one presenting. He will write out information and share with the Affiliate.

Mark Feliz asked if all meetings should use the Affiliate link? President answered that you can use the Affiliate link, or use your own link like Phoenix and Tucson does.

President Porterfield reminded us to include him in the announcements concerning your meetings so that he can be informed.

# What’s Going on in the Federation:

4 24: Title II Website Accessibility rules were published in the federal register. We have been waiting for a long time for meaningful steps to take place. Now those rules and guidelines have been written, although they fall quite short. The NFB has responded with our thoughts concerning what was published.

To read them, go to Nfb.org, then go to the Policy Page.

There is still lots of work to be done. and greater guidelines are needed for Website and Software Application Accessibility.

## Bell Programs: Amy Porterfield

Somaya Tarin will be coordinating in Phoenix. Roxanne Torres will be coordinating in Tucson. If you’d like to help volunteer with Bell, let Amy know. We have 13 students so far in Phoenix and 11 students so far in Tucson. Bell starts on Memorial Day in both cities. The Affiliate was thanked for sponsoring lunch for the first day of Bell.

## Chapters and Division Reports:

The various chapters and divisions gave reports of their events past and upcoming. Those who reported today were:

Phoenix Chapter – Michael Smith

East Valley Chapter – Mark Feliz

Tucson Chapter – Cody Beardslee

Seniors Division – Monica Nunez

Students Division – Ammar Tarin

Parents Division – Ashleigh Moon

Education Committee – Ashleigh Moon

Merchants Division – No report given

Fundraising Committee – Rachel Kuntz

Technology Committee – Joe Goode

Joanne Williams remarked that as we have new people transitioning into various roles, we should send out committee information to the listserv.

Announcements:

President stated that there is still time if you have not applied for a State scholarship. The deadline is 5/31.

We have three $1200 scholarships available.

We were reminded that if applying, you will need your essay/personal statement before scheduling time with him.

Bob Kresmer reminded us that one of the scholarships is set aside for someone who is working full-time and going to school part-time.

Ammar is officially an uncle. Somaya had Hawa.

Jordan talked about the philosophy session from our last meeting. Was a quote that Manny left for us “no one can make you helpless.”

Adjourn: Bob Kresmer moved at 1:01 to adjourn the meeting. Joe Goode seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 1:03 PM.