NFBA Board Meeting Minutes 11.9.24

Call to Order and Roll Call:

All board members were present with the exception of Vicki and Ammar.

Ammar is excused, as he is taking his lsat’s today. Vicki is not here; as she is recovering from surgery.

Additionally, approximately thirteen affiliate members and guests were in attendance.

After the pledges were recited, President Porterfield went over the meeting and Zoom Protocols.

Leadership Changes:

Vicki Farley and Macaulay Beasley were welcomed to the Board.

Vicki will chair the Scholarship Committee.

Macaulay will chair the Fundraising Committee.

Secretary’s Report – Sharonda Goode

The minutes of the Convention business meeting were read. Jordan moved and Amy seconded to approve the minutes.

The minutes were Corrected to reflect The "Swimsuit and Sohl Party" as the Swenson & Sohl Christmas Party.

The minutes were adopted by the Board with the correction.

Convention Recognition:

President Porterfield acknowledged the success of the 78th Arizona State Convention and the high energy level comparable to the National Convention. He highlighted the recognition of many individuals at the Business Meeting and Expressed gratitude for volunteer engagement and emphasized the need to sustain engagement year-round.

Gary Wunder reached out regarding a write-up for the Monitor about Ruth Swenson, one of our former Affiliate Presidents who passed away. President Porterfield directed Gary Wunder to contacts who may have more insight on Ruth’s life.

Treasurer’s Report – Donna Silba

The report was read by our Treasurer.

**Key Financial Discussions:**

* **Students Division:** Donna is still awaiting income details beyond what was processed through Square.
* **PayPal Reports:** Donna has been given individual login credentials but still lacks access to past reports. President Porterfield will facilitate a meeting to resolve this.
* **East Valley:** Their dues are in PayPal. Donna would like an email notifying her of the amounts. Additionally, Donna will send Mark Feliz a full raffle report.
* **Chapter Membership:** President Porterfield reminded chapters to submit **membership rosters to Donna by January**.
* **Bell Programs:** Donna stated that Saavi has not yet been paid for this year’s two programs. She asked about whether to pay them or not at this time.
* **Amy reminded the Convention Registration committee that Saavi had not yet received an invoice for their registrants.**
* **At Large Chapter: President Porterfield responded to Macaulay’s question about this chapter by stating that this is a work in progress. Our President’s goal is t get someone from Northern AZ to spearhead it.**

Amy moved and Mark seconded that the Treasurer’s Report be accepted. It was approved by the Board.

This meeting’s philosophy discussion centered the differences between the One Minute Message and the Belief Statement. Members were engaged and contributed thoughtful input.

It was suggested that we as an Affiliate have the Belief Message cards so we can be reminded of this statement and pass them on to others. Amy motioned and Sharonda seconded that Macaulay would purchase 250 belief statement cards (5 packs of 50 at $20 each). The Board approved.

Legislative Report – Amy Porterfield/Jordan Moon

State Updates:

As for voting results, from the November election, they remain unclear. There is uncertain of in-state races and many of the propositions did not pass.

Phoenix Seminar: It is scheduled for January 21, 2025. We will have our own Great Gathering in the week before. Jordan urged members to contact newly elected representatives and provide Phoenix Seminar details. January and February will be legislatively active months.

For the last few years, we have had a budget of up to $500 for food and drink. Sharonda motioned and it was seconded by Amy that $500 be allocated for food at this year’s Phoenix Seminar. Jordan, Amy and Beasley will help with organizing the seminar.

Amy motioned and Sharonda seconded that we ask for $5 donation from the membership. All was approved by the Board.

National Updates:

Washington Seminar: It will take place in early February 2025. Washington Seminar Priorities will be finalized in December. The initiatives will more than likely be: the

1. Website Accessibility Act; 2)

Blind Americans Return to Work Act; 3)

Medical Device Accessibility Act; and 4)

Access Technology Affordability Act.

If you need financial assistance, please let President Porterfield know.

Financial assistance can be applied to flights, lodging, or food. There is a McDonald’s connected to the hotel.

President Porterfield encouraged members to write a paragraph on how the initiatives impact them, as it is very important to know how our priorities affect blind people.

What’s Going On in the Federation?

• Dare to Be Remarkable Conference: Six members will fly out to attend the conference. Four presentations will be done by members of this Affiliate.

• Structured Discovery Certification: Saavi Tucson has been fully certified. Saavi Phoenix will be testing in March for their certification. No doubt they will also be certified.

• Braille Readers are Leaders: Registration begins Nov 15 via the Beanstack app. The contest starts on December 2 and goes through January 17. goes through

• NFB National Scholarship: Applications open Nov 31 - March 31. The NFBA State opens Nov 31 - May 31.

• **National Convention:** **July 8-13, 2025**, in **New Orleans**.

• Future Convention Locations: Austin (2026-2027), Chicago (2028-2029).

Abdallah is on the Jernigan Scholarship committee. Applications must be in by April 15. To apply for a scholarship, you must write an essay about why you want to attend, as well as obtain a recommendation from your affiliate President.

• NFB Bell Academy: No report right now. Amy stated they are resting now and looking forward to attending the Bell seminar. We will have BELL in both Phoenix and Tucson.

• The Arizona Department of Education is dismantling the Accessibility Unit. **This is a bad decision, as it affects students at all levels hindering their access to educational materials. With this digital accessibility unit being shut down, there is less Federal investment in students. President Riccobono sent a letter to Cardona, the Secretary of the Department of Education, asking that Digital Accessibility Unit remain available.**

• STEM2U: There will be a program in both Phoenix and Tucson. Somaya is joining as a coordinator as well. **The theme is the Scientific Method. The students will explore, experiment, and excel. Students will get to design their own experiment. Volunteers are needed to help. The program will be completely accessible. Dates are forthcoming, but likely in the Spring of 2025. This is a completely funded program that will not cost the affiliate anything.**

Chapter Reports:

Phoenix Chapter – Michael Smith

Elections took place last week, and the new board consists of:

Michael Smith, President

Macaulay Beasley, 1st Vice President

Joe Goode, 2nd Vice President

Donna Silba, Treasurer

Sharonda Goode, Secretary

Board members: Vicki Farley and Jordan Moon.

Our BEAM Month activities which consisted of our attendance of the First Friday event in Downtown Phoenix as well as our Game Night and costume party. We also received a signed proclamation from the Mayor and were officially recognized during BEAM month.

Our upcoming events include our Christmas party at the Old Spaghetti Factory on December 14 from 4-7 p.m. In January, we will participate in the MLK Celebration on the 20th.

East Valley Chapter – Mark Feliz

Ammar was congratulated for taking his LSAT on that very day. Kris Crawley was congratulated for being accepted into the Kenneth Jernigan cohort. Additionally, his family was recognized for there newest addition, a little baby girl, born into the world on November 3.

Tucson Chapter – Cody Beardslee

Nothing to report.

After the divisions and committees were given opportunity t give their reports, the meeting was adjourned.