

Date: 21 February 2024

Location: [Zoom](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83848943667?pwd=a0hCYmZSTkNGWG40UGp4YjlKeEdYdz09)

Present:

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| Board Members | Cody Bair, President  Andrea Fowler, Vice-President  Shane Clark, Treasurer  Gary Van Dorn, Secretary  Ileen Gallegos, Board Member  Susie D’Mello, Board Member, Absence Excused  Nate Hecker, Board Member |
| Members | Andrey Marquez  Bishoy Fragalla  Jodi Witthaus  Dishon Speers  Chaz Davis  Eliza Portugal  Monique Melton  Pipi Adams |
| Guests | Martin Becerra-Miranda  Carina Rorzco  Nate Trela, Blind Parents Board Member  JP Mazar |

1. Introductions
   1. President Cody Bair called the 21 February 2024 meeting of the Mile High Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado (NFBCO) to order at 18:06 MT.
   2. Cody asked people to introduce themselves beginning with the Board. Secretary Gary Van Dorn says we have a quorum consisting of a third of the active members.
2. Minutes from 17 January 2024, Secretary Gary Van Dorn
   1. President Cody Bair announced the minutes for the Mile High Chapter meeting of 17 January 2024 were sent a couple days ago along with tonight’s agenda.
   2. Gary asked if there are any corrections to the minutes of 17 January 2024. There are no corrections.
      1. Motion: Pipi Adams moved to approve the Mile High NFBCO Meeting Minutes of 17 January 2024. Treasurer Shane Cark seconded the motion. The membership approved the minutes of 17 January 2024.
   3. Gary did not schedule a meeting concerning proposed amendments to the Mile High Constitution. He has been busy with his duties as NFBCO Secretary. Gary reviewed with the Chapter the amendments we wish to make with the Mile High Constitution. The 2011 Constitution of the Mile High Chapter of the NFBCO was attached to the approved 17 January 2024 meeting minutes.
3. Treasurers Report for 21 February 2024, Treasurer Shane Clark
   1. Shane gave the Treasurer’s Report for the Mile High Chapter of the NFBCO.
      1. We had $1,095.27 as of the last meeting.
      2. Received dues from David Abraham for $5.00.
      3. The PAC pledge was taken out for $25.00.
      4. Received prepayments for tasting and cooking. Received $423.95 so far after Square fees. Additional Square Payments were more payments that came in before the meeting that are not in this amount.
      5. The balance is now $1,423.95. Balance including cash is $1,499.22.
   2. Pipi Adams moved to accept the Treasurer’s Report for 21 February 2024. Secretary Gary Van Dorn seconded the motion. The Chapter approved the Treasurer’s report.
4. Fund Raising, Nate Hecker
   1. 2nd annual Chili Cook Off
      1. President Cody Bair asked Board Member Andrea Fowler for an update on the Chili Cook Off.
      2. Andrea said there are fourteen people to cook. Do not have many people signed up as of the meeting to taste. Andrea feels we will receive more people who will pay at the door.
      3. Andrea asked if anyone received the chili voting tokens from Board Member Susie D’Mello before she traveled abroad. Secretary Gary Van Dorn said Andrea dropped them off at his home. There are bags with Braille and raised numbers. Gary counted the bags during the meeting and there are fifteen bags and one hundred chili pepper’s as a means to vote for one’s favorite chili.
      4. Voting will occur at a separate table this year. The number is being capped at fifteen. Andrea believes the bar owner Josh will be a cooker.
      5. Cody asked people to pay beforehand to taste if they know they are coming. There is a Square link and Zelle available to accept payments. Gary said he also has a QR code for Zelle if people need that.
      6. Cody said they are also selling Jello-O Shots going for $2.00; a dollar will go to the Mile High Chapter.
      7. Another live auction is also planned!!!! One of the items being auction is a weeknight stay at the Stanley Hotel in Estes Park. There are also other items being auctioned. Andrea discussed another auction item at Black Hawk at the Monarch Casino. Alex and Andrea will get the person up to Monarch and you will need to travel back to Denver. A Miller Light vintage clock is also being auctioned for one’s man cave, or lady’s corner. Gary has a phone or tablet charger with different outlet attachments so one may travel. Board Member Ileen Gallegos has multiple Tupperware items to auction. A couple more auction items could be in the works!!
      8. As a reminder, the Second Annual Chili Cook Off is 24 March 2024 at 1700 MT at the Broadway Shot Spot.
   2. March Madness Brackets
      1. Cody would like us to begin thinking of the Third Annual March Madness Bracket fundraiser. The brackets are being hosted by a site that is accessible; Cody could not recall the name hosting the brackets during the meeting. The winner receives half of the proceeds raised from the bracket pool. This is one of the easier fundraisers.
      2. Gary said we raised $114.74 last year. $185.75 was raised the year before. Gary said there is an existing link we can copy from last year. Gary said that the Square Link will need to be shut down before the bracket link shuts down. Cody will share the link only if someone pays.
5. Membership, Vice-President Andrea Fowler and Board Member Ileen Gallegos
   1. White Cane and Slate and Stylus list phone calls (Audrey Marquez)
      1. Audrey said she did not make as many calls this month. She has been living life. Audrey has an individual who would like to help calling. She will send Cody his name.
      2. Cody said he will send an updated White Cane List.
   2. Potential Future Meet Ups
6. Blind Parents Presentation on access-a-ride program, Nate Trela
   1. Nate attended this evening’s Mile High NFBCO Chapter Meeting. RTD added Access-on-Demand to their Access-a-Ride. One can receive 60 rides a month and RTD will pay up to $25.00 for the trip. RTD announced last month that they will turn off a feature that was very welcome with the program allowing multiple stop trips. You can use the multiple trips for taking their child to school, shopping, etc. The multiple stop trip did not count against the 60 trips allowed by RTD for the month.
   2. RTD said they never intended to offer multiple stop trips and offering multiple stops was a glitch. Nate said this changes the economics of the program since it changes what was available. It now is four trips per day rather than two.
   3. RTD’s rational does not make sense according to Nate. Access-on-Demand was supposed to mirror Access-a-Cab. One could have multiple stops on Access-a-Cab so this does not match what RTD is saying. RTD says this costs them more to allow multiple trips. Also, RTD says it is supposed to mirror Access-a-Ride; there are no rules governing the number of trips per day.
   4. The NFBCO Parents of Blind Children Division is taking on this issue. They feel this impacts others besides blind parents. The Parents of Blind Children’s Division is asking we write letters to our respective RTD Board Member and RTD General Manager Deborah Johnson.
   5. The Division is further asking people to attend the next RTD Board Meeting on 27 February 2024. The meeting is at 17:30 MT. Nate does not have the link during this meeting so one can sign up via Zoom. RTD Board Meetings are held at 1660 Blake Street, Denver, CO 80202. Gary feels that Zoom is a great option to attend. Although Gary feels the more people in the room the best. Showing up will demonstrate the importance of the issue.
   6. Gary sent a link to Nate during the meeting where he may locate historic RTD materials. The link Gary sent to Nate is <https://www.rtd-denver.com/about-rtd/board-of-directors/board-briefing-documents>.
   7. Nate is sending a sample letter one can write sometime soon via Colorado Talk.
   8. Nate said Access-on-Demand is a significant improvement over Access-a-Cab and Access-a-Ride. Blind people have become use to the multiple trip option and it has proven beneficial to blind people. Allowing people to take part in their children’s activities.
   9. RTD’s rational keeps changing. An RTD manager said they will not change their mind on this. Please share your personal stories in person or writing a letter.
   10. Secretary Gary Van Dorn asked if Nate was able to obtain a written copy of RTD’s rational of the rules. Gary suggests also looking at the Board’s minutes to ascertain RTD Management’s rational provided to the Board.
   11. Nate asked Gary if he has any ideas. Gary feels the Blind Parents Division is doing the right thing. He feels the dynamics of RTD are changing. Gary reflected upon what could be changing. Gary said Jamie Lewis is a member of District A; Gary resides in District A and he can aid in being an advocate. Gary said to reach out Director Lewis. Gary said he likes the Blind Parents Division going over the Board’s Head by speaking with General Manager Johnson. Also, speaking at the Board is a great idea.
   12. Gary would like to see the financial rational RTD has for the change. Gary suggests the Blind Parents ask for the financial information. RTD has a history of not thinking through their initiatives and they are popular and end up costing. It does make great sense allow multiple trips.
   13. Bishoy Fragalla asked when RTD plans turning off the multiple trip feature. One should not use the feature although it remains available on the app. Nate knows RTD is enforcing the 60-trips per month rule; a member of the Wild West Chapter had their access shut off without a warning. RTD said they would advise people. The number of rides is not totaled across the Lyft and Über apps. One must keep track on their own.
   14. Gary asked if RTD published the rules on their page. Nate said there are rules that appear to be edited. He is unaware if these are the original rules or not. Nobody was aware of the restrictions until RTD sent an email to participants at the end of last year.
   15. Cody said he can do multiple trips. RTD should turn this feature off in the apps for those in the program. Also, Cody reflects that not tracking the rides across the apps is confusing. The policy does not make sense.
   16. Jodi Witthaus appreciates Nate taking this issue on. She appreciates it.
   17. Carina Rorzco said she is having a problem with Lyft pass being removed and she has no idea why. Access-a-Ride authorizations are expiring and receiving post cards. The Über pass is present although Lyft is gone. Members of the Chapter shared similar antidotes of this occurring on both platforms.
   18. Nate invites people to contact him with any questions. He will include his contact information in the email he plans sending to Colorado Talk.
7. Veterans Outreach Project, Vice-President Andrea Fowler
8. State Report
   1. Washington Seminar
      1. President Cody Bair said a group of eight people from Colorado, along with a few CCB students, attended Washington Seminar. The issues discussed with Congress this year are:
         1. The Blind Americans Return to Work which resolve with phaseout for SSDI. Getting rid of the idea once $2,500 is earned that the benefits are eliminated.
         2. Medical Device Accessibility Act creates legislation saying medical devices need to conform to accessibility standards.
         3. Website Accessibility Act speaks for itself. It would create standards providing statutory guidance for companies making their site accessible. The act would hold web designers responsible for the accessibility of their site.
      2. Cody said they mostly met with legislative aids. However, they did meet with Representative Brittany Pettersen (CO-D-7) and Representative Jason Crowe (CO-D-6). Cody said, Pettersen, Crow and another Representative whose name he cannot recall, cosponsored the Medical Devices Accessibility Act. Representative Pettersen also cosponsored the Website Accessibility Act. Representative Pettersen also agreed to cosponsor the Social Security changes once introduced into the House. Our National Staff met with Representative Pettersen last week concerning the issue.
      3. Cody thinks we should think about reaching out to DeGette in her Denver District Office (600 North Grant Street, Suite 850, Denver, CO 80203.
   2. Day at the Capital
      1. The Colorado Day at the Capitol was held this month. The priorities are:
         1. Accessible Prescription Bill where pharmacies need to provide accessible prescriptions. The bill does have language concerning the size of the pharmacy.
         2. Increased Funding for NewsLine®. We currently receive $120,000 and are requesting $250,000.
         3. Requesting an interim study on the continuing rideshare dog guide denial issue. We are asking the General Assembly to help brainstorm solutions to fix the problem.
         4. Requesting an audit of the deaf-blind program. Their assistance was cut more than in half. Also, the funding ran out by the end of the year.
      2. Cody urges us to attend the hearings on the bills when they come up. NewsLine® is one of the ways the NFBCO builds chapters.
      3. Pipi Adams, Board Member Nate Hecker and Tim Keenen worked to obtain some very helpful coverage of the NFBCO Day at the Capitol. The media provided a great deal of visibility. Pipi feels the story done was excellent and largely placed us in a good light.
      4. Rob Harris did the newscast for Denver 7. He would like to attend other events in the future such as the 6 Dot Dash. Pipi did a news story about her café being closed due to recent vandalism at our State Supreme Court Building.
   3. Upcoming Chapter Fund Raisers
      1. Cody encourages us to attend other Chapters’ fundraisers. The Denver Chapter is having an Open Mic Night on 6 April 2024. The event is at CCB.
      2. The Wild West Chapter is having a bakeoff on 20 April 2024. The event is at Brewability.
   4. Scholarship programs
      1. The Scholarship program is open and accepting applications. Complete the National Scholarship application by 31 March 2024. The scholarship application for Colorado is due 15 April 2024. Colorado is offering scholarships to residents of Colorado and Wyoming. Encourage students to apply for a National and Colorado Scholarship.
   5. 6 Dot Dash
      1. The date is 1 June 2024. Registration went live Monday. Cody will send the link. Register one and all!!! There will be the race, expo, beer tasting and other events. You can volunteer if you are unable to run or walk.
   6. National Convention
      1. Convention is 3 through 8 July 2024 at the Rosen Centre in Orlando, Florida. Registration for convention is not open yet. The hotel is taking reservations.
      2. The NFBCO is taking requests for assistance. Reach out to Lisa Bonderson if you require assistance. There is another assistance program for those who never attended a national convention called the Jernigan Fund. We expect first time convention attendees to apply to the Jernigan Fund first.
9. CCB Report
   1. Dishon Speers said there are a couple seniors going skiing at El Dora next week.
   2. Eliza Portugal said a couple students came in last Friday.
   3. Several students went to the Colorado Day at the Capitol.
   4. There was also a Super Bowl Party recently.
   5. Chaz Davis said they are going skiing with a number of youth from various school districts. Metro State University is holding a STEM Day. The STEM Day encourages blind students to become involved with science. A family weekend is scheduled for 10 May 2024 at the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park. A weekend of activities, instruction and other fun will occur. More information is forthcoming. Chaz says they would enjoy our participation with the students in Estes Park.
10. Transportation Report, Secretary Gary Van Dorn
    1. Gary said the East Colfax Redevelopment is having a meeting next week at the Carla Madison Recreation Center at East Colfax and North Josephine. They will discuss parking on the streets since Colfax is losing parking. Parking does not directly affect the blind, although it does affect Lyft or Über. Also, it affects blind people if you are with somebody. Gary sent an email on the issue with an interactive map; he has concerns with the accessibility of the email. Contact Gary if you do not find the email accessible.
    2. RTD has Lyft and Über concerns that were previously discussed.
    3. Bustang is discontinuing trips from Colorado Springs to the Denver Tech Center. Martin Becerra-Miranda asked if asked if the Bustang will only depart from Denver Union Station heading south. Gary asked Martin to reach out to Gary if he forgets to contact Martin.
11. Meeting Location for 2024
    1. Adding in-person component to our meetings
       1. President Cody Bair said the Sheridan Library at 3425 W. Oxford Ave offered us meeting space for no charge. Cody said they met at the space and is a very good fit for us. It is further south than we hoped. He feels we should try meeting there next month. Secretary Gary Van Dorn says we should consider this place.
       2. Gary looked at the recreation room in his building at 625 North Pennsylvania Street. Audrey Marquez that we can look at alternating between Gary’s recreation room and the Sheridan Library. Cody suggests we try both location and see which local we prefer. The Sheridan Library is a viable alternative. Gary’s area has a few more restaurants since he resides in Governor’s Park. Cody said he talked to people over the past few months and the sense he receives is that people are Zoomed out. Gary googled restaurants near the Sheridan Library and there seems to be restaurants in that area too.
       3. Board Member Ileen Gallegos asked if anyone reached out to a school to determine if they have spaces. Cody feels this is a good idea. Ileen said she would like to reach out but does not know who to reach out to. Colleges have rooms and Cody said they are willing to rent out rooms. It is unfortunate a lot of the colleges would charge. Gary said it does not hurt to look at a local college or school.
       4. Dishon Speers thinks CCDC’s offices would be good. They moved and does not know how large their facilities are. Gary said he can reach out to Julie Reskin who is one of the Co-Directors. The offices of CCDC are located at 1385 South Colorado Boulevard, Suite 610A. This may be walkable from LighRail.
       5. Pipi Adams said her apartment is off the Englewood LightRail Station and the space is free. This space could work very well. Pipi will look into meeting there.
12. Other Business
    1. Community Center Outreach
       1. Audrey Marquez said she met with somebody who is involved with the Sheridan Community Center and Sheridan Library. There is a new recreation center being built at the previous Loretta Heights College Campus. They are seeking input from different disability groups including the blind. Input on how the community center will be built, what kind of programming they will offer, etc. President Cody Bair and Audrey met with them yesterday to discuss issues of importance for blind people. A focus group will occur next week for people with disabilities. Audrey mentioned room to park Access-a-Ride buses, ramps, an employee to aid people locating various places inside when they first open, etc. Audrey also said having accessible IT resources is also valuable. Cody reflects that it is fantastic community organizations reach out to the NFBCO asking for our input.
       2. The goal of the Community Center is an incubation space for startups. Also hope to have shared spaces. Cody said they are having vending services and are seeking community-based services to operate the vending services. There could also be a cafeteria. Pipi Adams asked Audrey to provide the planners with her contact information for the vending and cafeteria facilities.
       3. Secretary Gary Van Dorn asked if there is inexpensive meeting space. There is no word on costs currently. The facilities are two years out from being completed. The location is near South Federal and West Dartmouth.
    2. President Cody Bair asked anyone if they would like to join. Martin Becerra-Miranda and Carina Rorzco asked to join. Secretary Gary Van Dorn moves to accept the membership of Martin Becerra-Miranda and Carina Rorzco to the Mile High Chapter upon the payment of $5.00 in dues. Treasurer Shawn Clark seconded the motion. The motion was accepted unanimously.
13. Adjourn
    1. Secretary Gary Van Dorn moves to adjourn the 21 February 2024 meeting of the Mile High Chapter of the NFBCO. Dishon Speers seconded the motion. The 21 February 2024 meeting of the Mile High Chapter adjourned at 19:39 MT.
    2. The next meeting of the Mile High Chapter of the NFBCO is 20 March 2024 at 18:00 MT via Zoom.