**Conference Call Board Meeting, January 7, 2017**

**Board members in attendance**

**Gary Allen, President, Rob Palaski, 1st Vice President, Beth Rival, 2nd Vice President, Nathanael Whales, Treasurer, Maryanne Melley, Board Member, Mary Silverberg, Board Member, Cheri Duquette, Board Member, Jim McCollum, Board Member. Missing Carol Lemieux, Secretary.**

**A motion was made to pass the secretary’s minutes from November, Nathanael 1st, Beth 2nd, the board was in favor and it was accepted.**

**Nathanael gave the treasures report;**

**Checking; $16,119.16**

**Savings; $83,468.74**

**Totaling ; $99,587.90**

**Broken down to these two Funds;**

**General Fund; $64,925.21**

**Restricted Fund; $34,662.69**

**He also reported that over the past year our losses have gone from $80,000.00 a year to $20,000.00 due to the changes made in the office.**

**There was discussion about moving the office to a new location in East Hartford that would be about half the cost of the current rent. However there were safety concerns for Diane and the women that did fund raising calls at night. There supposedly is no lighting in the parking lot. Beth volunteered to have Charlie check out the situation. There was also talk of a security guard for our workers or simply talking to the landlord about fixing the lighting problem.**

**BCAC-Barbara Blajewski reported how CRIS radio has outstanding fund raisers every quarter. She felt perhaps we should speak to Diane Weaver Dunn about ideas for fund raising.**

**BESB-Beth Rival reports that unfortunately it is more of the same. There no more home makers. Therefore when a person is newly blind nobody comes to your home with bump dots or any advice to negotiate your home. There is one social worker and two mobility instructor positions on hold.**

**Birdies for Charity- Gary would like one person from each chapter to work on this fundraiser.**

**Kathryn Webster will continue to run The Federationist.**

 **Jim McCollum and Kathryn Webster will talk with Justin Salisbury about Jim becoming the Administrator on our website.**

**BELL Program-The program may not happen. We need a volunteer to run it, a TVI to be part of it, and a place to hold it. The Hartford area offers free camps throughout the summer so it would be better not to hold the program in that area. Kathryn Webster suggested pairing with another state on our border. Beth also mentioned the possibility of doing a weekend program if the week long program was not feasible. More investigation will have to go into this seeing as children need to be transported and it is difficult for their working parents.**

**National Convention will be held at the Rosen Shingle Creek, Orlando Florida. The board will vote on a subsidy amount at the April meeting.**

**State Convention committee members are Rob Palaski, Jim McCollum, Nathanael Whales, Mary Silverberg, Barbara Blejewski, and Josephina Martinez. We are still looking for hotels. Josephina talked with the manager at the Sheridan in Meriden. The room rate was $83.00 per night; they have large meeting rooms and a good bar. More research has to be done on how expensive it would be to use the rooms we need. The board agreed that each vender that comes to our convention should donate a door prize.**

**Braille readers are leaders. More advertising is needed to get young people interested in this contest.Sugestions were made such as CRIS radio, WTIC, BESB and putting flyers in schools. We also raised the prize money to $500.00.**

**Washington Seminar; Gary Allen, Nathanael Whales, Mary Silverberg, Maryanne Melley, Edward Shaham, Edgar Machicote, Jim McCollum and Kathryn Webster will be going to Washington D.C. this year. Maryanne has scheduled four appointments so far and is working on the other three. Edward will purchase a Bluetooth speaker to be donated to the student division raffle.**

**Discussion was had on trying to run a fundraiser like we did several years ago when Beth Rival was president going to either Hammonasset or Rocky Neck. However Beth reminded everyone that even though there was a great turnout we did not make any money because there is no public transportation and the money spent on transporting members to the event cancelled any money we would have made.**

**Chase Cummins is going to the Louisiana Center for the Blind. Because he is a minor his mother must live with him. This means she needs to take a leave of absence from her job for nine months. The Cummins have been more than generous to the NFB of CT for over 25 years. Therefore the board voted that we give Cathy a grant for $2,500.00 for living expenses while Chase is at school.**

**Chapter News; Waterbury; the district representative and Alderman from Waterbury are coming to the next meeting on January 14th. Chapter members will be discussing with them the need for audible crossing signals at particularly dangerous intersections. Central Connecticut; we will have an outreach table at the Connecticut Kids Fair on January 28th and 29th. Once again the NFB Central Cyclers will be raising money for the NFB Kids Camp at National Convention, this cycling challenge is held at the Boys and Girls club of Bristol. Hartford; they will have an outreach table in February at Executive Square. Barbara is looking for some little trinket to give away, this makes people interested in the table. Suggestions were made that she try the Oriental Trading Company or check with Lucia for ideas. Shoreline; Jim McCollum is new president and he is concentrating on building the chapter.**

**Remember, if you would like a slate and stylus you can call the National office and they will send you one for free. The phone number is 410-659-9314**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Maryanne Melley**