NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF CONNECTICUT

 STATE CONVENTION – BUSINESS MEETING – NOVEMBER 5, 2017

The meeting was called to order by President Gary Allen at 9:30 a.m.

Board Members present: Gary Allen, Rob Palaski, Beth Rival, Nathanael Wales, Anne Walsh, Jim McCollum, Maryanne Melley, Mary Silverberg, and Cheri Duquette.

A roll call was taken of attending members and guests.

ELECTIONS: The Committee Nominee Cheri Duquette won over floor nominee Josefina Martinez for a Board Position. Jim McCollum, Committee Nominee was elected to a Board Position by acclamation. Anne Walsh, Committee Nominee was elected to Board Secretary by acclamation.

SECRETARY’s REPORT: Charles Rival read the Secretary’s Report submitted by Anne Walsh.

 Cheri Duquette expressed concern that info re Newsline-Blackford-NFB was not included in the report. A preliminary version of the minutes contains the updated information regarding Newsline funding. The minutes corrected to include the updated Newsline situation were accepted.

At this point, Mark Riccobono, President of the National Federation of the Blind, informed our Affiliate that the minutes presented should have been those covering the Business Meeting of the previous Convention..

TREASURER’S REPORT: Nathanael Wales thanked Gary and Cheri for ‘keeping him on his toes’. He thanked Cheri for fund raising. And, he thanked the Board for supporting the Dravet Fund with a substantial amount of money. Nathanael read his report; there were no questions from the floor. Beth motioned that the Treasurer’s Report be accepted as read; Mary Silverberg seconded. The motion passed.

 Then, a question was asked about how much of the funds received from the Trantolo Firm would go to the Louisiana Center. Gary indicated that $500 would be transferred to the NFB Center for the Blind in LA; and, once checks were deposited a restricted tech ‘Trantolo and Trantolo Fund’ would be set up.

 It was reported that Amy, of Trantolo and Trantolo said they would raise funds for us again. A motion passed that the fund be called the Paul Duquette Fund. Gary said ‘OK’. The purpose of this fund is to furnish technology needed to qualified individuals in as timely a fashion as possible in relation to the urgency of situations.

BCAC: Barbara Blejewski: BCAC had a meeting of member organizations at CRIS last month. CRIS is reaching out to teens and is developing programs for Spanish speakers. Also, CRIS is opening new studios. Various guide dog groups, such as puppy raisers, dog users, and people who wish to become guide dog users were in communication. Other groups with common interests did the same. And reports were submitted. The next BCAC Meeting will be in January.

BESB: Beth Rival will report on BESB’s December meeting at our January Board Meeting.

BIRDIES FOR CHARITY: Deb Reed: It will be in June again. The Traveler’s Golf Tournament is held once a year. Whatever funds are raised and submitted to Travelers by non-profits will be returned along with a 15% bonus. George Reed explained how clubs could help themselves by setting aside funds to use to obtain the15% bonus.

PAC PAN: Marie Beaulier has the current report and will give this sealed report to our Treasurer.

 The CT Affiliate’s standing in this program was 45 and is now at 42. The PAC money is utilized by the National Center to cover the cost of services and supplies provided to Affiliates. Marie told all that when she started covering this program she did not participate; but she does now.

NEWSLINE: Gary Allen- BESB will pay for 2018. However, we are still waiting for the Blackford people to fund November and December of 2017. Gary recommended that everyone in the room be on Newsline and that info about Newsline should be disseminated at every outreach activity. He offered to assist anyone who would need help. Also, many NFB members could assist those signing on. Newsline can be accessed by phone, by computer and other electronic reading devices.

The FEDERATIONIST: Maryanne Melley has a publisher and her first publication will go to print in January. Inside will be Maryanne’s account of her extraordinary experiences at the top end of a fish line.

 Maryanne was fortunate enough to win the local Tournament for the Visually Impaired. She went on to win the New England Event and; then, she took second place in The National Tournament! WOW! Maryanne has one submission. Materials for publication can be sent via Maryanne’s email address MVCMelley@gmail.com or to Lucia at our Outreach Office (447 Connecticut Blvd, Suite 117, East Hartford, CT, 06108).

COCCOMO FUND: Mary Silverberg described what the fund was about. She said that she was honored to serve on it and she told how much satisfaction it gave her to participate in a project that was helping people. Esther Levegnale told how rewarding it was to share in the excitement when a person was told that he or she would receive the technology desired to pursue their ambitions.

NEWS OF NOTE: Mark Riccobono;--NFB funded the Transforming Braille Group which developed the Orbit Reader Braille Display No. 20 which is selling for $450. Orbit Research manufactures it, APH is one entity that is selling it, NFB is not yet selling because it is felt that the product does not, as yet, work well enough. It will be out one of these days. NFB does not make any money on this.

2018 NATIONAL CONVENTION will again be held in the Rosen Shingle Creek Resort Hotel in Orlando, Florida.

 Gary asked members, “Who in the room thought they might be going? Then, he asked if there were any new members who might go. A college student, Brianna, responded with a “Yes.” Gary was asked to explain funding available to Convention attendees. His reply, “While the CT Affiliate had not yet voted on the amount of subsidy for 2018, past grants had been an amount that would cover airfare and half the room price for the necessary nights. So, if one shared a room, the only costs would be food and optional spending. The CT Affiliate has done this to enable as many members as possible to experience these Conventions.”

 Mark Riccobono added that: “Available to some lucky first-timers are Jernigan Fund grants, usually in amounts of about $500. This is not intended to pay the entire cost. It is meant that you invest some of your own money in it. Applicants must get a letter from their Affiliate President and submit their request by the end of March or so.”

 When asked where the next Convention would be after Florida, Mark would only say, “West of the Mississippi.”

At this point, door prizes were awarded…

The WASHINGTON SEMINAR will be on the 29TH of January. Last year the subsidy was $600.

 A motion was made and passed to set the 2018 subsidy at $600. Nary a Nay vote was spoken.

A discussion here occurred wherein the good and bad points of the hotel and its services were evaluated. Experiences at doggie evacuation zones evoked the most emotional responses. This point, and a host of others will be revisited in January.

Our Affiliate will be sending a letter to the Jehovah Witnesses to thank them for the wonderful help they gave to our members.

CHAPTER NEWS:

CENTRAL CT: George Reed— In September, several members from the Central CT Chapter went to the Berlin Fair to tend the NFB Table there. They had an outreach activity on Oct. 7th at the Wellness Facility at the New Horizons Village. On Oct 11th they presented a segment on Nutmeg TV. And, In January they will be at the Kid’s Fair in the Hartford Convention Center.

 The Central CT Chapter had conducted more outreach activities than any other.

GREATER HARTFORD: Barbara Blejewski reported that her Chapter was down to two members, due to health problems. She has discussed a merger with the East of the River Chapter. Meanwhile, she has here learned some tips from Mark Riccobono which she believes will help with bringing new members into NFB.

SHORELINE: Jim McCollum is finding membership building to be quite a challenge. He is considering a move of the Chapter’s meeting place out of downtown New Haven, a little nearer to East Haven.

EAST OF THE RIVER: Anne Walsh indicated that they had done some outreach. The first activity was manning a table at East Hartford’s Fall Festival; the second was to staff at the East Hartford Senior Center.

STAMFORD: John Padilla has retired; John had been President of the Shoreline Chapter for a very long time. Judy Hetfield has taken it over, temporarily, until January. They will have elections in January.

SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT: They are trying to find young people for their Chapter.

There was discussion here about dates and times of Christmas parties.

ADJOURNMENT OCCURRED AT 12:30 P.M.

Note: The two Board Member positions are for two years.

 The Board Secretary position is for one year.