National Federation of the Blind of Kansas

Jayhawk Chapter Minutes, August 15, 2015

Location: Room A, Lawrence Public Library, 707 Vermont, Lawrence, Kansas

Members present: Dustin Disque, Athena Johnson, Cheryl Miller, Ron Miller, Renee Morgan, Pat Slick, Rob Tabor, Susan Tabor

Attending guests: Charles Hurst

The president called the meeting to order at 1:06 pm. The president added further discussion of the State House Visitors Center kiosks to the agenda under other old business.

Presidential Release #441 by National president Dr. Mark Riccobono was played.

State and Chapter President’s Report. Chapter members gave a round of applause in appreciation of Cheryl and Ron Miller for transporting food from Sandbar Subs for members to enjoy during the meeting and for providing nonalcoholic beverages for the August kickoff meeting.

National Convention. Rob gave a report on the 2015 National Convention in Orlando Florida. There were several activities designed to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the founding of NFB in 1940 in Wilkes-Barre Pennsylvania. Rob noted there were 2163 registered conventioneers of which 2163, (about 75 percent) had pre-registered online. The Kansas delegation consisted of 7 NFB adult members and one child. Rob was the only delegate from Jayhawk chapter

Rob participated in a Guinness World Record-setting event for the largest umbrella Mosaic with 2,480 umbrellas which were simultaneously deployed on cue. The event took place on the morning of Wednesday, July 8, the first day of the 3 day general session. This surpasses the old record of 2,170 umbrellas arranged in a mosaic.

Rob noted that President Riccobono’s debut report as national president was enthusiastically received and demonstrates the strong continuity of our national leadership.

State Affiliate Board. Rob announced that the state board met via teleconference call on July 26. The 2015 Kansas state convention is now scheduled for November 20-22 at the Hotel Old Town in Wichita. Further information will be forthcoming as to room rates and the room reservation process. The board voted to fund the Kansas subscription fees for Newsline® for a 6 month period. This decision is facilitated somewhat by a recent bequest of $150,000 from the estate of a woman whose last name was Schlitz, of which 50 percent has been transmitted to NFB national treasury.

Speaking engagement. Rob expressed his appreciation to Dustin for inviting him to give an extensive informational talk to the Information Bureau which met via teleconference on the evening of Tuesday, August 11. Rob stated the audience showed strong interest and had several good questions.

Vice President’s Report. Renee stated she has nothing to report.

Approval of Minutes. Upon calling for changes or corrections to the April and May 2015 minutes and hearing none, Rob declared both April and May minutes approved as submitted via the Jayhawk Chapter email distribution list.

Treasurer’s report. The bank account balance as of July 1 was $750.20. There were $40 disbursed for chapter picnic expenses and $200 disbursed to Rob for attendance at national convention for total disbursements of $240. Ron noted a deposit of $200 from the proceeds of the Freddy’s fund-raising supper event. Noting a deposit credit of $200 and total disbursements of $240, Ron gave the ending balance as of July 31 of $710.50. The president declared the treasurer’s report approved as given, there being no additions or corrections.

Fund-raising Updates — Freddy’s. Rob announced that the Freddy’s fund-raiser added $200 to chapter treasury as it did last year.

Mercantile Co-op Give-back. Rob noted that Brendy Latare had volunteered to submit an online application for the Mercantile Cooperative’s charitable giveback program. As Brendy was not present, Rob stated he would follow up with her regarding the project and present a report at the September regular meeting.

The Salty Iguana, Athena reported she had no further information and stated she would revisit her contacts to get more details on the particulars of its charitable giveback program.

USA-800. Rob announced that USA800, Inc., a call center outsourcing company headquartered in Missouri, has very recently opened a call center in Lawrence. Upon explaining the fundamentals of the call center outsourcing business model as experienced by the consumer, Rob noted that the call center industry is a logical and very suitable field for employment of blind workers due to its being a technology driven industry. However, many blind jobseekers often find their employment aspirations are repeatedly obstructed by the would-be employer’s use of proprietary business software which is discovered to be inaccessible to assistive technology. Rob further opined that the problem is systemic in nature and requires collective advocacy by NFB to raise corporate awareness and to remedy this major stumbling block to employment of the blind. Rob stated he will attempt to initiate a conversation, perhaps in the form of a focus group once the local management team is fully in place.

Upcoming Officer Elections. Rob announced the chapter is due to hold its annual elections of officers in September or October and announced the appointment of Renee to chair a nominating committee and noted that Renee is free to enlist the assistance of one or 2 chapter members to assist her. Rob stated that annual membership dues of $12 per member will be collected before votes are taken. A membership per capita of 50 cents on the dollar must be remitted to the NFB state treasurer and this should occur during or before state convention.

Meet The Blind (MTB) 2015 Campaign. Rob informed our 2 new members that MTB is a national campaign in which October is designated to encourage state affiliates and local chapters to conduct community educational events to inform the general public about the innate normality of blind people and to increase the awareness of the mission, philosophy, and programs of NFB. Rob noted that MTB events in recent years included a mayor’s proclamation ceremony at City Hall, an informational table in the courtyard of US Bank at Ninth and Massachusetts, and in some years a demonstrational walk in downtown Lawrence. An invitation to members for input into whether any of these events should be conducted in the 2015 campaign produced a decision by consensus that the chapter should conduct the Mayor’s proclamation ceremony but discontinue the downtown table event. In lieu of the table event several members suggested we plan an event or series of events to raise awareness of traffic safety concerns, in keeping with the mission and goals of the Kansas White Cane Act. Some suggested that the mayor and/or other city officials should be invited to attempt to cross a busy intersection under blindfolds or sleep shades, and this should be proceeded by giving verbal information about the techniques blind people use to judge when it is safe to navigate a street crossing using auditory observations of traffic flow. It was generally agreed the blindfold street crossing event should be scheduled for a Saturday, preferably in early to mid-October and on the day of a KU home football game. It is also suggested that we need to contact all local media outlets in our pedestrian traffic safety awareness campaign. Rob appointed Pat to chair the MTB 2015 campaign and Susan offered to assist. Rob encouraged all members to participate in the 2015 MTB campaign according to talents and interests..

Other Old Business – State House Visitor Kiosks. The ensuing discussion of the purported accessibility issues with touch screen kiosks in the Visitors Center at the Kansas State House revealed that no one in attendance had personally experienced the kiosks. It was suggested that a group of chapter members set aside some time to travel as a group to Topeka to make the attempt to use the kiosks initially without sighted assistance and then to enlist whatever level of assistance is necessary to operate them. Rob requested Ron to review his calendar and devise a list of dates when he is available to drive a group of 2 to 4 people to Topeka for this endeavor, which he agreed to do. Rob opined the matter needs to be brought to the attention of Anthony Fadale, ADA compliance coordinator for the entire state system. Perhaps a meeting with Mr. Fadale could be scheduled for the same day immediately after the visit to the State House.

Knowledge Base. Rob demonstrated the use of the recently released NFB Connect app for the iPhone and other iOS devices. On conclusion of the demonstration various participants requested a basic iPhone training session. Rob stated he would follow up this request.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:47 pm.

Next meeting Saturday, September 19, Independence, Inc., 2001 Haskell, Lawrence, KS

Submitted by: Rob Tabor Jayhawk Chapter president, NFB of Kansas