Jayhawk Chapter National Federation of the Blind

Minutes for March 17, 2018

Location: Teleconference call

The March 2018 meeting of the Jayhawk Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of Kansas (NFBK) convened via teleconference on Saturday, March 18 at 10 a.m., CDT. The teleconference meeting was substituted for the regularly scheduled meeting at the Lawrence Public Library on account of several known absences as well as anticipated traffic in the downtown Lawrence area in preparation for the St. Patrick’s Day parade. Members on line were Renee, Pat, Tamara, Dustin, and Rob. No guests were on the call.

• National report. The chapter president summarized the highlights of Presidential Release No. 470 in lieu of full audio playback. The following items were reported:

— National Convention. The online pre-registration period for the 2018 NFB national convention opened on March 1. The convention will

 be held in Orlando Florida from July 3 to July 8, 2018. Convention information including the pre-registration form are found by logging into http:/www.nfb.org/convention. The early registration fee is $25 and $65 for each convention banquet ticket purchased online. Both the registration fee and banquet tickets increase by $5 after the registration window closes.

* Delta Airlines Service Animals policy. Delta Airlines had initially issued a new policy on boarding service animals on its jetliners. Initially, blind passengers using guide dogs were required to give at least 48 hours’ notice of being accompanied in flight by a guide dog. Through persistent negotiations and advocacy, our national leaders persuaded airline executives to modify its on board service animals policy to relieve bind passengers of this and other onerous requirements. NFB staff continues to be in conversation with Delta Airline representatives.
* AIRA (glasses) NFB special pricing. The AIRA corporation announces a special monthly subscription for NFB members. For $99 per month we get 140 minutes of service plus an added 60 minutes of services to be used at home or workplace for 6 months after sign-up. Additional service time is available for job-seeking activities, e.g., assistance in navigating an inaccessible online job application website. All NFB state affiliate conventions will become Aria hotspots which means that services used at convention venues will not be deducted from a subscriber’s monthly plan. More information is found at [https:/go.aira.io/nfb](https://aira.io/nfb).

 —National NFB Code of Conduct. A formal code of conduct was unanimously approved by our national board at its winter quarterly meeting on January 18, 2018. Topics covered therein include diversity and a policy against discrimination against specific classes, a zero tolerance policy against sexual and other forms of harassment, guidelines for respectful postings on social media, a conflict of interest policy, guidelines and limits on interactions with under-aged persons, a policy on product and service endorsements, and a grievance and due process policy. State affiliates are urged to adopt the code of conduct for themselves.

Preparer’s note: a copy of the code of conduct was distributed to chapter members as part of the March pre-meeting packet.

* Marrakesh Treaty Bill introduced. Rob announced that after the March presidential release issued, Senate bill S-2559 implementing the Marrakesh Treaty on accessible books was introduced on March 15 by Charles E “Chuck” Grassley (R/IA). . Originating co-sponsoring senators include Bob Corker, (R/TN), Diane Feinstein, (D/CA), Bob Menendez, (D/NJ), . Rob surmises that Federation members will be called on for follow-up action to advocate for passage of S-2559 and opines that having bipartisan support at introduction bodes well for eventual passage.

 •State report. Rob announced that the state affiliate board meeting was held via teleconference on Sunday, March 4. The board voted to increase the annual payment to our state website developer Milton Ota from $500 to $600 to compensate him for the additional work required to migrate the website to Drupal, a web content management system (CMS) which will enable content to be updated without the need to know HTML and other web coding languages.

• Statewide email listserv. Susie Stanzel has been appointed by our state president Tom Page as the new Home-On-The-Range email list moderator and will succeed Maryse Figueroa who relocated to Arizona from Kansas several years ago.

* Ken Tiede Memorial Scholarships. Announcements and applications are now available for the 2018 Ken Tiede Memorial State scholarships for blind post-secondary students. Two scholarships of $1500 and one $2500 award will be presented to Tiede scholarship candidates at our state convention in Wichita on the first weekend of November.

 —Pending state legislation. Lynn Petro of Overland Park, mother of Brooke Petro who was recently denied access to braille school textbooks by the Blue Valley school district because she attends a parochial school, has successfully advocated the introduction in the Kansas House of HB 2613, which mandates the provision of braille and sign language interpreter services to bind or deaf students attending private and parochial elementary and secondary schools when such services are deemed appropriate. HB 2613 has been heard before the House Education Committee, after which it was referred to the House Appropriations Committee to attach a fiscal note. The bill is now pending action in the education committee, where it may meet resistance from both parties, e.g., Republicans concerned about costs to the state treasury, and Democrats who may be hesitant to lock horns with the Kansas National Education Association (KNEA) who opposes the bill because it would bring some benefit to private and parochial schools, albeit an incidental benefit.

* Blind Rehabilitation Service Advisory Committee. Tom Page and Tom Anderson both serve on the committee and report that a compromise agreement has been reached with Michael Donnelly, KRS Director regarding client financial contribution to their rehab training programs. In recent years clients have been required to assign SSDI and SSI benefits to help defray the costs of their blindness skills and vocational training. The compromise client participation plan would reduce client participation in a residential rehabilitation training program to zero, and, for college and other post-secondary students, cost-sharing for housing and food expense would be reduced from 75% to 30%. These proposed policy revisions must be vetted and approved by other committees and ultimately approved by the Secretary of DCF.

 —Code of Conduct. The NFB Code of Conduct, referenced earlier herein, was discussed at length but no action was taken by the state board.

* Next board meeting. Due to Easter Sunday, the April state board meeting, usually scheduled for the first Sunday of the month, is scheduled for April 8 at 3pm via teleconference. All members are invited to dial in.

• February minutes. The president called for any corrections to the February 2018 meeting minutes which were distributed prior to the March meeting. Hearing none, the president declared the minutes approved as sent.

• Treasurer’s report. The treasurer’s report was given by Rob in Brendy’s absence. There were no debits or credits since February 28. Therefore, the account balance as of 2/28/2018 remains at $786.82. Upon calling for corrections to the treasurer’s report and hearing none, the president approved the report as given.

• Fundraising updates. Rob reported that the NCAA chapter bracket challenge is well under way and requested those who have not yet done so to join the Jayhawk NFB private pool which clusters all of us together, thereby making it more efficient for Rob to track points and standings. The group name and password were given along with the instructions to join to the private pool of the accessible online pool system.

* Freddy’s benefit supper. Rob reported that he and Susan had visited Freddy’s at lunch time but the manager who is authorized to arrange for a benefit supper was unavailable. Rob stated that he is persisting to reach the gentleman by phone.

 —Trivia night. Rob reported that the committee will soon be contacting Steve Buckner to arrange a meeting, possibly at Conroy’s Pub, to plan the details of the event. Pat offered to assist with the planning process, and Rob appointed him to the planning committee.

• Summer Break and Chapter social. Chapter members agreed to take the customary summer break from monthly meetings during June and July and will resume regular business meetings in August. It was also agreed to convene a chapter social event at Conroy’s Pub on Saturday, June 17 at 2 pm.

• Other old business. LMH. Pat reported that Lawrence Memorial Hospital (LMH) is seriously considering making provisions for accessible standard forms which patients are asked to sign. Pat opines that added pressure on LMH to do this can be brought to fruition if we all insist on having hospital staff read forms to us prior to signing.

* Lawrence Public Library. Pat reminds us all to visit the library and to ask staff for an accessible computer to demonstrate the need in the community for at least one computer equipped with assistive software. Pat stated that NVDA can be installed without charge.

• New business. Renee suggested that we approach The Merc Co-op with a request to designate the chapter as a recipient of its Change for the Community program. Rob noted that a previous attempt 2 or 3 years ago was unsuccessful but could be tried again, which Renee volunteered to investigate.

• Adjournment. Having no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:49 am. Our next meeting is Saturday, April 21 at the Lawrence Public Library as per usual.

Submitted by Rob Tabor Chapter president