Cambridge Chapter Minutes, April 17, 2023

The April meeting of the Cambridge Chapter was held on Zoom. It was called to order at 6:03 PM.

In attendance:

Kristina Constant

Masha Sten-Clanton

Al Sten-Clanton

Rachel Kobierecki

Sengil Inkiala

David Ticchi

Mika Pyyhkala

Cullen Gallagher

Jenn Bose

John Oliveira

Kobena Bonney

Rashad Saadieh

Shara Winton

Stephanie Valdes

Stephen James

Allen Larkin

Debbie Malone

Justin Heard

Stephanie led the NFB Pledge.

The March minutes were accepted as written.

Mika presented the Treasurer's Report. We had our standard $50 PAC donation. Our checking account balance before a transfer was made was $7,298.54. $5,798.54 was transferred to the affiliate account, leaving the chapter with $1500 as recommended by the national office.

Cullen moved that the Treasurer's Report be accepted; the motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Justin announced that Stephanie has been appointed as our fundraising committee chair.

Justin presented highlights from the April Presidential Release. You can access it at the following link: https://nfb.org/sites/nfb.org/files/2023-04/presidential\_release\_april\_2023\_chapter\_version\_final.mp3

David reminded us that the release is also available through NFB Newsline.

If you have not booked your flight yet for the national convention, be aware of basic economy flights. You may wish to avoid these, as there are often additional fees for carry-on luggage. You also may not get any credit if you need to cancel.

We will be holding our election for Vice President next month. It will be in-person only; there will be no Zoom voting. If a voice vote is too close to call, we will have a process in place.

We had a good discussion last month about what would motivate members to attend meetings in-person and what would make them more interesting. Justin introduced two ideas that he has for improving meetings. The first is that he will send out a Google Sheet, where we will be able to sign up to bring a snack to the meeting. You will also be able to bring a non-alcoholic drink. That person would need to arrive around 5:30 to get the food and drink set up. Members could arrive around 5:45 to get their snacks, and the meeting would still start at 6:00. This is optional; no one is required to do this. If you would like to bring something and have issues filling out the Google Sheet, contact a chapter officer. You can also team up with another member to bring something for the meeting.

Another thing we heard last month is that we would like more discussion of blindness issues and philosophy, and not using all of our time for business. One way to do this is to pick an article from the Braille Monitor and discuss it. We will select an article at the beginning of the month and send it out to the list. In leaving time for these discussions, there is a possibility that we may not get to some of the business. Some of these items might not be able to wait until another chapter meeting. If this happens, trusting the chapter leadership will be important.

There was some discussion as to whether there is enough time to add this to our meetings. Some other ideas were brought up, including having philosophy discussions either at another location or on Zoom. It was also pointed out that this might not take as long as some might think. There may be some that do not read the article or have any comments on it. We agreed that we would try having the article discussion beginning with the June meeting, the election might require more time next month..

We discussed the technology needed to run a hybrid meeting. Justin clarified that he would not be leaving anytime soon, but wanted to make sure that the system is in place to keep the hybrid meetings going. Justin currently uses a professional stereo microphone and a Bluetooth speaker which is placed across the room to minimize feedback. When anyone wants to speak on zoom, Justin mutes the mic to ensure that there is as little feedback as possible, and unmutes it when someone in the room is speaking. There was a Braille Monitor article about running a hybrid meeting. Running a hybrid meeting can be as simple as having a good quality microphone, speaker, and someone to run the zoom. It was suggested that a committee be appointed to look at equipment options, and see if anything would need to be purchased. Kobena, Cullen, Rashad, and Mika will serve on the Technology Committee. Cullen agreed to chair this committee.

Justin discussed the upcoming leadership seminar. It is invite-only, and this was done to allow those who have demonstrated leadership qualities to come together and learn. The best way to get invited to these events is to actively participate and volunteer. There are a lot of opportunities to get involved in our affiliate, including advocacy and committee work.

The MCB rally was held just after the commissioner announced that he would resign. It was held on the state house steps, and attendees discussed the good progress that has been made, and the work that still needs to be done. There will likely be more events; stay tuned for details. There is a survey for MCB consumers on how MCB can improve. If you received it, please fill it out. There is a unique code in each email that you will need to enter.

The next meeting will be on May 8. There will be Zoom access for the meeting itself, but voting for the election will be in person only.

Meeting adjourned at 7:33 PM.