# Cambridge Chapter Minutes, May 13, 2024

The May 13, 2024 Meeting of the Cambridge Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of Massachusetts was held as a hybrid meeting at Citywide Senior Center and Zoom. It was called to order at 6:05 PM.

## In Attendance:

Cullen Gallagher

Kristine DiNardo

ElizabethAnn Johnson

Kobena Bonney

Ellen Bartelt

Julia LaGrand

Helen Kobek

Adam Roberge

John Oliveira

Mika Pyyhkala

David Ticchi

Laurie Mattioli

Shara Winton

Allen Larkin

Kristina Constant

Stephen Yerardi

Justin Heard

William O’Donnell

Jen Bose

Sengil Inkiala

Shirley Dorris

Vinod Chawla

Olufunke Taiwo Osho

Jeff Wilson

Rashad Saadieh

## NFB Pledge

ElizabethAnn led the NFB Pledge.

## Approval of Minutes

Kobena moved that we accept the minutes as read: the motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

## Treasurer’s Report

Mika Presented the Treasurer’s Report. We had minimal activity this month, which includes our $50 PAC contribution. That leaves our checking account balance at $426.13. Mika is also working on processing the gift for Scott Hurley, this will be sent and processed next month.

Elizabethann moved acceptance of the Treasurer’s Report: the motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

## Affiliate Updates

### Scholarship Winners

Shara announced that we are excited to claim three national scholarship winners in Massachusetts. Tom Geraci is a part of our student board and helps with our social media. He attends Maritime College in North Andover.

Sam Morgan attends uMass Lowell and is studying meteorology.

Our third winner is Julia LaGrand from Michigan and attending school at New England conservatory. She attended the meeting and introduced herself. She is currently studying violin performance, and will also be doing a dual degree program with Harvard.

### National Convention

If you have not registered for National Convention, online registration closes May 31. If you miss the deadline, you will need to register in-Person, which would involve a longer line and higher cost.

The main hotel is full, but there are two overflow options, the Rosen Plaza And Rosen Shingle Creak. The Rosen Plaza is closer to the Rosen Centre.

The affiliate will help anyone in need of financial assistance to attend the convention. Contact Shirley or Shara for assistance. If you are asking for assistance, you will need to attend all of the General Sessions and work at least one shift at our exhibit hall table. When the agenda is released, please let Shirley know your availability for working a shift.

### Springfield Walk Trip

There are only two spaces available for this weekend’s trip to the Springfield Chapter Walk. Surely helped to procure a 12 passenger van for the trip. We will be leaving for Springfield around 7:30 and heading back around 2:00 PM.

### New Legislative Director

Kyra Sweeney is our new legislative Director. She is very excited to begin this work.

### Kendra Scott Fundraiser

We have not received the numbers yet, but our fundraiser went very well. Thank you to all who purchased something online or came out for the event last Sunday.

## Community Outreach Committee

Last year, Justin started a community outreach committee. Inky is the chair of this committee, which focuses on reaching out to places that need insight on what we need for assistance.

Much of this would be in the surrounding area of Cambridge. The committee will talk to the fire and police departments about how to help us. Another focus will be providing support for things that are lacking. An example is the experience members had at the Quincy Walmart, where they were denied assistance and told that Walmart had a policy of not providing shopping assistance as it would be a liability. This is apparently not a corporate policy.

Inky emphasized that we will go beyond the police and fire department, and strongly encouraged anyone facing an issue to bring it up to the committee. They will do what it takes, including contacting national and the Attorney General if needed.

Inky hopes to have a committee meeting next week..

## Upcoming Meeting Changes

Shirley discussed some changes that she would like to bring to our meetings.

### Calling ON Members for NFB Pledge

It is very important that all members know the NFB Pledge. Starting next month, Shirley will be randomly calling on members to recite the pledge. This will insure that it is not the same people leading the pledge each month. If you are really uncomfortable with this, contact Shirley.

### Agenda Collaboration

Shirley will work closely with Inky on the agenda. Shirley also encourages member input on the agenda. If you have a specific issue that you would like to bring up to the meeting, please contact Shirley a few weeks before the meeting so it can be discussed and put on the agenda. We want to be able to support one another.

### Presidential Release And The Agenda

Shirley will have the Presidential Release at the end as we may sometimes have longer agendas. Although the Presidential Release is available online and it does take some time, we do need to continue presenting it at our meetings. We will try having it at the end of our meetings and move it if it is necessary.

There was also a brief discussion about our meeting location. We were reminded about the factors that led us to the Senior Center, including being able to bring in snacks, availability for Monday night meetings, and availability for a monthly meeting. We will continue to meet at the Senior Center on Mondays at 6:00 PM with the Zoom option continuing to be available.

## Presidential Release

Cullen presented highlights from the [May Presidential Release.](https://nfb.org/sites/nfb.org/files/2024-04/may_2024_presidential_release_chapter.mp3)

## Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be on June 10.

## Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:24 PM.