# Cambridge Chapter Minutes, August 12, 2024

The August 12, 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. The meeting was called to order at 6:03 PM.

## In Attendance:

Sengil Inkiala

Wesley Tailer

Nicole Tolbert

Allan Barr

Stephanie Valdes

Ellen Bartelt

Elizabethann Johnson

Kobena Bonney

Kate Katulak Higgins

Adam Roberge

Liam Flanagan

Hellen Kobek

Ian Spector

Masha Sten-Clanton

Al Sten-Clanton

Laurie Mattioli

Jen Bose

Shara Winton

Kristina Constant

Mika Pyyhkala

Greg Bedard

Carol Fithian

Olufunke Osho

David Ticchi

John Oliveira

Shirley Dorris

Rashad Saadieh

## NFB Pledge

Shirley led the NFB Pledge.

## Approval of Minutes

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

## Treasurer’s Report

Mika presented the Treasurer’s Report. The only transactions were our $50 PAC contributions for July and August. Our checking account balance is $276.13.

Shara moved that we accept the Treasurer’s Report: the motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

## New Members

Two new members were voted in this evening. Ian Spector introduced himself. Following his introduction, Kobena moved that we vote in Ian Spector as a member; the motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Allan Barr introduced himself. Following his introduction, Kobena moved that we vote in Allan Barr as a member; the motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Welcome, Allan and Ian.

Carol Fithian and Wesley Tailer attended their first meeting and were welcomed to join.

## Fencing Program

Stephanie discussed the International Fencing Club’s desire to have a blind fencing team for the 2028 Paralympics. This was presented to the International Federation at the Junior Olympics in 2015, and they were in favor of it.

They are interested in coming up with a set of rules to make it official for blind people. The Paralympics has a fencing team for wheelchair users, and the hope is to assemble a blind team to do a demonstration at the 2028 Olympics and make it an official sport.

Fencing helps improve balance and orientation. The club is in West Roxbury, and training may begin twice a week in September. We are not sure what the cost would be at this time, but the club does need to pay for rent and coaches. If you are not interested in going to the Olympics, this can be done recreationally.

If you are interested in being a part of this team, contact Stephanie.

## David Ticchi Walk

The David Ticchi walk will be held at Fresh Pond in Cambridge on October 6 from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. There will be a table accepting donations. This is our biggest fundraiser of the year, so please work on getting sponsors and donations. The walk around Fresh Pond is 2.5 Miles. The walk letter will be sent out next week.

## Outreach Team Update

Inky gave an update from our Outreach and Advocacy committee. The committee has continued to work on the Walmart assistance issue, gathering more information. Laurie and Hellen contacted several Walmart locations to find out if they would provide personal shopping assistance. In Orlando, several members had a positive experience while shopping at Walmart. It was pointed out that there was a resolution passed at the national convention regarding this issue. However, managers at four of the Walmart stores contacted indicated that they provide assistance, and this is also a corporate policy. Members felt that it would be valuable to have this policy in writing so it could be shown when there are issues. We need to be assertive to insure we get the assistance we need.

Shirley emphasized that this work is important to all of us, and we cannot do it alone. It takes a team to get results.

The team continues to work on the beauty store issue, and an issue with accessing forms at the DMV was also mentioned.

Please come to our meeting on August 21 to discuss these issues.

## Affiliate and Other Updates

Shara presented a few updates:

There may need to be a change in venue for our State Convention as doors are not Brailled. Shara is working with the hotel to resolve this.

On August 29, there will be a Zoom meeting to hear from everyone about what they would like to see at our convention and get some new ideas. Please come with your ideas for the convention.

There are two surveys that National would like us to complete. The first is regarding your thoughts on the Presidential Release.

To provide feedback, email President Riccobono at officeofthepresident@nfb.org.

There is also a survey regarding the national convention. Please take a few minutes and fill these surveys out.

[Convention Survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/nfb24)

## Presidential Release

Cullen presented highlights from the [August Presidential Release.](https://nfb.org/sites/nfb.org/files/08-2024/presidential_release_august_2024_chapter_version.mp3).

## Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:39 PM. The next meeting will be September 9.