The NFB of MA At-Large Chapter met on Tuesday, February 11th, 2025. The meeting began at 6:31PM. Those in attendance included:

Cullen Gallagher

Shara Winton

Allen Larkin

Elizabeth Ann Johnson

Kristina Constant

Liz Lesperance

Shirley Doris

Debbie Malone

Ren Lovegood

Shannon Canton

Brian Langlois

Sandy Burgess

For this month's icebreaker, we named our favorite book.

Liz recited the NFB pledge.

Cullen put forth a motion to approve the January meeting minutes which was seconded by Allen. The minutes were approved unanimously.

The treasurer's report has been tabled. Shara will talk to Kobena about the status of opening a bank account for our chapter. Sandy will be the lead name on the account and Debbie's name will be on the account as well.

Cullen played the abbreviated February presidential release. The release can be heard at the following link:

https://nfb-presidential-release.podbean.com/e/presidential-release-546-february-2025/

Shara noted that the day after the presidential release President Trump issued an executive order eliminating diversity, equity, and inclusion programs throughout the federal government. In response, the NFB has prioritized continued funding for programs including NLS, free matter for the blind, the vocational rehabilitation act, the older blind program, the protection and advocacy program and Medicaid. At the state level, our affiliate will participate in a "day on the hill" to advocate for state-level legislation. This will be discussed further at the state convention.

Shara presented the affiliate presidential report. There will be a bus scheduled to transport members from the Boston area to the state convention in Springfield and then back to Boston after the convention. The price will be between $40-$45 roundtrip. The details are still being finalized. Those who are only taking the bus one way are still asked to pay the full roundtrip price. The bus will leave around 9:00am on Friday March 14th and return to Boston around 4:00Pm on Sunday March 16th. Note, there will be a tour of the basketball hall of fame that will take place before the bus leaves on Sunday for those who are interested. The bus will wait for everyone to get back from the tour before leaving.

Door prizes are needed for the convention. Carol Maurice is the door prize coordinator. Our chapter discussed how we would like to contribute to the door prizes. Cullen put forth a motion to donate $100 as a single amount awarded as a door prize. Liz seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Please register for the convention if you have not yet done so.

There is also still time to submit a scholarship application.

If you have a resolution that you feel the state affiliate should prioritize please contact Shara or Kyra.

Auction items are still being collected. Baked goods make especially great auction items. Please give any items to Shara. Please include a brailed description of the item. Our chapter would like to contribute to the auction by either donating a pair of RayBan Meta smart glasses or donating a gift card towards the purchase of these glasses. Cullen has reached out to Jessica who is the manager at the Ray Ban store in Cambridge and is just waiting to hear back on whether or not the store will be able to donate a pair. The glasses don't come with a USB-C cable so Cullen will include this either with the glasses or the gift card.

Ren Lovegood is a PhD student living in Stoughton who joined our meeting for the first time tonight. Cullen put forth a motion to add Ren as a new member to our chapter which Allen seconded. Ren was voted in unanimously.

In a future meeting we will be discussing our 2025 goals, fundraising, and advocacy initiatives.

Kristina gave an update on the guide dog group. The guide dog group met on Feb. 2nd and discussed how guide dog discrimination is a criminal offense in Massachusetts but there is a very low fine associated. Al Elia will be at the state convention as well as the next guide dog meeting to discuss this issue in further detail.

We will meet briefly on Tuesday, March 11th at 6:30PM to iron out any final details for the state convention which will be held later that week.

The meeting adjourned at 8:08PM