# Cambridge Chapter Minutes, May 12, 2025

The May 12, 2025 Meeting of the Cambridge Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of Massachusetts was held via Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 6:05 PM.

## In attendance:

Shirley Dorris, President

Sengil Inkiala, Vice President

Cullen Gallagher, Secretary

Mika Pyyhkala, Treasurer

Jen Bose, Board Member

Shara Winton, Affiliate President

Adam Roberge

ElizabethAnn Johnson

Sunish Gupta

David Ticchi

Kristina Constent

Hellen Kobek

Ellen Bartelt

Kyra Sweeney

John Oliveira

Stephanie Valdes

Wesley Taylor

Olufunke Osho

Rick Camann

Vinod Chawla

Allen Larkin

## NFB Pledge

Kristina led the NFB Pledge.

## Approval of Minutes

Jen moved that we accept the April minutes; the motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

## Treasurer’s Report

Mika presented the treasurer’s report.

There was very little activity this month, just our PAC contribution. Our checking account balance was $2,745.79.

Shara would be having lunch with Scott Hurley on Thursday, and would present him with a gift card for his assistance with our walk.

Shara announced that planning for the 2025 walk had begun and would be held on Sunday, October 5. Members were encouraged to mark this date on their calendars.

Cullen moved that we accept the treasurer’s report; the motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

## Day at the Massachusetts State House

Kyra announced that we would have a day at the State House on Wednesday, June 4 from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Meetings would be scheduled for most of the day with state legislators. The two issues we would be advocating for are the protection of rights of parents with disabilities from discrimination in juvenile court and custody proceedings, and amendments to the state public accommodations laws to protect rideshare users against service animal discrimination.

To participate, members should email Kyra, kyra.sweeney94@gmail.com, and CC Shara.

An email had been sent out regarding the parents’ rights bill, and members were urged to write to encourage legislators to support this, especially if they could not attend the event on June 4.

## Presidential Release

The [May Presidential Release](https://nfb.org/sites/nfb.org/files/2025-05/presidential_release_may_2025_chapter_version.mp3)  was played.

## National Convention

The National Convention was scheduled to take place in New Orleans, July 8 to 13. The following members indicated they would be attending:

1. Mika
2. ElizabethAnn
3. Sunish
4. Kyra
5. John
6. Cullen
7. Shirley
8. Olu
9. Stephanie
10. Shara
11. Jen
12. Vinod
13. Ellen

The convention would be at the Marriott, with the Sheraton across the street serving as overflow and the location of the exhibit hall. The hotel room block and convention registration would close on May 31.  
The initial plan was not to have a table in the exhibit hall. However, a number of members expressed interest and willingness to assist with a table. A meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, May 14 at 7:00 PM to discuss this further. We raised around $3,000 last year with our t-shirts.  
The national organization also requested volunteers to work a shift in the Independence Market, and ElizabethAnn, Stephanie, and Kyra volunteered.

## New Fundraising Committee

Shara announced that we have a new fundraising committee, and that some new and exciting ideas were planned.

## Lawsuit Regarding Recreational Horseback Riding

Several members had been denied access to recreational horseback riding, and the reason given was that they were blind and that this was state law. Legal action was being taken to challenge and change this policy.

## Blindness Stories at Meetings

At last month’s meeting, Jen mentioned an upcoming storytelling group. Shirley had participated in something similar in the past and shared some of her blindness story last month. A member suggested that we incorporate this into our meetings to help get to know each other better. It was decided that we would feature someone each month. Members who are interested in speaking should contact Shirley.

## Museum of Fine Arts Event

Shara sent out an email about an event scheduled for June 17 at the MFA, focused on marginalized people from an artist in Roxbury. Shara encouraged as many members as possible to sign up, and the group could go for a late lunch after the event. Interested members were required to register through the MFA for this event.

Shirley suggested forming a social committee to find opportunities to socialize with each other. This is something we would consider in the future.

## Accessibility of Travel Booking Websites

Sunish would like to hear experiences with booking travel and accessibility. This could be covered at next month’s meeting or after the National Convention.

A resolution had previously been passed requiring apps to be accessible. It was suggested to reach out to the national office to find out the progress of this work. Stephanie would do this and report at the next meeting.

## Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM, with the next meeting scheduled for June 9. We would return to the normal hybrid meeting format in June.