

MI-ABS Teleconference Minutes
Jan. 12, 2020

Present:

Jeff Crouch (president)
Robert Parsons (vice-president)
Victor Marques (secretary)
Steven Crouch (intern)
Dakota Birch (member at large)
Rachel Pavone (member at large)
Jerusalem Crawley (intern, joined approx. 8:00)

Meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM

- A quorum does exist for this meeting.

Previous Minutes:

- Minutes were sent out on January 2, 2020 for the December teleconference and to amend the minutes of the general business meeting of November 9, 2019, via the email list-serve and with links posted in WhatsApp to a Dropbox copy.
- Motion to approve last month's minutes. Robert moved, Steven seconded. Unanimous approval.

Treasurer's Report (Jeff Crouch):

- As of today, bank account is \$1325.37. No expenditures in the past month. No income since convention. Waiting for checks from Mark Eagle still to determine final proceeds from the state convention.
- Point of discussion (Robert): Haley has stepped down as treasurer for MI-ABS for personal reasons.
- The expectation is that Treasurer reports for NABS and NFB should include balance at the beginning and end of the reporting periods. Any subtractions and additions, and nature thereof, and the amounts need to be reported accurately. Jerusalem had made a motion to look into the account at last meeting, but the math and details noted on the report Haley submitted did not add up.
- The last report came back with handwritten inaccurate amounts. Once balances reconciled, we were still short, because of unpaid or unaccounted dues. We are still short about \$25, at this point we are moving to get the treasurer off the account, especially given her resignation.
- Detailed reports were not provided by the past treasurer. We need transparency, and whoever handles the account from now on handles it responsibly. In future, we won't be able to track when money comes in and out if it is not tracked accurately and with detail.

- Discussion on accountability: Rachel motion that if we pay by Venmo: this needs to be tracked with receipts sent to the member from the treasurer. Members are to forward written proof of payment to the treasurer (i.e. Venmo email receipt, screen shot, text indicating that they paid cash or some other tangible documentation) and the resulting receipt provided to the member from MI-ABS will indicate the name of the member, payment method, amount received, date received, and what it was for. Rachel moved, Robert seconded, unanimous agreement.
- Effective now, Steven does not have voting privileges until he pays his \$5 dues. Steven will work out with Jeff what he will do but it is expected that he will be paid ASAP.
- We will write off the missing \$25 at this time.
- Jeff: in order to remove Haley, PNC requires signatures of both Jeff and Haley. Removing Haley only leaves Jeff on the account, and we need to have at least 2 members with access.
- Haley may not have actually deleted herself from the physical PNC account, and still has access to the treasurer email and Venmo account even if she deleted it from her phone. We may need to explore removing her from the account and adding a new person, or simply closing the old account and starting over with a fresh new account, for security. A Motion will need to include changing of those passwords.
- Motion: Remove Haley Loskowski as treasurer from the PNC account, and change associated treasurer email and Venmo passwords. Victor: motion. Robert seconded. Unanimous agreement.
- We need to figure out who can do backup with Jeff for treasury duties.
- After discussion, Victor to be a backup. Jeff is the state rep and president. Victor Marques to take on treasurer reporting functions as part of secretarial duties. Jeff will make purchasing decisions and approvals based on board decisions arising from business discussed at monthly board meetings, Victor to report all financial activity to the board to ensure accountability. Treasurer reports can go with the meeting minutes to the list-serve each month.
- Motion was made that Victor is added to the PNC account. Treasurer duties are split with purchasing power for Jeff and Victor reporting, with financial reports for the period immediately before the next meeting going to the members on the list-serve and WhatsApp groups prior to each monthly teleconference meeting along with the prior meeting's minutes. Motioned by Robert, Seconded by Rachel. Unanimous agreement.

Washington Seminar (Robert):

- Coming up soon this February. Aim High was re-introduced, one of the top legislative priorities for students. Other issues are just as important, but this is the main one.

- NABS are doing a conference call for all attending on Jan. 19.
- Makahi, Jerusalem and Yazmine all got stipends. We will pay for the flight of Jerusalem and Makahi's flights up front, and NABS reimburses us.
- We need liability forms for Yazmine: Fred and Donna to pursue this. Then we move the process forward.
- Student leadership seminar is the weekend before. Jerusalem was selected, to be accompanied by Robert, for the weekend before Washington.
- Congratulations to Jerusalem on this leadership award.

Midwest Seminar (Robert):

- March 20-22.
- Flyer was sent out.
- Register. Deadline is Feb. 10.
- Every student planning on going has to register. The planning committee will send an email with directions.
- Take that email to your rehab counsellor.
- Affiliates get reimbursed by rehabilitation agencies for transition age students.
- Forward the registration confirmation email to your rehabilitation agency and the state affiliate.
- The \$100 registration fee covers meals and banquet meal on Saturday – the only meal not included is Friday night.
- Does not include hotel, make that reservation. Book that hotel, only 44 rooms blocked. The hotel rate will include breakfast.
- Still contact Mike Powell if you are not transition age. He is coordinating room sharing with transition age students.

Committee Reports:

Membership and Fundraising:

- Fundraising at Washington seminar: No decisions as Jerusalem is not here, but update from Robert.
- There have been Two calls for fundraising. Working on Washington seminar fundraising. Second meeting had no attendance.
- He wanted to do tee-shirts, but messaging was controversial.
- We need to have a neutral stance. Jerusalem was going to talk tonight about the message. With the short amount of time, it is likely not feasible to do a fundraiser at seminar, at least one we need to buy stuff for. Not feasible to buy anything, since we need to front the money for air tickets. Robert suggested that a 50/50 raffle always works well.
- Victor and Rachel recommend the 50/50.
- Robert: motion to suggest that we do a 50/50 at the seminar. Jerusalem will be there from Friday, so he can fundraise at both the leadership seminar and

Washington. Jeff: a motion is not required, we will just express our support to him for this idea.

- Jerusalem (who joined late, after this initial discussion): new shirt design, I See with My Heart, Not My Eyes. Robert: discussion as a group, with the timing and outlaying of funds for air tickets before they get reimbursed, that is an issue. Also, tee-shirts might be expensive even in bulk and we don't know how quick the turnaround would be, we would have to include shipping to Washington to do it there. Change the fundraiser to 50/50 and do the tee shirts at a later time. Other students to sell at Washington. Victor: suggest the tee shirt idea for Chicago. Not as many people selling things too at Chicago as per Rachel, and we can ship here for us to take to Chicago with us. Robert: too much competition in Washington.

Legislative (Jeff):

- Covered in the Washington Seminar update. Jeff to email what we are working on nationally once those priorities are finalized. Everyone can be informed as to what is happening. State board call Thursday Jan. 17, about state legislation: blind parents' rights initiative and working on restoring the Michigan Commission. Contact Mark Eagle, there are opportunities to help on those issues.

Communication (Jeff, Steven cannot present due to dues issue):

- Yazmine, Steven and Jeff. Provided Twitter access for student division. Yazmine emailed information on Facebook pages so she can begin posting. Yazmine is going to Washington, she can post from the student account about Washington and Midwest activities so people can stay up to date. A short but good call.

National Scholarship (Jeff):

- National office runs this. Students can apply, \$3000 to \$12000. Application is open now and runs through March 31. Robert pointed out that students must be attending college in fall 2020. They are sticklers for following directions, so ensure everything is complete, essay is not even one word over 700 words, etc. Applications online, provide address. Reference letters can follow as long as they are emailed to scholarships@nfb.org before March 31.

Old Business:

- None

New Business:

- Robert: National is pushing for abiding and acknowledgement of our code of conduct. We want issues from the past to be removed, to move forward with no drama. The norm is that the code of conduct should be signed by each officer, on file. We have to refer back to a signature to bring up any claim for removal or

reprimand as per the constitution. Robert says not just elected officials, but all student division members should sign this. Every one, even in past leadership, should sign, and all should be accountable.

- Motion: Robert: everyone who has paid dues so far, and will do so, to sign and send a copy to the secretary by January 31, 2020.
- Jeff mentioned that at the state level, the code of conduct applies to everyone state-wide whether they sign it or not, as a member.
- Robert: said this would be true but there were issues with the student and state. There is no time stamp that exists forever. The motion covered members of the affiliate at the time. People who pay dues or join later are not grandfathered. Younger members were not chapter members before, neither Robert or Victor. We need tangible forms and proof annually that people agree to these principles.
- Motion: It is a MI-ABS requirement for all members to sign the NFB Code of Conduct, and send to the secretary by email by January 31, 2020. Print, sign and scan the form back to the secretary, or alternatively, an email with the phrase "As a member of the Michigan Association of Blind Students, I certify that I have read and agree to abide by the entire NFB Code of Conduct as posted on <https://www.nfb.org/about-us/history-and-governance/code-conduct> on the date of this email, with respect to all business relating to the Michigan Association of Blind Students for the remainder of the 2019-2020 membership year" will suffice if it comes directly from you. Jerusalem seconds. Unanimous agreement.
- National NFB code on the national website: <https://www.nfb.org/about-us/history-and-governance/code-conduct>. The link as provided in the meeting does not work (www.nfb.org/codeofconduct is incorrect) so use the above link instead. Victor will send this out in email. Deadline: January 31, 2020.

Rideshare program:

- NFB was involved in suing Uber and Lyft. The monitoring program has been helpful. Settled out of court for \$250k, with a commitment by Uber and Lyft to educate drivers and partners on illegality of service dog denials. The NFB is asking for reports. There have only been 3 reports per month for Michigan. Go to nfb.org/rideshare to fill out these reports. NFB is asking for Report on both great rides and denials, and you can report for friends who have been denied and don't have time to fill it out, but try to complete it after every ride. Michigan has a bad reputation for not completing these reports, and we don't want the issue to be dropped by NFB.

Announcements:

- Robert announcing: Kalamazoo chapter meeting Wednesday Jan. 15 7 PM at Edison Neighborhood Assn, first meeting of the year. Refreshments provided, fundraising and discussion of an event to plan in Kalamazoo, possibly partner with another organization)

- Jerusalem: do we have any standalone events planned for the student division? It's a possibility, but it is Makahi and Kamarri's division for outreach. Not necessarily needing to be a fundraiser, just for outreach. BBQs, chili cook-offs are good ideas: possibilities are endless for outreach, we just have to get people to do the work. It can be a good social event. Robert: movie outing to a theater near the state board meeting location has been done in the past. This would include affiliate members. We can plan something like this, just need to plan and make it happen.

Adjourn at 8:30 PM. Jeff motion, Victor seconded, unanimous.

Next call to be the third Sunday, Feb. 16, 2020 7PM due to Washington seminar.