Draft

National Federation of the Blind of Arkansas

Central Arkansas Chapter

Meeting Minutes

August 12th, 2023

Opening: The regular meeting of the Central Arkansas Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind (NFBCAC) was called to order at 11:00 A.M., at the Terry Public Library, by President Cindy Scott-Huisman, who welcomed the membership and guests. along with requesting that all participants identify themselves when speaking, to facilitate communications and recording of the minutes.

Chapter Members Present: President Cindy Scott-Huisman,Vice President Ginger Robertson, Secretary Kyle Kiper, Treasurer Bettye Johnson, Board Member Brent Philpot, Federationists Emily Goolsby, Joshua Goolsby, Madelyn Goolsby, Wesley Hillman, Ernestine Johnson, Scott Jones, and Tawnya Philpot.

Guests Present: Arkansas State Independent Living Council Executive Director Fransha’ Anderson, Adren Duncan, and Doug White.

Roll Call: President Scott-Huisman led all participants in an around-the-room roll call, providing an opportunity for all present to identify and introduce themselves.

Guest Speaker: President Scott-Huisman welcomed Dr. Fransha’ Anderson, of the Arkansas State Independent Living Council (SILC,) thanked her for agreeing to be the guest speaker, and provided her with the floor.

Arkansas SILC Executive Director Dr. Fransha’ Anderson thanked the chapter, and introduced herself. She began her presentation, by identifying both of her two areas of focus, for her visit. Primarily, she described her position as the 12-year Executive Director of the SILC, and gave a thorough description of all of the services of which her board provides, to individuals with all disabilities, including the blind. During her presentation, Dr. Anderson recognized Guest Attendee Adren Duncan, as the former Chair of the SILC Board, and Vice President Robertson, for her efforts at the Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind. She also announced that the second, of her two-pronged message, was as the current title holder of Ultimate International Miss Arkansas Elite Miss, which has provided her with the opportunity to develop and facilitate a special project, of which she created after supporting her Mother’s battle with Cancer, and personally experiencing the trauma of being a caregiver. She created Ella’s Embrace: A Caregivers Connection, named after her late Mother. The soon to be formed non-profit provides support and supply bags, for caregivers, to include water, snacks, reference lists, and motivational messages, along with other items. Future referrals, for caregivers, were invited, and the continued support of the NFB of Arkansas. Dr. Anderson returned to discussing the SILC, and shared the organization’s now National recognition and advanced funding. She asked that the National Federation of the Blind of Arkansas be engaged, as one of the organizations which actively takes part within the Independent Living Council. She additionally asked that Federationists take part in the writing of the SILC plan, and complete surveys which she will send out, to the membership. Several comments and questions were entertained, and a lively interaction took place. President Scott-Huisman thanked Dr. Anderson, for visiting the Central Arkansas Chapter, and asked that communications be maintained, to benefit all. The speaker was photographed, with the NFBCAC members, and the meeting continued.

Approval of Minutes: President Scott-Huisman advised the membership that minutes of the June meeting were emailed to all members and inquired whether anyone had any comments or requests for corrections. Vice President Robertson made a motion to accept the previous minutes, Federationist Hillman seconded the motion, A voice vote was held, and the motion carried.

Treasurer’s Report: President Scott-Huisman advised the membership that the June Treasurer’s Report would be presented, orally, by Treasurer Johnson. The Treasurer reported that the ending May balance was $283.12, and that she continues to work on reconciling the report numbers, with the Affiliate Treasurer’s Report. She added that her June and July written reports, would be provided prior to the next meeting.. President Scott-Huisman inquired whether anyone had any comments or requests for corrections. Board Member Philpot made a motion to accept the previous reports, Vice President Robertson seconded the motion, A voice vote was held, and the motion carried.

Continuing Business: President Scott-Huisman announced that a Chapter Membership Directory has been distributed, but that several members have asked about expanding the information listed. Federationist Jones said he will continue to grow the directory, and will form a sub-committee, in order to better address the project.

President Scott-Huisman invited all members to take part in the NFBCAC What’s App Group, where ongoing networking and discussions take place. Both Federationists Hillman and Jones added that they find the forum to be very beneficial.

President Scott-Huisman asked that all members read the meeting agenda, as not all ongoing topics are covered verbally, but are maintained on the written agenda.

4 Pillars of the NFB:

Pillar 1 - Education, Rehabilitation, and Employment: Secretary Kiper gave the Job Squad report, for Board Member Cynthia Kiper who was absent. He shared that the Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind has posted several positions, including Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and Project Manager jobs. He clarified that an individual does not have to currently hold a Master’s Degree, to be hired, but would be required to earn the credentials, while working. He also commented on recent local discussion, that a replacement National Industries for the Blind Associated Agency may be moving into the former IFB Solutions site, in Little Rock. This would provide new jobs, for many who are being displaced by the ending of the IFB’s contracts.

Pillar 2 - Membership and Community building: Vice President Robertson reminded members that a NFBAR Statewide Convention Planning Meeting, will take place on the 24th of August, at 7:00. President Scott-Huisman added that the protocol, to take part in the planning, is to contact NFBAR President Chadwick, and ask to be added to the committee.

Pillar 3 – Advocacy: Vice President Robertson shared that she had been in conversation with several assisted living facilities, who were requesting help, in learning how to support their residents with visual issues. She added that their initial request, was on how to find someone who could repair a Braille Writer. Robertson identified an organization in California, which utilizes prisoners to provide maintenance to the equipment. During the process of connecting both parties, the representative of the organization agreed to be the guest speaker, at the September NFBCAC meeting.

Board Member Philpot said that he and Federationist Philpot have been asking restaurant managers, each time they visit a property, whether they take part in the Menus4All App, and have given them information on how to contact the developers.

Federationist Jones shared that he has been increasing advocacy, by actually self-advocating, by using his long white cane in public, not only at home but now at his worksite. He shared that this process is how he hopes to be a better representative of the National Federation of the Blind, for all.

Secretary Kiper reported that he had been able to recently assist a local Blind applicant, to pursue one of the open positions at the Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind.

President Scott-Huisman discussed the current drive to improve public transportation for all Blind people in Central Arkansas. Board Member Philpot reported that he had received a reply, when he wrote to RockRegioin Metro, regarding their limited service provision and lack of efficiency. He has offered to meet with their representatives. Treasurer Johnson announced that she intends to pursue being appointed to the transit authority board, so she may advocate for Individuals with Disabilities. Philpot added that he is writing to Little Rock City Board Members. President Scott-Huisman asked that interested individuals talk to her, about forming a Transportation Committee.

Pillar 4 – Development: Federationist and Development Committee Chair Philpot announced that the current World’s Finest Chocolate sales campaign has been a success. She asked members to discuss moving forward with the potential of taking part in a Double Good Popcorn virtual fundraising project, and gave some details on how the 4 Day sales window works, along with the use of Social Media. President Scott-Huisman asked the members to go ahead and discuss the project. Treasurer Johnson suggested that the sales start as soon as possible, in the Fall, before school students begin their fundraising. A discussion took place, with President Scott-Huisman asking for a vote. The members voted, and it was unanimously decided that the popcorn sales take place, as soon as it can be arranged. President Scott-Huisman asked the members of the Development Committee to meet, and move forward.

President Scott-Huisman updated members on the upcoming statewide fundraising campaign, in which the Razorback Blanket, crocheted by NFBAR Board Member Tanya VanHouten will be the prize. She added that the raffle starts in September and ends in November, and to contact VanHouten for information and how to obtain tickets to sell. Special recognition, of the extreme efforts of At-Large Chapter VanHouten, in not only the making of the blanket but also the administration of the fundraiser was put on the record, by President Scott-Huisman. The chapter members all agreed, that the blanket and project are very impressive.

Take Five for Philosophy: Secretary Kiper facilitated the segment of every chapter meeting, dedicated to discussing a dilemma contrasted with the concept of Federation Philosophy. A discussion took place, related to the question of how each member feels about the recent publicly discussed announcement of United Airlines putting Braille markings, within their aircraft. A positive, and interactive, debate ensued, allowing multiple members to express their personal thoughts. After 5 minutes, President Scott-Huisman called time, and the meeting continued.,

New Business: President Scott-Huisman announced that the NFBCAC Board Elections will take place, in-person, at the October Chapter Meeting, at the Little Rock Terry Library. She reminded members that all 6 positions will be up for election: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and 2 Board Member positions. She advised that she will not be seeking re-election, as it is her opinion that leadership should rotate, so others may serve and benefit from the experience. All who wish to run for office will be given an opportunity to speak, at the upcoming September NFBCAC Meeting.

Welcoming Ceremony: As there were no new members to welcome, Board Member Philpot lead the membership in the recital of the National Federation of the Blind Pledge and One-Minute Message, a regular part of all welcoming ceremonies.

State Affiliate Representative: As there was not a presentation, by a NFBAR Board Member, President Scott-Huisman, who also serves on the Affiliate Board, shared that she has NFB Pamphlets which may be collected by attendees and distributed within the area. She reminded members of the upcoming State Convention Meeting and the Razorback Blanket Raffle.

Presidential Release: Board Member Philpot played a condensed audio recording, of the August Presidential Release, allowing chapter members to hear from the national leadership.

Additional Announcements: Guest Adren Duncan invited all who may be interested, to attend his chapter of Toastmasters International, which meets online. He asked that anyone wanting information, contact him.

Secretary Kiper announced that RockRegion metro Paratransit Representative Tonia Wright will soon be leaving her position, to return to serving as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, and that there is no word on who will replace her.

President Scott-Huisman expressed her excitement over an excellent chapter meeting. She reminded members that the next meeting will be on Saturday, September 9th, at 11:00, via Zoom. The Guest Speaker will be from the Volunteers of Vacaville, in California. She added that all members and guests should watch for her email, which will come out between this and the next meeting.

Adjournment: Board Member Philpot made a motion to adjourn. Vice President Robertson seconded, a voice vote was held, and the motion carried at 12:35 P.M.

Minutes submitted on September 2nd, 2023 by Secretary Kyle Kiper

Minutes reviewed on , 2023by President Cindy Scott-Huisman

Minutes approved on , 2023 by the Central Arkansas Chapter Membership